



Series: The Upside Down Kingdom

Date: May 5, 2024

Speaker: Darrick Smith, Campus Pastor – Northeast Campus

Text: Matthew 5:9

Title: Blessed Are the Peacemakers

*****Mention Starting Point—what it is and where it's happening.**

Intro:

What's up fam? It's good to worship Jesus with you this morning. If you are new to Mercy Church this morning, we are going through a sermon series journeying through the Beatitudes—**Jesus first recorded sermon in Matthew 5** looking at this theme **The Upside-Down Kingdom; life in the Kingdom of God**. We are picking

up where we left off this morning in Matthew chapter 5 verse 9. If you would meet with me in your Bible in Matthew 5:9. When you get there, say, **“Amen.”**

If you've ever spent any time around the Smith Family—**my wife LaShonna; our 3-year-old Judah our 10-year-old Daniel; and our 13-year-old Noah;** you'd probably walk away with several observations.

-The Smiths are a fun family that loves to host people in their homes. Hospitable and friendly people.

-**Pastor Darrick loves to bake.**

-LaShonna needs a lot of prayer to be married to Darrick. #JesusBeAFence

-**Judah, off the chain. It's called Terrorist Three's, ya'll. God help us, and ya'll pray for us.**

- **Daniel is talkative, chatty, talks a lot, energetic, extroverted, intelligent, and the life of the party. He is his father's son!**

- Noah is quiet, reserved, introverted, easy to get along with, and kind. **He is his mother's son.**

Have you ever heard that phrase before? When someone compares **one** to the liking of **a parent**, and they conclude, **“You are your father's or mother's, child?” It means you emulate them. You mimic them. You are like them. Whether good or bad.**

This is exactly what Jesus is getting at in our text this morning. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.” Matthew 5:9





In other words, ...

Main Idea: God's Children Embody a Life of Peacemaking.

If you are in Christ this morning (**saved by grace through faith**) then you are a **child of God**. If you are a **child of God**, then you should be a peacemaker because ***you are your Father's child***.

God's Children Embody a Life of Peacemaking.

But what is a peacemaker? Why is Jesus saying we are blessed if we make peace? Great questions. Simon Sinek, author of ***“Start with Why”*** states that you should always begin with the WHY before you get to the WHAT.

Those are the two things I want to do this morning. I want to help you understand **why** Jesus is calling YOU to be a peacemaker AND 2. **What** it practically looks like to be a peacemaker. Amen?

Alright, the why.

I. The Conflict (context):

The term “peacemaking” carries with it this connotation that conflict exists. The only reason peacemaking is needed is because conflict is present.

The word **“conflict”** means that something is at odds with one another. A disagreement; divergence; or broken fellowship of some sort.

Well, if we look at the Grand Narrative of Scripture—the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, we know that conflict is everywhere.

This conflict began in Genesis.

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

Here God creates His Kingdom- a place where He reigns over everything, everywhere, all the time.

After everything He created. He blessed it and said, “It is good.” Now here is why this phrase is

important. This is God declaring that His design and purpose for creating the world have met his standard. It is the way He wants it to be. ***It is perfect. It is without error. It is without hostility.*** And thus, He found pleasure and was glorified in what He created.

Then in Genesis 1:26, God creates mankind in the image of the Trinity (God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit). He tells them to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth with His image and glory (paraphrased).

Vs. 31. ***“God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.” Genesis 1:31***



This is the first **hint** in the Bible of God's original intent and design for His Kingdom. It is the first glimpse into this word called **SHALOM or PEACE—the wholeness and fullness of God**. All things are reconciled to God coexisting in perfect harmony. Not a glimpse of error. It is good, blessed, without evil, or chaos. It has **SHALOM**. **There is no conflict.**

And there are people in this Kingdom who reflect the very image of God and their mandate from God is to advance His Kingdom—spread his SHALOM.

So, by definition, **a peacemaker is a child of God who actively seeks to bring the SHALOM of God to people and the world**. It's our original mandate—be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth.

Peacemakers are agents of reconciliation, blessing, goodness, and righteousness. They promote the well-being of others. They reflect the very character of God. They are their Father's child.

However, in Genesis 3, God's SHALOM is interrupted, shattered, and marred. **Conflict arises**. God's image bearers—those who were called to be peacemakers, were deceived by Satan and fell into temptation and sin. Sin entered the earth, and the SHALOM of God is broken. Image bearers are now enemies of God. All of mankind is shaped by iniquity and sin. **And now, the world is in conflict with God, conflict with one another, and conflict with self**. Peace seemed far off.

But God sends His only Son **Jesus, the Prince of Peace**. **Isaiah 9:6 says, “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”**

Jesus the King came and his death on the cross and resurrection purchased peace. Jesus made reconciliation possible.

Colossians 1:20 says, “And through him to reconcile everything to himself, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”

2 Corinthians 5:19 says, “That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us.

Jesus the Prince of Peace restored what was lost in the Garden of Eden. **He came to deal with the conflict between God and man**. And then He lived a life teaching us what it's like to make peace with each other and ourselves.

Now, we—the sons of God are blessed when we do exactly what our Heavenly Father does—make peace.



The promised favor and presence of God rest on those who make peace everywhere they go. **Why? Because that's the Father's intent and design for His Kingdom. We are our Father's Children.**

God's Kingdom is one of peace, and as His image bearers, we are called to go out and be peacemakers.

I love how one professor put it, **"If the Kingdom of God is in you, you should leave a little bit of heaven wherever you go."**

So, how do we do that?

II. **How do we embody a life of peacemaking? I want to give you three ways.**

1. **Push for Peace** (conflict resolution)

We're all in relationships in some capacity, right? Some of us are in a vertical relationship with God. And then we have horizontal relationships like **parents, crazy aunts, and uncles. Spouses, children. Bosses and co-workers.** And, friends, how many of us have them? Friends.

And the reality is relationships are HARD. **#thestruggleisreal. It's a result of the fall of man.** Every relationship will have conflict. There's no way of getting around it. It's challenging to be reconciled with

people who have sinned against you/done you wrong. It's difficult to bless those you feel don't deserve your blessing. It's frustrating trying to live in harmony with your spouse or a nasty roommate who doesn't clean up after themselves (and that's a whole sermon).

It seems nearly impossible to serve your children and live in harmony with them when they wake up every 3 hours wanting to eat; when they start walking and get into everything; or when they get older, and you become their Uber driver and walking ATM.

And let's not throw in the neighbors with the weeds in their yards that are coming onto your property.

The person in your community group that you avoid because your personalities conflict with one another.

What about the drama in your family or in your friendships that you just keep avoiding hoping it will fizzle out? **It's hard. But here is what Paul says in Romans 12:18, "If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."**

Pushing for peace means we intentionally move toward others just as Christ moved toward us. It requires sacrifice, but it's not impossible.

¹ <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/1247270?ref=kingdom-of-god>



Here is what you must remember. Your vertical reconciliation leads you to horizontal reconciliation.² You have received the gift of reconciliation as a result of Christ on the Cross, now his Spirit lives in you to help you embody a life of peacemaking.

Personal Story:

In my marriage, my wife and I sometimes have what I call, “**Intense Fellowship**” moments AKA arguments, because you know, Christians don’t argue, we just slap labels onto things to make us feel holy and good about ourselves AKA intense fellowship. LOL

In our moments, you have an enneagram 3 and 9. A peacemaker and an achiever. One is prone to passivity and the other is prone to aggression. **I’ll leave it to you to figure out who’s who.**

Here are some soundbites from our moments.

- “I just want to keep the peace. I’m not going to say anything.”

- “I felt some type of way when you said this, and I think you need to apologize to me. You need to repent.”

- “I’m just going to pray and let it go. I don’t want to rock the boat.”

- “I don’t think you are listening to me and understanding what I’m saying. Let me finish. Let me talk. I have won this **argument, I meant intense fellowship.**

- “Maybe it’s me, so I’m just going to ignore it.”

Well, both of us are wrong. Neither one of us is making peace.

Making peace isn’t saying, **“I’m going to let it go. I’m not going to say anything. I don’t want to rock the boat, so I won’t confront it, I hope it goes away.** This is the complete opposite of peacemaking. In fact, what one is doing is being passive and perpetuating conflict and disunity. **Confrontation is good!**

Nor is making peace being the disruptor who is ALWAYS ready to tell you **what you did, when you did it, how you made them feel, and how you can resolve it.** Always clapping back isn’t peacemaking. This is the complete opposite of peacemaking. In fact, what one is doing is being aggressive and creating animosity and disunity. **Confrontation is good, but when only seeking to love your neighbor like you love yourself.**

So, what DOES peacemaking look like in our relationships? The Book of Proverbs gives us a great image of what this looks like.

² <https://hopeformuncie.org/blog/vertical/horizontal/reconciliation>



- A. Kind, merciful, and gracious:** He who oppresses the poor taunts *and* insults his Maker, but he who is kind *and* merciful *and* gracious to the needy honors Him. [Proverbs 14:31](#) (AMP)
- B. Forgiving:** He who covers and forgives an offense seeks love. [Proverbs 17:9](#) (AMP)
- C. People of Integrity:** *He is* a shield to those who walk in integrity [those of honorable character and moral courage]. [Proverbs 2:7](#) (AMP)
- D. Slow to Anger:** He who is slow to anger is better *and* more honorable than the mighty [soldier]. [Proverbs 16:32](#) (AMP)
- E. Accepting of Correction:** Listen to counsel, receive instruction, *and* accept correction, that you may be wise in the time to come. [Proverbs 19:20](#) (AMP)

Spouses, are you slow to anger with one another?

Parents, are you quick to extend grace to your children?

College students, are you quick to reconcile an offense and forgive? Or are you prone to lash out and run from conflict? OR cancel your friends?

Teenagers, are you able to receive correction with humility from your parents?

Church, are you willing to receive correction from God and those He's placed in authority over you?

Mercy Northeast, are we a people who everywhere we go we bring blessing, righteousness, and goodness? The Shalom of God?

[This is what it looks like to be a peacemaker in our relationships.](#)

The second way to embody a life of peacemaking is:

- 2. Pray for Peace-** our world is broken as a result of sin. There is conflict all around us. Brokenness is happening everywhere we turn. Just turn on the news or do a quick internet search and it won't take you long until you discover devastating and heartbreaking news.

Just this week a tragedy happened right in our city. Four officers were killed in the line of duty. Seeking to do their jobs and do what's right, they lost their lives.



Some of you are swallowed up by the news and horror of the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Pray for peace. That's something you can do. Regardless of what your beliefs are on it, the One who can do something about it is seated on the throne in Heaven and is powerful.

In just a few months we will vote on a new president. One of the most divisive times in our country and in the church. PRAY NOW. **The Apostle Paul prayed in 1 Timothy 2:1-2, "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives."** Church, are you praying for peace? Peace in our church, peace in our city, peace in our world. **OR are you the peace disruptor?**

3. **Preach for Peace** (evangelism)

Ephesians 2:14-17 says, *"For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has torn down the dividing wall of hostility...and reconciling both of them to God in one body through the cross, by which He extinguished their hostility."*

Vs. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. (Berean Standard Bible)

Isaiah 52:7 says, *"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion "Your God reigns!" (NIV)*

Do you see what God is up to? Jesus left heaven and came preaching a message declaring to those who were **far from and near to** God that through His sacrifice on the cross, those who believe in the finished work of the cross will no longer be enemies of God but will have the right to be called sons of God.

And He didn't stop there. Through His sacrifice on the cross, the hostility and conflict that once existed between Jew and Gentile; slave and free; Samaritan or Greek; republican or democrat; black or white. He tore it all down and said you ALL are one in Christ Jesus. There are no favorites in the Kingdom of God. **Peace has come to all mankind!**

And He didn't stop there. God then sends His Holy Spirit to come and abide in His children empowering them to live out their God-given mandate, **"Therefore go and make disciples of ALL nations."** Preach the Good News; proclaim the message of peace to ALL.

Conclusion

Church, that's our mission! "Every Christian is either an evangelist or an imposter." Which one are you?



Are you your Father's child?

Personal Story: Every so often Judah, will go and get my shoes, put them on, and start flipping and flapping through the house. There is this big smile on his face and this sense of joy to walk in his father's shoes. And the Holy Spirit showed me *that engraved into the hearts of every little boy is a desire to be like their father—to walk in their shoes, so I need to be careful how I live. Your son will embody YOU!*

Jesus followed in His Father's footsteps perfectly. He emulated. He mimicked His Father. Jesus saw what His Father had been doing since the beginning of time and He embodied it. **And now we as God's children get to look to Jesus as an example of *How to Embody a Life of Peacemaking.* Would you bow your heads?**

Prayer (Altar call): I want to extend an invitation this morning to come to the altar to pray. I want to address three (3) groups of people this morning. In a moment we are all going to stand and sing and as we do, I want 1). Those of you here this morning who don't follow Jesus to receive Him as Lord and Savior of your life. As it stands you are an enemy of God,

and you have no peace with God. You've assumed Christianity all your life; you've gone to church and you're a pretty good person. But you've never fully surrendered to Jesus—confessed your sin and need to be saved and brought back into right relationship with God. I want to give you that opportunity this morning. Our elders and prayer team would love to pray with you. 2) Some of you have broken relationships in your life. Your marriage is struggling. You have bitterness towards your spouse or a friend.3) Others of you have internal conflict. You are burdened by your sin. Maybe some of you inside you are lonely. The peace of God seems so far away, and your soul needs it. Maybe dark depression surrounds your soul. Come and pray.

Let me pray and you respond accordingly as we begin to sing.