

Do You Know the Way of Peace

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[0 : 00] I'm grateful for the opportunity to preach this morning to you at Squamish Baptist Church and Grace Church in 99 as we continue to meet together this week and I believe next week as well.

My name is Dave Nannery. I am associate pastor at Squamish Baptist Church. Just continue to pray for BK for the second week in a row he is out with illness and continue to pray for him for recovery from pneumonia.

And I'm grateful for some of the medicine he's been taking that has helped him with that and so continue to just ask the Lord on his behalf that he would soon be able to rejoin us and resume finally that sermon series on taking us through the Old Testament.

So I'm going to preach today on the subject of peace and I'm going to be upfront that this is not the first time I've preached on this in addition to having preached on the subject here before.

This particular sermon is one I've preached elsewhere as well and I say that as well. I say that in particular because my experience with a sermon like this where sometimes I get into examples into the nitty-gritty is one of two things happens.

[1 : 14] First, people think that I'm targeting them. I promise you I'm not targeting anybody, okay? If you are like, whoa, that's way too relatable. How does he know what's going on in my home?

How does he know what's going on in my relationships? It's because these are problems that are incredibly common and incredibly difficult at the same time. Man, like when the Bible says the way of peace they have not known, it speaks well.

These are thousands of year old problems and they're problems that if we had time, I could go into chapter and verse, give you examples throughout Scripture of people engaged in conflict, of people pursuing false ways of peace, and we could be here for a very long time going through illustration after illustration and you come away with the conclusion that finding the way of peace in my relationships is an age-old problem and it has been difficult for people ever since we fell into sin.

So that is a big challenge for us. And the second one is sometimes when we're engaged in conflict and we hear a sermon, the temptation is, oh man, the person next to me needs to hear this.

Or, oh, I wish so-and-so were here. Why aren't they here? They would have really benefited from this. And what I encourage you is, it's not the most productive way of thinking because it's a way of, I think, evading the Spirit's work in our heart.

[2 : 38] And what we want to think through is, what do I need to hear here? Lord, how are you addressing and challenging me as an individual as I want to become a peacemaker?

It is very rare and beautiful when you encounter a peacemaker how often have you maybe heard yourself say, or maybe you've had friends or family say something along the lines of, there's just no peace in my home and there's no peace in my heart.

The absence of peace, it does feel like a big problem, doesn't it? And that's because it is a big problem. It is. Most people don't seek the help they need until we're really at our wit's end.

And in my role as a counselor, people come for counseling, probably the number one, one of the biggest reasons they come is because of a lack of peace after many, many years of living in relationships without peace or without real peace.

And so when the Bible says in Romans chapter 3, the way of peace they have not known, it speaks truly. There's one individual I met and he described his desire for his family in these words.

[3 : 47] And boy, I felt these were relatable. I felt these are my bones. He says, I just want the fighting to stop. I just want everyone to get along. We think we all want that.

We think we all want peace. But do we really? Because the way of peace is more than, and it's actually different than the absence of conflict.

Peace is not we all mindlessly agree with one another in all things, and we never disagree about anything. Rather, peace is the ability to work through your conflict in a gracious way, carefully listening to one another and solving the conflict together on the same team.

That's what peace looks like, and that's what it feels like. It's not the absence of conflict, but peace is the presence of trust and the presence of order in our relationships.

This trust and this order allows us to work through conflict without sinning against God and without sinning against one another. And in God's kingdom, that's a good thing.

[4 : 55] God's kingdom is not about everybody agreeing and in absolute lockstep with one another. Rather, God's kingdom is about a kingdom of peace where we know what to do with conflict.

Do you know the way of peace? So, what is peace? Where does it come from? The Bible is very clear where peace does ultimately come from.

On a number of occasions in the Bible, the Lord is called the God of peace. He is the source of it. Peace comes from God. And that's because peace is baked into his very nature.

He is the one who makes peace because God is the one who is at peace. In Matthew chapter 5, here's what Jesus tells us about God. He says, Now, that's a funny expression, sons of God. Maybe you think, whoa, I thought only Jesus got to be called the son of God. And yes, it's true. He is the son of God in a unique way that you and I are not. But a son of someone means you resemble your father.

[6 : 07] You're a chip off the old block, just like your father. To be called a son of God means you're taking on his character. You're starting to look like him. Peacemakers are just like the God that they have been maturing and growing up to resemble.

God is, in eternity, a God of peace. He is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is three persons, one God.

That means that God is, by nature, a singular being who exists in eternity in harmonious union among three persons. His very nature, even in eternity, is a God who is fundamentally at peace in relationship.

That is who he is. And that is who he is outside of time and space. The Trinity is harmony in eternity. And this harmonious union is the essence of peace.

Peace consists in these rightly ordered relationships. And what peacemakers do when we start to become sons of God, when we start to take on his character, we gain the ability to take relationships of confusion, instability, distrust, mental toil, dark thoughts, suspicions, and we gain the ability to remake these relationships into relationships of peace.

[7 : 39] To those on the outside, peacemakers look like they almost like have a superpower. They're not perfect at it. They're not all powerful at it. But they seem to just have this knack for knowing what to do with difficult relationships like this.

Peacemakers are led by the Spirit of God. They know how to cultivate trust and order in their relationships. And within this trust and this order, now conflict can be resolved.

Now you can keep short accounts with one another and actually just keep up to date and not have long lingering problems, that stuff that is just off limits and can't be talked about.

Blessed are the peacemakers who share that desire of the Spirit, who keep in step with the Spirit, who come to know the way of peace that comes from the God of peace.

And they are a blessing in all of their relationships. There's a happiness there. There are other kinds of peace, though, that don't come from God.

[8 : 41] That word peace can be often used in ways that distort what God really means by it. Consider the blessing that Jesus gave to his disciples in John chapter 14, verse 27.

He says to them, Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you.

God the Son brings them, brings his disciples his own peace, which he has enjoyed in eternity in the Trinity.

And then he says, Not as the world gives do I give to you. What he's saying is he is giving us a way of peace that is different than the false forms of peace that the world has offered to us, that we have been, that have been handed down to us from our own families and our own fathers, that are taught in our culture and that well up in our own hearts and that Satan wants to tempt us with.

There are false forms of peace. What are they? The false forms of peace the world gives, these counterfeits of peace. There are three of them. So what are the three counterfeits of peace?

[9 : 53] Counterfeit number one is what we might call pacification. Pacification. And that is a word that you could perhaps define as follows. Peace through superior firepower.

Peace through superior firepower. The kind of peace that Paul's readers in Galatia, they knew all too well. That Paul is writing in the context of the Roman Empire.

People knew all about pacification there. It was the kind of peace that Rome inflicted on its subjects. Rome would pacify by crushing them and making them submit to what was called the Pax Romana, the Roman peace.

One Roman historian, Tacitus, he actually critiqued the Roman way of peace with these words. They make a desolation and they call it peace. They make a desolation and they call it peace. That is what the legions of Rome did. There is a gracious confrontation. Yes, that is a necessary part of peacemaking. Peacemaking does involve confrontation. It does often mean moving into and challenging.

[11 : 07] It is a genuine tactic of love. But there's a counterfeit. All forms of love have a counterfeit. All forms of peace have a counterfeit. And the counterfeit is pacification. So here's some specific examples.

Like what does it look like to pacify someone? You can look into any book on relationships, families, marriage, just relationships in general. But like what are these false forms of peace like?

And it can look a lot like accusation and demand. Pointing the finger. This is your fault. Only one person to blame here. And it's not me. It's you. Maybe I've done a few things wrong.

But the real problem is you. Exaggerating. You always side with her. You never take out the trash. You only think about yourself. You're the worst dad ever.

Getting really big. Trying to make yourself big in a fight. Using big words and big language to overpower your opponent. Labeling and shaming.

[12 : 07] You're a loser. Horrible. Failure. Pathetic. Nasty. Toxic. Ugly. Stupid. We go on and on. All these tactics we use to make ourselves big and more powerful than the other person.

Interrupting. Lecturing. Raising your voice. Yelling. Stomping around. Slamming doors. Throwing things. Intimidating. Restraining. Pushing. Slapping. Hitting. Threatening. Rounding up a mob against your enemies.

All so that we can get what we want. All so that we can pull out bigger and bigger guns. Peace through superior firepower. My way or the highway. We do things my way.

Now, I've never met a person who said, man, I love fighting. Like, I just really enjoy getting into fights with people. We don't love fighting, but we do love to win. So we pursue pacification.

We make a desolation and we call it peace. So pacification is the first counterfeit of peace. And counterfeit number two is appeasement. Counterfeit number two is appeasement.

[13 : 10] So this is the counterpart to pacification. If I don't think I can get what I want by winning, maybe I can get what I want by giving in. So the subjects of Rome knew this approach, too.

I'll pay my tribute to Caesar. In exchange, if I grovel before him, I'll get something I want out of Caesar. The subjects of Rome got benefits from being subjects of Rome and bowing the knee to him.

Usually what I want is maybe I want love or acceptance or security or safety. I want not to be abandoned. We have other names for this.

Peer pressure, enabling, codependence, being the nice guy. Now, this, too, is a counterfeit of something good. Because there is a gracious yielding to others that is a necessary part of peacemaking.

And Josh read about some of that. You know, if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him something to drink. And it is possible to do this in a spirit-led way, led by love in its appropriate context.

[14 : 16] But there's a counterfeit that our flesh has. It's not spirit-led, and that's appeasement. What's it look like to appease someone? It looks like accommodating or affirming sinful and foolish behavior in others because they have something that we want.

A middle school student is attacked and ridiculed by her peers. So she goes along with the crowd. She is appeasing them in order to be accepted. A mom dreads taking her toddler to the grocery store because he tends to throw tantrums.

She feels helpless. And he does it again. She gives him whatever he wants just to make it stop. She wants to not be embarrassed in public. And so she appeases her toddler to get what she is wanting.

A husband sees his wife misbehaving and is afraid to challenge and contradict her because she might freak out at him or leave him. So he just says, yes, dear. Deep down, he's angry because she isn't respecting him for being such a nice guy because men, women don't respect a doormat. A wife simply accepts responsibility whenever her husband blows up at her and yells degrading things at her. She stays quiet, gives in to whatever he says. Being a perennial wallflower isn't making things better.

[15 : 31] Maybe you're just trying to appease other people. You're always saying yes to their demands, always caving in to their accusations. And you convince yourself you're a powerless victim.

Oh, I'm so powerless. The other person is so powerful and they're in control and they're doing everything. I've got no choice. I've got no agency. I've got no ability. What's happening there, and I want to challenge you on this, if you're telling yourself that with all that self-pity, you just lack integrity because you give in to whoever is pushing the hardest or yelling the loudest. Appeasement is one of the ways that we get what we want. This is the second counterfeit of peace. And then counterfeit number three, peace faking.

Peace faking. This is the subtlest one of all. This is what happens to people who just get tired of all the fighting, families who get tired of all the pointed fingers, all the emotional explosions. In a family that has a culture of peace faking, everything gets swept under the rug. If someone blows up, we move on and we pretend that it never happened. We put on our smiles when we show up at church.

[16 : 46] We post perfect family photos on Instagram. Everything is great. Everything is great, okay? Now, I have a joke.

This is a Canadian specialty, is it not? The peace faking, let's just all get along, be nice and polite, don't rock the boat, don't bring up that touchy subject. We don't talk about politics or religion here, and we don't talk about our problems.

Just have a pleasant smile. Is life at home getting tense? Hop on your mountain bike and hit the trails. Are the kids acting up? Let your wife deal with it so you can go watch TV.

Is your marriage falling apart? Get on your phone, scroll on Instagram forever. Avoid an escape and put on a happy face. We do this. Maybe you're faking peace with other people, sweeping everything under the rug, avoiding conflict, dodging responsibility, escaping problems.

And peace faking can be a big problem in our churches and families. We just hope to keep our heads down, just hope it just goes away. We have been embracing the counterfeits of peace in our relationships.

[17 : 55] This pacification, this appeasement, this peace faking, and I stress again, these are thousands of year old problems. These are not new to you and to your relationships and to your family.

You can find example after example in scripture of people doing all of these things, led by the flesh, not led by the spirit. For some of us, this is like the air we breathe and the water we drink.

It never even occurred to us that there's another way. Maybe we just have a sense that something's not right, but we don't know what it is. And what it is, is we don't know the way of peace.

God has offered us a choice. Do you want peace or do you not? He invites us, embrace his real peace or face eternity without any peace.

Because there is no place in God's kingdom for false peace. Only the real thing is allowed. In Isaiah 57, the Lord says, Peace, peace to the far and to the near, says the Lord, and I will heal him.

[19 : 01] But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up mire and dirt. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked. What if we were to turn away from our mire and dirt, to repent of our fake peace?

Galatians 5.24 says, Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. What if you began to crucify every form of false peace in your relationships?

Nail it to a cross, kill it, leave it for dead. Do you know the way of peace? And I say that because we say, Okay, great, I'm going to throw out all those false forms of peace.

Well, it's kind of hard if you actually don't know the real way of peace. We slip back into the false forms of peace if we don't know the real thing. How do we keep in step with the Spirit on the pathway of peace?

And the way of peace begins with this step. First, be at peace with God. Be at peace with God. Remember, He is the God of peace.

[20 : 25] That's where it starts. God's Word is very clear on this. In Romans 5 verse 1, we read, Peace with God comes when you have faith and put your trust and faith and entrust your very self to His Son, Jesus Christ.

So now, rather than standing before God in your own merits, you are now counted righteous and right in His eyes. Your long war against God has ended.

Before there was enmity between you and God that stood between you. That's been brought to a close. Now there is real peace, real wholeness and wellness, what the Jews would call real shalom. And it only comes when you have faith in Jesus Christ. You trust that He is the Son of God. You trust that His death on the cross has paid the full penalty for your sins.

His death on the cross has satisfied God's wrath on your behalf. You trust that His death and His resurrection have won the victory against Satan and all evil.

[21 : 45] He has laid out a path for you to follow in His footsteps because He has already won the victory. And now you can finally rest because Jesus Christ has done all this for you on your behalf.

This one way to peace with God is faith and rest in Jesus Christ and what He has done. It's not about who you are and what you've done.

This is a peace. The beauty of it is because it all depends on Him. It can never be taken away from you. A real peace.

An eternal peace. And Jesus Christ is the only way to real peace. In Acts 4 verse 12 we read, There is salvation in no one else.

For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Let me give you an illustration of why it matters that we start with peace with God and why that allows everything else to come into alignment in order to begin to be restored in our other relationships.

[22 : 53] I want you to imagine a minute. I'll do a little bit of astronomy here. I want you to imagine our solar system. Maybe you've seen like models of, you know, our solar system and it's got all the planets and moons and all the little asteroids and they're moving with harmony in their proper orbits.

This is perhaps what we could call a solar system at peace. This peace and this stability where everything is in its right place, everything is in harmony.

It makes space for a world like ours in which life can flourish and grow. If we were constantly having to worry about another planet smacking into the earth, comets and asteroids left and right hitting us, how could life exist?

How could we flourish and grow? What opportunities would we have? So what is it that keeps our solar system at peace? What keeps this system of cosmic relationships at peace?

What mass, what gravity, what source of power and light can there be that arranges everything in harmonious union? Does anybody know? Oh, wait, I heard a whisper.

[24 : 06] What was it? Somebody said something. You can't all be this. You all have to know something about astronomy, right? What is it that I'm describing? The sun, right?

Is it not the sun that holds everything in place? It actually contains 99% of the mass of our solar system. Is it not the sun that belongs at the center of the solar system?

Is it not the sun around which everything else is ordered? Is it not the sun that keeps our solar system at peace? And if you doubt that, imagine for a moment, what would happen if you were to snap your fingers and make the sun vanish, just disappear?

Would peace be possible? No way. Because what would happen is all the planets and objects would just start flying off into chaos and confusion and disorder.

Some of them would just start smashing into each other. Others would start orbiting the wrong things. Others would wander off into the abyss. All peace would be lost.

[25 : 17] And so it is with God. You must have peace with God in order for yourself to pursue peace and in order for your relationships to truly be at peace. Now, you can perhaps try to banish God from your solar system of relationships.

Now, of course, you can't banish God for real, any more than you can banish the sun from the sky. You don't have that power. Unless there's something about you I don't know. His grace is always going to provide some measure of peace in your life as long as you live on this side of judgment. That is just this common grace that God shows to all of us that this world is nowhere near as bad as it could be. Believer or unbeliever, we have some measure of peace in our lives, and that is

because God still exists.

The sun still shines. And he brings goodness to us. But there's coming a day of judgment. If you wish for him to be gone and his peace to be gone, your wish is going to come true.

The light will go out. All that will be left is darkness and consuming fire. There is only one way to real peace, and real peace that lasts forever.

[26 : 30] And that is by faith in the Son of God, who gave his life to bring us peace with God. So when you're at peace with God, you are no longer trying to win against him.

You're no longer trying to do our small part to try to pacify him by grumbling against him and defying his law. How could God do this to me? Why would he make me like this? I would never worship a God like that.

You let go of trying to pacify the almighty God because now you're at peace. When you're at peace with God, you're no longer trying to appease him either. How many people I know who imagine God as a severe master, but when you're at peace with him, you let go of obsessing over, oh, I need to repent better.

I need to repent better. I need to do more. I need to do more. He's going to get mad at me. You no longer worry that he's going to get his hands on you and curse you and make you pay.

Because the beautiful thing is this. God has already taken care of the appeasement. His wrath has already been taken care of.

[27 : 40] His son took his wrath. His son became a curse for us. Father, son, and spirit arranged it to be so and willingly. If your faith is in Jesus Christ, it is never again your job to appease God.

That's already been done forever. When you're at peace with God, you're no longer faking a peace with him. There is a fake peace that is common in the world that says something like this.

God and I are okay. I live my life. He does his thing. I'm a good person. I don't see why I need all this religious stuff. But that's fake peace.

It's not real. With real peace, you no longer live in that sort of complacency. You're not presuming on his patience and kindness anymore. You receive it as a gift.

You see that you are forgiven, washed clean, and now you're grateful to have a real peace with God, not a fake one. And so the way of peace begins with this. Come, be at peace with God.

[28 : 58] He says, come, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. He invites you. Come and be at peace. Let go of all the false forms of peace that have kept you distant and separate from God.

And embrace the real peace. He has done all that is needed to give it to you. Then there's a second step. How do we gain peace in our relationships?

And the second step is this. You actually have to develop peace within yourself. Develop peace within yourself. Because these counterfeits of peace, they show up within you too, inside of you.

And your calling as a Christian is to take ownership of the peace that is yours in Christ. There is a peace that challenges the world, the devil, and the flesh. When you develop that peace, you are no longer trying to pacify yourself.

Some of us, we're busy accusing ourselves. We read in the Bible the way Job's friends start accusing him, beating him up to do better, try harder, work more, repent better.

[30 : 06] And you can let go of that because you're no longer needing to get a place where you feel good about yourself. As though you need to be great in order to be okay, in order you need to have it all together in order to be okay, rather your boast is in the Lord, not in yourself.

What you can say is, Jesus Christ is good. He is more than okay. He is glorious. And I'm with him. I'm with him.

Bit by bit, I'm learning to walk with him. When you know the God of peace, you don't have to constantly pummel yourself into submission so that you can be good enough.

You're no longer trying to appease yourself either. Some of us feel like we're at the mercy of our terrible thoughts and feelings. The shame, the anxiety, the anger, the stuff that we think that, I just, I have to be this way.

I have to be this way. I'm at the mercy of this. I can't help it. You're not powerless before those things. Brothers and sisters, you are not powerless in your internal life.

[31 : 18] You don't have to do what your feelings are telling you. You don't have to give in to temptation. There is a way to challenge the accusing thoughts of shame. There is a way to claim the promises of God.

There is a way to stand firm against the devil's schemes. You no longer have to avoid anxiety at all costs. When you know the God of peace, you can let go of that internal appeasement. You no longer fake peace within yourself. You don't live in denial anymore. You don't have to keep telling yourself this is fine when it isn't. You can feel grief again and sorrow and be honest with yourself about it and still be okay.

When you know the God of peace, you don't have to engage in all that peace faking inside. And this is vital. Because if you don't have peace within yourself, what happens is in those moments of conflict, you'll get eaten alive.

Because what happens and I typically find as I work with people who are engaged in conflict is we just start reacting to one another, right? It's like we're full of raw nerves and we brush up against each other and we just start poking each other in the raw nerve.

[32 : 31] all your anxieties, all your shame, all your demands, all your idolatries, they're all going to pour out of you. And you'll do and say a lot of things that you regret.

Or at the very least, you'll come away going like, that didn't feel right. That just didn't feel like what my father would have me do, what I just did there. to bring peace to an anxious situation and have the confidence that we can enter those situations.

We can have these conversations. We can pursue peace with one another. We must have peace within ourselves. And to do this, there's just a lot of preparation you're going to need.

I really loved the question last week that Pastor David Corrente asked. He asked this question, if you had a captive audience wanting a, actually wanting a word from God, are you prepared? prepared. I think that's a wonderful question because one, from both my own experience of life and from my experience of talking with many people is, we just kind of want to drift through the Christian life.

[33 : 40] Just show up, go through the motions and everything works out. If I get into a fight with somebody, I hope, well, maybe it'll work out better next time. What are you doing differently?

Oh, nothing. I just hope it'll work out better. Maybe I'll have more willpower next time. I'm going to put my counselor hat on and say, no, you won't. If we go in unprepared, the same thing happens again.

And so we have to ask, what does prayerful, spirit-led preparation look like? So I want to take David Corrente's question and expand that, a question about preparation.

If you know, hey, if you know what your particular struggles are with anxiety and shame, if you know what the dark thoughts and the self-accusations are that come at you, are you prepared to challenge them?

Are you prepared to know the promises of God that confront you? Are you prepared for that moment of crisis? Have you put on the armor of God so that when the day of evil comes, you can stand your ground?

[34 : 48] will you be ready to remember in that moment the words of God that you need to do the good thing and the wise thing?

Whether I'm counseling people, and I'll say this, I have to do this in my own life first because I can't, I can't ask people to go where I'm not willing to go first.

Much of what we have to do is preparation, getting ready, knowing what's going to be hard for us. Not just showing up in a difficult conversation, hoping it goes better next time, but working out, talking with wise, trusted friends.

What is it in particular that upsets my peace? Asking God, what do I, Lord, what do I do with that? What do I do with these feelings that just come up within me?

What truths and promises do I need to remember? Maybe what's the one verse or the one sentence or the one thing I need to do in that moment of crisis that I know would honor my Father in heaven and please Him.

[36 : 03] What would it look like in a practical level, Lord, to draw near you and to obey your will? Who should I talk to? Is there someone who is just thoughtful, wise, and mature, and understanding, who I can talk to and get a sense of what would be helpful the next time this happens?

And I say this because something I often tell people is, I'm sorry, but the world is full of people who are going to rub against all your raw nerves. They're just not going to stop. Most of the time, they don't mean to, but they do.

So you need to know this. How do I pursue peace within myself? How do you put on the readiness given you by the gospel of peace?

You prepare in a spirit-led way so that you're ready. Finally, we create peace with one another.

Peace doesn't just happen. We don't drift into peace.

We drift into false peace. Peace must be made and must be pursued. And our culture is always pushing against it.

[37 : 10] You're fighting. You're having to swim upstream to make real peace. It's hard. If it feels hard for you, that's because it is hard. God fully intends for Christians to create relationships of peace.

And the good news is he has given us what we need to do it. You are not alone, left to your own devices, left to your own wisdom. We have one spirit who produces the fruit of peace in all of us. The beautiful thing is in this church environment, God has given us what we need to kill the hostility among us. We can begin sharing the harmonious order of the God of peace.

And so what I often tell people is one of the best places if you're like, how do I become a peacemaker? I'm like, just start coming to church and when you come here, people are going to start rubbing you the wrong way. Perfect.

Now you can start learning in just the right environment to learn. Because if you've spent any time at church at all, you know that you're like, well, that harmonious order and all this stuff you're talking about, that's not what I'm seeing on the ground.

[38 : 16] If you're new to a church environment in a church setting, and you're saying, what are you talking about? I'm saying, just stick around for a while. Okay, you will see people in all the ugly glory of the flesh.

You will see false forms of peace. You will see peace breaking. And you'll see and experience the chaos and disorder of it.

And lest you think, oh my goodness, you know, why are churches in North America like this in the 21st century? Why are there all a bunch of hypocrites? Crack open the Bible, turn to 1 Corinthians, turn to Galatians, turn to James, read these books, and you'll find, oh, these are not new problems in the local church.

They're 2,000-year-old problems. We have always had a problem with peace. a lot of us. a lot of us, we just have to grow up into maturity.

The way of peace we've barely come to know. We've been adopted into God's family. And now we have to unlearn the futile ways we inherited from our forefathers.

[39 : 29] But the beautiful thing is God's aim for us is exactly that. He is like, he's at work as a vine dresser. He's trimming and pruning and causing us to grow, maturing by His Spirit to be sons of God.

If you were like, okay, Dave, give me all that you know about peacemaking. Give me all that God's Word says about it. Well, there's people who know way more than I do. This could be a 10-sermon series.

So a book by Ken Sandy titled *The Peacemaker, A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*.

Ken Sandy in his book *The Peacemaker*, that's a great place if you're like, how do I do this on a practical level?

He walks through the process and pitfalls of reconciliation in the mess of personal relationships. In a world that isn't ideal, where other people just aren't going to react in an ideal manner.

If you're wanting a lot of specifics and details and how-tos, just as a good starting place, this book is a good help to you. And there's other resources if you want to learn more.

[40 : 31] And this is a big part of what I do is counseling people, okay, for you with your particular struggles and your particular relationships, what would this look like on a practical level? But for now, here's a quick summary of three attitudes that create peace with others.

If you come to people with the heart that has these three attitudes, new things become possible.

The first attitude of peace is Christ-like love.

Not the counterfeit love of the world, but the love of Christ. A love full of compassion. A love full of honesty. A love that moves towards others in kindness.

A love that gives room patiently for them to grow. A love that responds to evil, not with resentment and bitterness and rage, but responds to evil with a grief-stricken anger and never with contempt.

A love that knows when to yield, when to challenge, when to pull back and wait. there's a, if you read the life of Christ and look at all the ways that he engages in conflict, which he's constantly in states of conflict, and he is the most amazing peacemaker, he is brilliant, he is adaptable, he has unbelievable wisdom for relationships, and when you are led by the Spirit and enthralled by the person of Jesus Christ, you can start loving people in that way too.

[42 : 06] You can take on the mind of Christ. We love because he first loved us. The first attitude of peace with others is Christ-like love. The second attitude of peace is repentance.

And we talked about this before, this is essential to peace with God and peace within yourself. It is so important to take full responsibility for your own sins against others.

That is vital for peacemaking. Turning from your sins into a new lifestyle of earnest obedience to God and sustaining it. This is the true way to restore relationships of trust in our families and churches.

Repentance is the second attitude of peace with others. And then the third attitude of peace, it's forgiveness. refusing to pursue vengeance on the other person, refusing to lock them in a cage in your heart, refusing to collect on the relational debt that they owe you.

If they repent, releasing them from the debt altogether. Not using their sins as ammunition against them to put them in their place and hurt them, but beginning a long journey towards trusting one another again.

[43 : 24] forgiveness is the third attitude of peace with others. And with these three ways to peace with others, love, Christ-like love, repentance, forgiveness, you will be able to follow God's commandments in Romans 12 that Josh read earlier.

If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. And again, do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

That's so important because if we don't know the way of peace and other people bring false peace in, we can get consumed by it and we basically get turned into false peace people ourselves.

but if you know the way of peace, you will not get absorbed into the other person and their ways of peace, but rather you can bring peace to them. In a world that doesn't know the way of peace, our church can be a place where real peace can be learned.

Peace with God, peace within yourselves, and then peace with one another. what if this church could be known in this town as this is the place where they know how to do peace, where they know how to pursue real peace?

[44 : 47] What if it could sound like these words from 1 Thessalonians chapter 5? We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work.

Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with them all, see that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

Now, may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I love this part. He who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it. That's good news. That's good news. This is just the beginning of the journey towards learning the art of peacemaking. What's beautiful is we have a God who is an expert in it and he has given people to his church, men and women throughout church history who have learned how to do this, who have written about it, who have passed on their wisdom to others.

[46 : 10] Take full advantage of that. Do you know the way of peace? Come and know it. Let me pray. Our God and Father, I thank you that we serve a Lord and Savior who knows the way of peace.

He himself is our peace. We confess, Lord, we are just mere infants in this. Even as we say, yes, there needs to be a way of peace, our minds are full of frustration, vexation, bitterness, anxiety, shame.

Lord God, we come and lay this before you. Teach us your way of peace. We haven't known it. The world doesn't, the world isn't interested in teaching it to us.

It just wants to indoctrinate us into its false ways of peace. But we want to know your way. we want to look like you. We want to come away from our conversations with others, come away from our conflicts with the sense of, Lord, I've done what you gave me to do.

And I pray, Lord God, make us people who, not without conflict, but rather through our conflict, we learn the way of peace. We need your help, Lord.
[47 : 46] Show us that way. Bring people into our lives who can help teach us that way. Let us be known for this. Amen. Amen.