

Sermon to the Saints of God assembled at Topeka, KS: Sunday, July 2, 2017

**Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God**

Matthew 5:1-12 “And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

- ***Blessed are the poor in spirit:*** for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ***Blessed are they that mourn:*** for they shall be comforted.
- ***Blessed are the meek:*** for they shall inherit the earth.
- ***Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:*** for they shall be filled.
- ***Blessed are the merciful:*** for they shall obtain mercy.
- ***Blessed are the pure in heart:*** for they shall see God.
- ***Blessed are the peacemakers:*** for they shall be called the children of God.
- ***Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:*** for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ***Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*** Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

These words of our Lord Jesus Christ are the beginning of what is commonly referred to as “The Sermon on the Mount”. This sermon stretches across three chapters (Matthew 5, 6 and 7), and it is the longest continual discourse from the mouth of our Lord that is recorded in the scriptures. It is noteworthy that this sermon does not contain much by way of what we ought to believe (he was preaching here to those who were already disciples), but rather, it is filled with practical instruction of how we ought to behave ourselves – in spirit, word, and deed. We ***must believe***, and preach about the nature and attributes of God, heaven, hell, eternity, things to come, etc.; and yet, that will do us no good, if we don’t take up our cross EACH DAY – doing pitched battle with our flesh in our ***daily behavior*** – and thereby follow after Christ. Not only must we do it within ourselves, but we must be watching, ***with a spirit of meekness***, so that we can consider, and provoke each other to it.

Our Lord’s wonderfully instructive sermon begins with these nine paradoxical couplings; each one contains an attribute of God’s sheep, paired with a promised blessing. These nine pairs are often called the “Beatitudes”. While that term is not a

Biblical term, it simply means “happy”, “joyful”, or “greatly blessed” – a fitting, short-hand way to refer to these blessings.

While there is much to learn from each of these blessings, our focus for today is on the 7<sup>th</sup> (Blessed are the peacemakers); before we turn full attention to that, I would like to briefly touch on the nature of the Beatitudes as a whole.

- Jesus Christ begins this sermon with these powerful blessings, which he proclaims by his own authority – He alone is able to make us blessed and happy; to give us the gifts, and the fruit of those gifts. His proclamation of blessings makes it so!
  - **Ephesians 4:7,8 “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. 8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”**
- Within these nine statements, the Lord gives us a thorough understanding of the attributes of His sheep; THESE are those who are truly blessed and happy.
- They are poor in spirit, mournful, meek; they hunger and thirst after righteousness; they are merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, persecuted for righteousness sake; they are persecuted, reviled, and spoken evil of, for the sake of Christ. By teaching us these attributes, our Lord gives us:
  1. Comfort – regardless of the earthly, fleshly perspective of our circumstances, the people of God are blessed above all people that were ever created! In some ways it is BECAUSE of our earthly circumstances that we have confidence that we are His. Only God’s people – through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – can truly have these attributes, and receive these promises.
  2. Provocation – herein is laid out the substance of our faith; the character and command of Christ – we are to imitate Him in the behavior of our walk (believing that He is, and therefore ought to be obeyed), and that He is a rewarder of those that seek after Him. It is a heart-rending, soul-convicting exercise to honestly consider within ourselves just how often we fail of these graces. These things are all contrary to the depraved, desperately wicked human heart, and therefore, we must mortify the deeds of the flesh each day, and pursue after the Spirit to add **each of these things** to us. This isn’t a buffet line to pick and choose from – we don’t get to claim that we follow after Christ because we think we’re the poster child for one or two of these attributes, while we neglect the others, or leave them for someone else in the church to tend to. **THIS IS THE WORK OF OUR LIVES!** Who cares what we preach, if we aren’t living each of these things, and provoking each other to live them – EVERY DAY! If you don’t think that each of these attributes is a VITAL part of your walk

in faith, then ask yourself this: is there a single one of the promised blessings that you think you can live without?

- A clear definition of happiness itself; you see that the focus is NOT on earthly things, but rather, spiritual and eternal things.
  - Matthew Henry: *“This is designed to rectify the ruinous mistakes of a blind and carnal world. Blessedness is the thing which men pretend to pursue. But most mistake the [goal], and form a wrong notion of happiness; and then no wonder that they miss the way; they choose their own delusions, and court a shadow. The [world’s] opinion is, Blessed are they that are rich, and great, and honourable in the world; they spend their days in mirth, and their years in pleasure; they eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and carry all before them with a high hand, and have every sheaf bowing to their sheaf; happy the people that is in such a case; and their designs, aims, and purposes are accordingly; they bless the covetous; they will be rich. Now our Lord Jesus comes to correct this fundamental error, to advance a new hypothesis, and to give us quite another notion of blessedness and blessed people; a rule and doctrine of eternal truth and certainty, by which we must shortly be judged. If this, therefore, be the beginning of Christ’s doctrine, the beginning of a Christian’s practice must be to take his measures of happiness from those maxims, and to direct his pursuits accordingly.”*

Moving now to our text: “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” We will break our analysis into three parts:

- How does the world define peace?
- How does the Bible define peace?
- How are we to be “peacemakers”?

### **How does the world define peace?**

- Dictionary:
  - A state of tranquility or quiet; a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom;
  - Freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions
  - Harmony in personal relations
  - A state or period of mutual concord between governments.
- Peace is a word that is always upon the lips of men, but it continually eludes their grasp. The men of the world understandably desire peace, but even when they enjoy such peace, they refuse to acknowledge God as the author and maintainer of that peace. The men of the world desire peace as a means to pursue and enjoy the lust of their flesh; therefore when God gives them temporal peace, it functions as a

hardening agent, making them fully set in their path of sinful rebellion. Obey God and be blessed - there is no other path to peace! (**Proverbs 14:34**)

- The people of this nation, in particular, believe that they have created and are able to maintain peace; they violently inflict their notion of peace upon the entire world. It's why this nation is so intent upon worshipping the military – they must maintain the illusion for themselves that they hold peace and blessings in their own hand. They cry for peace, but there is no peace as long as they lift themselves up against God!

- **Psalm 28:3-5** “**3 Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak peace to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts. 4 Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert. 5 Because they regard not the works of the LORD, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up.**”

- Ultimately, the primary enemy of the depraved human heart is God himself – therefore, the “peace” that the world craves is to be relieved of the commandments of their Creator. They mistakenly believe that they can unite themselves against God, violently nullify his standards in the earth, and steal away from him the blessings that HE ALONE is able to give.

- **Jeremiah 8:11-12,15** “**11 For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. 12 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD. ... 15 We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!”**

- This backwards, ungodly illusion of “peace” (as a freedom from God’s standard) is a fundamental component of Satan’s arsenal. Just a few examples:

- If you google “peace”, the top result is a Wikipedia article which is headlined with the image on the left; if you google “shalom” (peace in Hebrew), the top result is a Wikipedia article which is headlined with the image on the right. Clearly the world believes that peace is the absence of any opposition to proud sin.



- The organization that runs the fag propaganda mill at the “Rainbow House” styles itself “Planting Peace”. They literally travel around the world teaching the glory of fag and tranny sin under the banner of peace! God forbid!
  - **Isaiah 57:20,21 “20 But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. 21 There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”**
- The fag movement has used the image of the rainbow as their banner for several decades now. That beautiful symbol whereby the Lord God speaks peace, mercy and hope to his people has been corrupted to preach the “human unity” lie. See how they “love” and make a lie! (**Revelation 22:15**)
- Consider how the “churches” of this world teach a counterfeit peace – “God loves you just the way you are!” “Jesus was all about peace!” Hogwash! Consider the scripture:
  - **Matthew 10:34-38 “34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”**
    - Do you hear “human unity” in those words? Do you hear “hippy Jesus” in those words?
- Because we preach a faithful Gospel, we shatter this carefully crafted Satanic illusion, and therefore we are called hateful – the world accuses us of taking away their peace, when in reality the servants of God are the only ones who truly desire peace. The servants of God are, in fact, pointing our neighbors toward the ONLY path that leads to peace. They have declared war upon God, and his ambassadors in the earth:
  - **Psalm 120:1-7 “1 ¶ A Song of degrees. In my distress I cried unto the LORD, and he heard me. 2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue. 3 What shall be given unto thee? or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? 4 Sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper. 5 ¶ Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar! 6 My soul hath long dwelt with him that hateth peace. 7 I am for peace: but when I speak, they are for war.”**

### **What does the Bible say about peace?**

- The word “peace” occurs 472 times in the Bible.

- In the Old Testament, the most common Hebrew word for peace is “**Shalom**” (236 times):
  - completeness, soundness, welfare, safety, health, prosperity, quiet, tranquility, contentment, friendship
  - The Greek word translated as “Peacemakers” in our text is “Eirenopoios”, which comes from the Greek word “Eirenopoieo” meaning:
    - To make peace; to establish harmony
    - The underlying verb in these words is “Poieo”:
      - To make; to produce; to cause; to be the author of; To carry out; to act rightly (do well); to celebrate; to work; to show; to bear; to perform; to deal; to fulfil.
      - I flesh out the full meaning of the verb to highlight the fact that making peace isn’t a passive, disembodied concept – it is an active, intensive work that is to be done with diligence!
    - Each of these two words show up exactly one time in the scriptures. The first is in our text at Matthew 5 (translated as Peacemakers); the second is in James 3 (translated as “make peace”). The context in the James 3 passage highlights the fact that peace with God is exactly the opposite of the human notions of peace that we just discussed:
      - **James 3:17-18; 4:4 “17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that *make peace*. ... 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”**
      - This makes abundantly clear that making peace is NOT creating unity with (or in) the world! The world’s definition of peace is the enemy of true peace with God!
- Christ is THE Peacemaker and Peacegiver; the Prince of Peace
  - **Isaiah 9:6,7 “6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon**

his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”

- Hebrews 7:2 “To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;”
- As a sovereign King, the Lord Jesus Christ is the author of peace; he is the only one who is able to decree it, and execute upon it. He delivers it to his people, and has promised it as an everlasting peace in the eternal Kingdom of God. Christ is indeed our sabbath – our rest:
  - Hebrews 4:9-11 “9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. 11 ¶ Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”
  - Seeing that Christ is our Sabbath, how sorrowfully ironic is it that the Jews ritualistically greet one another with the hollow phrase: “Shabbat Shalom” – wishing a peaceful sabbath. They have rejected that very rest that their ceremony points to – there can be NO PEACE outside of that Messiah!
- **Restoration of peace between God and man is the primary focus of peace throughout the scriptures.** Without the work of Christ our Redeemer we are lost in sin; without the reconciling influence of Christ the Mediator between God and his people, we are left at enmity with the Father.
  - This lesson is the focal point of the Peace Offering, which is referenced 81 times in the Old Testament. You may recall from our previous analysis of the offerings of Leviticus:
    - Burnt offering (Leviticus 1) – teaches us Christ offering himself in the awful and wonderful work of atonement for our sins.
    - Meat offering (Leviticus 2) – teaches us Christ as the Redeemer; having purchased us with the price of his blood, we now belong to him, and are given a heart to joyfully acknowledge and submit to that fact.
    - Peace offering (Leviticus 3) – teaches the effect of that atonement: We have been reconciled to God, and are made to be at peace with Him. A portion of the offering was given to God the Father on the altar, a portion went to the priest (representing Christ the Mediator), and a portion went back to the offeror. Here we see the elect of God restored; feasting in communion with the Father, through the Son. These offerings follow in a particular order: you don’t get to start (by demanding it!) with the Peace Offering; you don’t get to live proudly in your sin, with no belief in, or profession of, the true Christ, and having

not been renewed unto good works (**Ephesians 2:10**), and then jump right to the peace offering, claiming communion with God!

- **Ephesians 2:14-17** “**14 ¶ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 15 Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; 16 And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: 17 And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.**”
- Eternal peace is promised for the people of God:
  - **Psalm 37:7-13** “**7 ¶ Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. 8 Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. 9 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. 10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. 11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace. 12 The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. 13 The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.**”
- The Lord often blesses and comforts his people with temporal peace, but we have no continual promise of such a thing. To the contrary, we are all subject to the pain and distress of this decaying world, and sin-cursed flesh. For a time, the Lord removes peace for his own purposes: as a chastisement, teacher, affliction, trial, etc. What we are promised, is that it is for our good.
  - See the book of Job.
- God gives peace to the spirits of his people, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit:
  - **Psalms 4:7,8** “**7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased. 8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.**”
  - **Psalm 119:165** “**Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.**”
  - **John 14:25-27** “**25 ¶ These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. 26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. 27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not**

as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

- John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."
- If you desire peace, then OBEY GOD! There can be no expectation that God will give temporal peace if we walk in willful sin:
  - Psalm 85:8 "I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly."
  - Proverbs 16:7 "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."
- The men of the world offer a false peace that leads to sorrow and death:
  - Romans 3:12-18 "12 They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. 13 Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: 14 Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: 15 Their feet are swift to shed blood: 16 Destruction and misery are in their ways: 17 And the way of peace have they not known: 18 There is no fear of God before their eyes."
- God removes peace as a judgment:
  - Luke 19:41-44 "41 ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. 43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, 44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."
  - 1Thessalonians 5:2,3 "2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."
  - Revelation 6:3,4 "3 ¶ And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. 4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword."

## **Seeing that Christ is THE Peacemaker, how are the children of God to emulate him as peacemakers in our walk of faith?**

- *Matthew Henry: “[We] have a peaceable conversation; [working] industriously, as far as we can, to preserve the peace that it be not broken, and to recover it when it is broken; to hearken to proposals of peace ourselves, and to be ready to make them to others; where distance is among brethren and neighbours, to do all we can to accommodate it, and to be repairers of the breaches. The making of peace is sometimes a thankless office, and it is the lot of him who parts a fray, to have blows on both sides; yet it is a good office, and we must be forward to it.”*
- We are peacemakers when we faithfully, industriously preach the gospel of peace to our neighbors; when we don’t suffer sin upon them. Peace with God is ultimately the only peace that matters – therefore we are compelled, as peacemakers, to preach the mortification (death) of this vile flesh, and life through faith in Christ. Because of that work, we are the very stench of death to the men of the world, but the savor of life to the sheep! Thank God for the privilege to participate in this ministry of life and hope!
  - **Romans 10:13-17 “13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”**
  - **Nahum 1:15 “Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.”**
  - Woe unto us if we refuse to preach the Gospel of peace – including our duty to make sin exceeding sinful before our neighbors. We are surrounded by those who claim the name of Christ, and yet they aggressively avoid this duty in the name of HUMAN PEACE; they don’t want to offend anyone! They are ashamed of Christ!
    - **Hebrews 12:14-17 “14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; 16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 17 For ye**

know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

- If our preaching and our behavior is not holy – godly, sanctified, separate – then we will not see the Lord! We have no legitimate claim that we are his sheep! The entire world throws the “holiness” part of this verse away, in favor of a satanic version of “following peace”. We must never do that! However, even though we must maintain holiness, we are not relieved from the duty to follow after peace – as much as we are able to – with our neighbors in this world. Holiness can quickly become a cloak for malice; righteous indignation and vexation of spirit can easily give way to self-righteous pride.
- We must be peacemakers in our daily interactions with the world, thereby giving a good testimony of Christ our Lord; this is a part of having our conversation (word and deed) honest among the gentiles, such that they should only be able to speak evil of us because of our faithful preaching, and not for our behavior. It is also because we have a spirit of love, meekness, and mercy, such that we desire good for our neighbor (spiritually and temporally), and seek after it in whatever appropriate ways are before us.
  - **Romans 12:16-21; 13:1** “**16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. 1 ¶ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.”**
  - **1Timothy 2:1-4** “**1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”**
- We must be peacemakers in our interactions with our brothers and sisters in Christ. There can be no excuse made for anything less than peace and harmony – after all, the blessing attributed to “peacemakers” is that we shall be called the children of God! How can we make a claim on that blessing if we don’t continually

fight against our proud, malicious, envious flesh, and labor to make peace with our brothers and sisters? God is our Father, and we are His children – siblings, by the blood of Christ. We know how much it angers earthly parents when our children won't be peaceable with one another; how much more do we anger God, when we proudly refuse to keep peace with one another? This should be a **raging compulsion** in our hearts, not a thing to be done stingily when the stars and our pride align. Forget your “personality”, forget past offenses, and how righteous you think your cause is – for the good of your own soul, your brother's soul, and the unity of the body – **MAKE AND KEEP PEACE!**

- **Ephesians 4:1-6 “1 ¶ I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, 2 ¶ With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”**
- **1Peter 3:8-12 “8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: 9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. 10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.”**
  - This passage is quoting from Psalm 34; in that place, it says to seek peace and “pursue it”, which helps us to understand the word “ensue” that is used in this verse. Think of it in terms of a hunter and their prey. First they spend serious time and effort preparing themselves, and searching for the prey. Once they've identified their target, they pursue after it with skill, vigor, and determination – they won't be denied! Pursue peace tenaciously, like a dog on a bone; like it's your vocation, or your favorite hobby! Don't wait around for someone else to make peace for you – IT'S YOUR JOB to seek after it! Perhaps you have been offended by a brother or sister, and therefore think that you are righteous to be angry, and to maintain your integrity while you wait for the other person to come and make peace with you. WRONG! If you know that there is a breach of the peace, then you have an affirmative duty to work to repair it – TODAY!! (**Matthew 5:23, 24**)

If you care for your brother, then you must do it – you should be terrified not to - the King of Peace is witness to these things! When you think you have been wronged you must be extra careful that when you go to address the matter, you are doing it with a spirit of meekness – knowing your own sin; desiring to be of help to your brother, rather than carrying a spirit of pride and vengeance into the conversation. On the other hand, if someone comes to you endeavoring to make peace – you must receive them. Make peace, and let them know that there really is peace. There must **actually be** peace in your heart - godly, spiritual peace among brethren is not merely the absence (or containment) of outward hostility; rather, it is the fruit of the continual unfeigned love that we have toward one another – having the same spirit of love toward EACH and all of the brethren. Your spirit WILL bear fruit, one way or the other! If you're setting about to keep your brothers and sisters at arms length, carefully managing your interactions with them, so as to keep an illusion of "peace", then you are endangering yourself, your house, and the entire church.

- **1Corinthians 14:33 "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."**
- **1Thessalonians 5:12-15 "12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves. 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."**
  - When we submit ourselves, and put down pride, we have **such wonderful peace from God!** How much peace we forfeit when we are full of pride, anger, and envy toward our brothers and sisters! How much needless grief and distress we suffer!
- **2Peter 3:11-14 "11 ¶ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."**

- The opposite of a peacemaker is someone who sows discord, and brings contention. One way that we can sow discord, is by refusing to proactively and industriously make peace with one another. Holding malice, bitterness, and anger in our hearts toward the brethren will **inevitably** result in words and deeds that poison the bloodstream of the body. If we quietly speak hard words about our brethren into the ears of some tender soul, then they will either be in distress at hearing them, or, they will be incited to despise and distrust others; if we subtly avoid our brethren, then others will be hardened to replicate that behavior. People are observant – Satan is even more observant, and wreaks havoc in the body wherever he sees a breach of the peace! That is sowing discord!
  - **Proverbs 6:16-19 “16 These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”**

It is notable that there are 36 instances in the NT where Christ, or one of the Apostles, prays peace upon the people of God (individually, or as a church); usually in their parting words. It is also notable that there are ZERO instances where Christ or the Apostles pray that peace for the world. Thank God for our hope through Christ that we are in that first category! Let us emulate him as peacemakers. Truly, the provocation that Christ gives us to be peacemakers is wonderful and sufficient – **for they shall be called the children of God!**

**2Corinthians 13:11 “Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”**

I love you all. Amen.