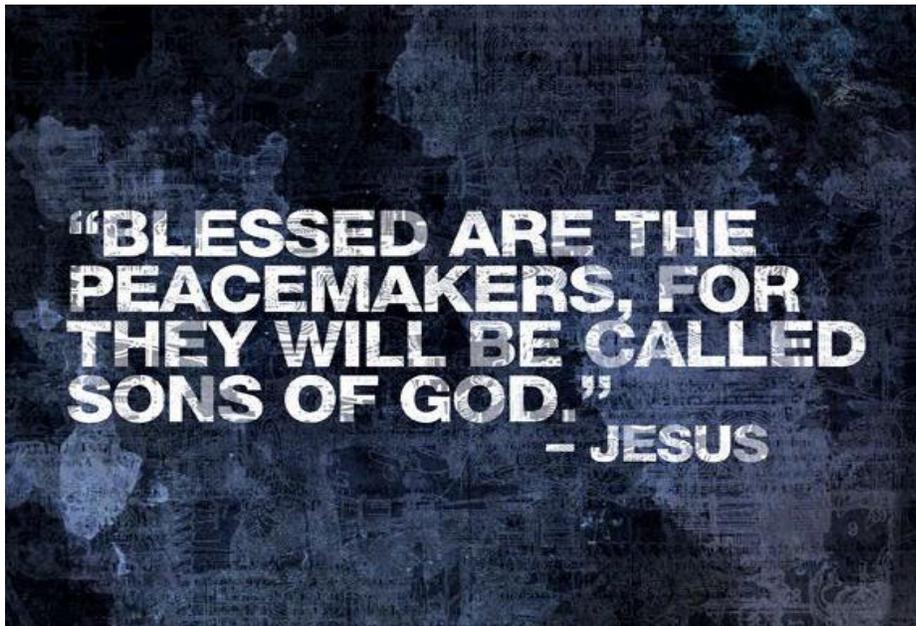


Salt and Light: Blessed are the Peacemakers (Matt. 5:9)



Every Christian has been called to be salt and light to his generation (Matt. 5:13-16). While everyone seems to have an idea of what it means to be salt and light—those on the Left have their ideas, and those on the Right have theirs—Jesus Himself provides the necessary virtues for being salt and light in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:1-16). At Faith Bible Church, we have been noting each of these characteristics. This article touches on the seventh beatitude, “blessed are the peacemakers.”

By the time Jesus gets to His seventh Beatitude, it would have been obvious to the crowd that He was talking about transcendent virtues: “Blessed *are* the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God” (Matt. 5:9). The transcendent virtue of peace (*shalom*/ שְׁלוֹם , *eirene*/ εἰρήνη) saturates the Bible, occurring about four hundred times. In the New Testament, it is in every Book, and it is repeated eighty-eight times.

Peace in the Bible is far more than the absence of war or troubles. It is more of a positive than a negative quality. It has the idea of fulfillment or completion, and since it is connected to God, it is spiritual and theological. In fact, this peace is a gift from the LORD. In sum, when one possessed true peace, he was in a perfect state of well-being with God, with others, and with self. The believers of the Old Testament longed for their Messiah, their “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6).

We Christians have the fantastic privilege of living in this Peace by living in Him. One of the greatest heritages we enjoy as followers of Jesus Christ is Peace: John 14:27, "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*" Note that this divine peace is not from and cannot be matched by what the world offers. In fact, this "*peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,*" (Philip. 4:7).

While it is true that the followers of Jesus Christ live in great inner peace, it would be a mistake to think that this peace is only in and for us. Note that the seventh beatitude says “peacemakers.” He is not talking about those who have peace in themselves. He is talking about “peacemakers,” those who make peace. In other words, He is saying that those who are salt and light create peace. The followers of Christ are not passive; rather, their actions bring God’s peace and stability to others and society. This action includes proclaiming the Gospel (so others can enjoy the inner divine peace of reconciliation with God that we enjoy); it also includes bringing peace to society (salt, light) by living out God’s matchless love, mercy, and grace.

Jesus says those who make peace will be called “sons of God.” Those who follow the better way of Jesus (instead of being brainwashed and enslaved by the Daseins of the political Right or Left) live as children of God: Romans 8:14, *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.* Romans 8:14-17 elaborates on the freedom that the sons of God enjoy.

Those who make peace are focused on God’s peace rather than the peace promised by the political Right and Left. Those who focus on the peace that the politicians offer will find themselves filled with anxiety and even hatred over the actions of their political opponents. This is not the case for those who follow the better way of Jesus. You will not find them demonizing those who do not agree with their politics. Instead of being hijacked by a political Dasein, those who follow Jesus are transformed and offer peace and light to their fellow countrymen. We see this in **Philippians 2:14**, *Do all things without complaining and disputing,¹⁵ that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.* Dominant symptoms of those who have been captured by a political party are regular complaining and disputing about political matters. They do not appear as “lights in the world.” In fact, they appear to be just like others in their political circles. They have ceased to be the Lord’s salt (Matt. 5:13) and light. Let us redouble our efforts to live out the grace, truth, and love of the Lord, and thus be named among those who make peace in our factious age.