

Blessed Are The Peacemakers

Jesus said, "*Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God*" (Matthew 5:9). The text is among a list of declarations referred to as the Beatitudes. This sayings were part of the sermon on the mount recorded in Matthew chapters five through seven. The lessons taught on this occasion are some of the most practical sermons Jesus or the apostles preached, and also they are perhaps the most difficult to have a handle on. The human or natural way is the way of reprisal, not the way of peace. If you hit me, I will hit you back. In other words, if you hit me, I'm getting even. However, most people are not content to stop at "even". We live in a "one up" world. Retaliation to the extent that there is ample payback is not sufficient. One gets a black eye, two black eyes is the order of the day. Jesus also said in connection with this, "*But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also*" (Matthew 5:39). The key element in peacemaking is found in these words, "*Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you*" (Matthew 5:43,44).

There is no doubt that the world is in need of peacemakers. Without peace there is war. Without peacemakers in the world there is strife, "*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another*" (Rom. 14:19).

Being a peacemaker is not the easiest thing a person can do. Jesus taught us to go against the grain, to choose reward over comfort and ease. Which is easier to do? Swim upstream or down? Climb a mountain or fall off one? Which is easier, holding a grudge or forgiving an offender? It may be easier to fall off a mountain than to climb it, but climbing is much more profitable and rewarding. Consider Jesus, it would have been much easier for Him to remain in Heaven than to come to earth and die on the cross. But the latter was definitely the most rewarding.

There are situations where peace will not prevail. There are those with whom we simply cannot get along. There will be problems, strife and hatred as long as two or more people are on the face of the earth. But remember the words of Paul, "*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*" (Rom. 12:18).

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