

# Peacemakers

by Anton Bosch

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*True peace can only be achieved through the work of the Holy Spirit and the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ.*

**Duration:** 49:09

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:11, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 27:50-51, Ephesians 2:14, Ephesians 6:15, Colossians 1:19, Colossians 1:23

**Topics:** "Peacemakers"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the concept of making peace, both with God and with others. He emphasizes the importance of preaching the Gospel and leading others to repentance and acceptance of salvation. The preacher also highlights the role of intercession in pleading for people to be saved and transformed by the Spirit of God. The sermon references Colossians 1:19, which speaks about the reconciliation of all things through the blood of Jesus' cross, and Luke 23, where Jesus is accused of being a troublemaker. The preacher concludes by addressing the apparent contradiction of Jesus bringing both peace and a sword, emphasizing the need for peace to be achieved through the cross of Calvary.

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## Transcript

We come to the second last of the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5, Matthew chapter 5, and let's read them again. Because they all hang together, the one leads into the other, and this morning we want to deal with blessed are the peacemakers, but without the preceding ones being applicable and outworked in our lives, we cannot be peacemakers. And so Matthew 5 verse 1 says, And seeing the multitudes, he went up on a mountain, and when he was seated, his disciples came to him.

Then he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be fulfilled. 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 sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. And again, we have to begin by saying that these are not natural attributes, and these are not political statements.

These are not statements about those who, like Henry Kissinger, used to go around trying to make peace in different parts of the world. This peace can only come as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit. This can only come through the righteousness which comes through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we'll emphasize that as we go along. But it is also not a natural attribute. Some people are naturally placid.

Some people are naturally peace-loving. That's the way they are. And as we've said before, if that's what it's speaking about, then God is partial.

Then God only gives preference to some people who have certain characteristics by nature, and He doesn't like others who by nature are more aggressive. These are not natural attributes. And in fact, the reality is that those who are naturally passive will not be able to be true peacemakers.

Because as we'll see this morning, that true peace can only come when righteousness prevails. When righteousness prevails. And those people who are naturally placid and easy-going will not bring about righteousness and therefore cannot bring about true peace.

And I think that sometimes there's a misunderstanding as to the difference between peace and a truce. A truce is something which we bring about as a result of a ceasefire when we all say, OK, we're not going to shoot at each other anymore. But that doesn't necessarily mean there's peace.

Peace can only come when righteousness comes. Peace is absolutely important and is essential to the character of who God is. And we'll speak a little bit more about that in a minute.

But it is a concept which pervades the whole of the thinking of the Word of God. The Old Testament begins with peace in the Garden of Eden. A perfect situation of absolute peace.

And it ends in absolute peace in the New Jerusalem. And so the Bible begins and it ends in peace. And in fact, in the middle, at the end of the book of Malachi, at the end of the Old Testament also, prophesies about that peace that would come when Jesus comes to eventually set up his kingdom.

Peace is so important that it's referred to 420 odd times in the Scripture. It is central to the culture of the Israelite who, when he greets another one, uses the word Shalom, meaning peace. In fact, it has a greater meaning, a depth to it, more than we can deal with this morning.

But simply saying, peace. There are other cultures also who do that. I think that the Basothos, they say Chotzo, which means peace.

There are other cultures who also use that word. But as we find in the Scriptures, right through, the concept of peace is spoken about again and again and again. And yet the reality is that there is no peace.

There is no peace in this world on the political sphere. There is very little peace amongst Christians. There is very little peace in homes often.

And the reason for this is that the enemy of peace is the devil and sin. These two are always with us, or are with us until Jesus eventually binds the devil for a thousand years and at the end throws him into the lake of fire. Then the disturber of peace will be out of the way.

And we know that during the millennium, during the thousand years of peace, we call it the thousand years of peace. Why is there peace? Because the devil is bound during that time. And so he cannot disturb the peace.

And then at the end of the thousand years, the Scripture says that he is loosed for a while, for a season. And what happens? Immediately he seduces the nations and again there is war and there is bloodshed. And so the devil brings about division and fighting and contention and wars.

And sin brings these things about. The book of James says, where do wars and contentions come from? Do they not come from the sin within your members? You lust and cannot have. And then that ends up in war.

And so we see that the peace in the Garden of Eden was absolutely perfect until the devil came in and sin came in. And even if while the devil was there, if Adam and Eve had not sinned, the peace would have prevailed. They would have had to contend with the devil.

But the peace between themselves and between them and God would have been there. But the moment they allowed sin to enter in, sin destroyed that peace. Now this is cardinal, this is essential to understanding the whole principle of peace.

Because the problem is that many Christians are looking for peace. And they are looking for peace on a basis of just smoothing over the difficulties, smoothing over the problems. When in fact the real issue has not been dealt with.

And the real issue is the issue invariably of sin. Invariably of sin and of the devil's work. And so the devil and sin and unrighteousness is the cause of peace.

Isaiah 48 verse 22, you don't have to turn there because you know it. Even the unbelievers quote this verse. There is no peace, says the Lord for the wicked.

And so even the unbelievers quote that verse, they don't even know that they are quoting the scripture. But there is no peace, says the Lord for the wicked. And so the unbeliever and the wicked, whether that be a wicked Christian or a wicked unbeliever, will never know peace.

Because sin destroys that peace. Whether it is peace between man and man or between man and God, that peace is destroyed as a result of sin. And if we go to the book of Jeremiah chapter 8, a very important verse in understanding the whole aspect or concept of peace.

And what happens here is that the prophets in the Old Testament prophesied that there would be peace. And they say to the people of Israel, peace, peace. But there is no peace.

Jeremiah chapter 8 and verse 11. And the heading in this section in my Bible says the peril of false teaching. Verse 11 says, for they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly or superficially, saying peace, peace, when there is no peace.

And so one of the problems is that as Christians, we obviously are peace loving. We want to know peace. We want to have peace amongst ourselves.

We want to have peace in our homes. And then we say, well, you know, there is peace. When in fact there is not peace.

When there is turmoil and when there is difficulty and when there is conflict and strife. And so what they did was that these prophets came and they said, there is peace. But he goes on and he says, verse 12, were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed.

Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall. And at the time of their punishment they shall be cast down, says the Lord.

And so when you read the passage, there was no peace for Israel because there was no repentance. There was no peace because there was no repentance. And so we cannot in our relationship with God come to peace with him unless there is repentance.

Millions of people out there in the world today say they want to have peace with God. They want God to be their friend. They want to sing that hymn, What a Friend We Have in Jesus.

But they don't want to come on God's terms. They don't want to repent. They don't want to turn away from their sin.

And so they want to hold on to their sin and still have peace with God. This cannot be. This is impossible.

And this is what the prophets in the Old Testament were trying to do. They were trying to bring peace to Israel in Israel's relationship with God and in Israel's relationship with the nations around them without dealing with the cause of the disturbance which was Israel's abominations. And so he says that they weren't even ashamed.

They didn't even blush when they were exposed. He says, and how then can they have peace? And so sin and a lack of repentance brings about a disturbance of the peace. In James chapter 3, just between Hebrews and Revelation, and the issue of peace is such a huge subject that I want to focus on what I believe to be the core of this subject.

And I would recommend to you John MacArthur's commentary on this passage in his commentary on the book of Matthew which really deals with this very, very well and lucidly. But you remember here in James chapter 3 verses 13 to 18, he highlights the two different kinds of wisdom. The wisdom which is from below which is earthly, sensual and demonic.

And then the wisdom which is from above, verse 17. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable. Gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.

And so the wisdom that is from above is first pure and then peaceable. That word peaceable means bringing peace. Bringing peace.

But it is first, notice he uses the word first, he doesn't just give us a random list. It is first pure and then peaceable. And so without purity there cannot be the making of peace.

And invariably in any relationship, whether it be in human relationships or in our relationships with God, there is a cause or something that brings about the animosity, that brings about the conflict. And invariably that is sin. And in relationships between two people, one person does something which is wrong and that disturbs the relationship.

And how is that relationship healed? By removing the offence, by removing the problem. And when the problem is removed then there can be peace again. And in our relationship with God, we have sinned, we have offended God and this brings about a war between God and us and we become His enemies.

God loves us and wants a relationship with us, but as long as there is something between us and God, there cannot be peace. But when that is removed and purity comes, then the way to making peace is open. And then peace is easily obtained.

In Hebrews chapter 12, a few pages back, a verse that we looked at last week I think, Hebrews chapter 12 verse 14, And so again you will see that He links peace and holiness. If we go to 2 Timothy chapter 2, also a verse that we have looked at in the last few weeks, 2 Timothy 2 verse 22, With those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2 verse 22, Pursue righteousness, we dealt with that one, faith, love and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

And so again, peace can only be pursued amongst those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Romans chapter 8, and we will stop here for a few minutes. Romans chapter 8 and verse 6. To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

Because a carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. And so He is saying simply that if we want to have peace with God, we've got to walk in the Spirit. We spoke about that last week.

Be spiritually minded. In other words, to allow my mind to be controlled by the Spirit. To be obedient to what the Spirit tells me to do.

Now we've said last week, but for the sake of those who weren't here, we're not speaking about some kind of altered state of consciousness, some airy fairy floating on a cloud when I'm walking in the Spirit. I'm simply having these two voices all the time. The flesh and the Spirit.

The carnal mind and the spiritual mind. The carnal mind tells me to do one thing, the spiritual mind tells me to do another thing. If I'm going to be dominated and controlled by my carnal mind, by my carnal desires and nature, and that may not necessarily be driving me to drink or to gambling or some terrible things like that.

It may simply just be not doing exactly what God wants me to be doing at that particular time. And so instead of reading the Scriptures, I'm doing something else maybe. Instead of speaking to somebody that God wants me to speak to, I'm doing something different.

It may be as small as that. But if I'm going to be controlled by my carnal mind, he says that is enmity against God, verse 7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

But the spiritual mind is life and peace. Is life and peace. And so if we can just come to this place where we're hearing the Spirit.

And I'm sure we all know in many of our relationships, in every time when there's been difficulty in relationships, somebody has not listened to the Spirit. Somebody has followed their natural instincts. And in following those natural instincts, difficulty has come in those relationships.

In our relationship with God. If we're going to follow what we want to do, if we're going to follow what our natural inclination is to do, we're going to find ourselves at enmity with God. Because the natural mind is by nature at enmity with God.

Doing its own thing in opposition to God. And so the spiritual mind brings about life and peace. The carnal mind brings about death and enmity.

Let's have a look at God. Because what we're really speaking about in all of these Beatitudes is the nature of God being brought about within us. And as we've said, this is not a natural thing.

This is not something which I can achieve by changing my personality. It is something which needs to be done by virtue of the new birth. And my virtue of the nature and the personality of the Lord Jesus being imprinted upon my nature.

Changing me, making me like Him. It is only then that we can walk in absolute peace with one another. And in peace with God.

It is only then that we can be peacemakers. Only when we become like Him. And so we need Him to do that.

But let's have a look at God. In Judges chapter 6 verse 24, God reveals Himself as Yahweh Shalom. The God is peace.

Our God is peace. Yahweh Shalom. In 1 Corinthians 14 verse 33, it says that He is not the author of confusion, but of peace.

And so His name, one of His names is the God of peace. Or God is our peace. And Paul says that He is the author of peace.

He is the initiator of peace. That's the very nature of God, is He wants to make peace. The unbeliever and the person who is fighting with God all the time, sees God as this aggressive God who is always fighting and always pushing down His justice and His demands and His laws and so on.

And yet God is essentially trying to make peace with man. You remember that when Adam sinned, God came down into the garden. He came looking for Adam, trying again to make peace.

And God even then kills an animal and clothes Adam and Eve, so that the relationship could be restored as best as it was possible with the problem of sin now present. And so right through we see that God tries to make peace. He is the author of peace.

And yet His plans and His purposes are constantly being thwarted by man and by the devil and by sin. Five times in the New Testament I counted, He is called the God of peace. In many of Paul's epistles, he begins the epistle by saying, May the God of peace, the God of peace.

He is not a God of war. He is never revealed in the scripture as a God of war. In Greek mythology, there are others who are the gods of war.

But God is not a God of war. He is a God of peace. But remember that we've been saying all along that that peace cannot be obtained by brushing aside righteousness.

By brushing aside what is true and what is right. God is in essence, although He is the God of peace, at the same time He is the God of righteousness. And peace can only be achieved in our relationship with God when we do things the right way.

And so God is not going to make peace at every cost. God is prepared to pay a great price in order to make peace. Because He sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, to be the propitiation for our sins.

To be the one who would remove the offense in order that we can come to peace with God. That's the extent to which God is committed to peace. But at the same time, He is not going to extend peace to the whole world if the world is not prepared to come His way.

If the world is not prepared to be righteous and to repent of its sin. Jesus is called in Isaiah 9, verse 6, the Prince of Peace. The Prince of Peace.

And then one of the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5, verse 22 is peace, love, joy, peace. So the Father is the God of all peace. The Lord Jesus is called the Prince of Peace.

The fruit of the Spirit is peace. And so in the essence of the Trinity is the issue of peace. It's there with every member of the Trinity.

And in Ephesians chapter 2, and maybe we need to just look at that section, we read about Jesus being our peace. Ephesians chapter 2. And much of Ephesians deals with the issue of peace. And you'll remember that he ends the book of Ephesians when he speaks about the armor.

He speaks about having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. But in chapter 2 and verse 14, For he himself is our peace, who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of division between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, that he might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And he came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

Now he's dealing with two sets of relationships here. Firstly, the relationship between Jew and Gentile. There are not two more opposite extremes than Jew and Gentile.

There are not two groups of people who are constantly at war as Jew and Gentile. From the very beginning, from the establishment of Israel, there has been war between Israel and the nations around them. And even to today, we know the intensity of the conflict in the Middle East, which has now been going on for centuries.

Jew and Gentile are like cat and dog, I suppose. They are two groups of people who are constantly at war. And that goes right back to the ancestors of the Jews.

And you remember that when the two nations came forth out of Abraham, there was a prophecy that the two would be at war. The two would be at war between Ishmael and Isaac. And that we find today.

And so, when he speaks about these two groups of people, Jew and Gentile, what Jesus did was that he broke down the middle wall of division between the two. And he brought the two together and made one

new man. Now, don't be fooled by those who want us to adopt Jewish traditions again.

Because they are saying that the one new man is the new Israel. The new man he is speaking about here is not Israel. The new man he is speaking about here is the Church.

And in the Church, in the Bride of Christ, which is neither Jew nor Gentile, we come together and for the first time there can be peace between Jew and Gentile in Christ. In Christ. And it is only in Christ that that division and that enmity and animosity between Jew and Gentile is removed.

And the two can become truly one. And you can bring in the best negotiators into the Middle East today. And you can try and work out the best kind of agreement between the two.

And we know that the Antichrist is going to do that. And they will sign the seven-year treaty. But that will only be a truce.

It will not be true peace. There will never be true peace in Jerusalem until Jesus reigns. And why will there be peace? Because He will reign in righteousness.

And when His righteousness comes, then there will be peace between those two. But outside of Christ there cannot be peace between Jew and Gentile. But within Christ there can be absolute peace and absolute harmony.

And in fact He speaks about the two not being two anymore but they now become one. They become one. Neither Jew nor Gentile but Christian.

But then also He is speaking about our relationship with God. And so both Jew and Gentile were at enmity with God. But Jesus came and He broke down the enmity or the wall that separated between man and God and brought peace between us and between God.

Let's go to Colossians chapter 1 and verse 19. Let's read four verses here. And it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

And you who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable in His sight. If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister. And so the peace was only achieved at the cross of Calvary.

Why was it achieved there? How did Jesus make peace? By removing the offence. Remember we said that peace was destroyed when sin entered into the picture. And when there is an offence, when I do something which offends you, that will destroy our peace.

That offence has to be removed. And when that offence is removed, the way is open for us to be restored and for peace to flow again. And so in our relationship with God, sin came in and sin turned us against God.

We became enemies of God and we found ourselves at enmity with God. Jesus came and He removed the offence. He was the only one who could do that.

We couldn't remove it and people have been trying to be better people and there are people particularly in the East who try through meditation and through all of various techniques and things to become more placid, to become more one with God. The emphasis of most religions today is to become one with God or one with creation. But that oneness can never happen because there is something between us and God which is the problem of sin.

And that's what Jesus dealt with at the cross of Calvary. And in removing the issue, in removing the offence, the way was made open whereby we could be united with Him and that we could come to peace with Him. But that could only happen at the cross of Calvary and that's what He is dealing with here.

And so we who were once alienated and enemies in our minds by wicked works, that was what made us enemies. Yet now He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable in His sight. Again you see the emphasis on holiness as a key component in the process of the making of peace.

And so God is peace, God makes peace through His Son. But now the attitude we've been dealing with doesn't deal with God but deals with us. And He says, blessed are the peacemakers.

And in Romans chapter 10 verse 15, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace. The gospel of peace. Now again people have politicised that and said, well you know if we bring peace between black and white or between Jew and Gentile or between East and West, if we bring that sort of peace, that's what this verse is saying.

It's saying how beautiful are those who bring about peace. But remember that peace can only come when we deal with the issues, when we deal with the offence. Peace can only be found in Jesus Christ.

And so it is the gospel, it is the good news of peace that the offence can be removed, that the sin can be removed, that we might become one. How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace. Romans chapter 12 and verse 18.

And I think of all of the aspects of our faith, this is probably the most difficult one. Together with holiness I suppose, but the issue of peace is one which is so visible when we are at enmity with one another, when we are at enmity with God, it is so tangible and it is one that we all struggle with in one way or the other. And I thank God that He is gracious and that He doesn't tell us to do things which are impossible to do.

When God gives us a command, that command must be achievable, otherwise it is not a just command. In the air force, in the military they have their own laws, military laws. One of the most important laws in the military is the issue of disobeying an order.

That is one of the laws which I suppose every other law hangs from in the military discipline code. The disobeying of an order. But even there they specify of a legal order.

And so if someone gives an order and the order is illegal, in other words if the order tells someone to do something which is criminal, it is not a legal order. And the subordinate doesn't have to obey that command because the command is illegal. You are only obligated to obey a legal command.

Now God is not unfair, God is not unjust. He doesn't issue illegal commands. He doesn't tell us to do things which are unjust or tell us to do things which are impossible.

Because if He tells us to do things that are impossible, then it would not be a legal command because it is impossible for us to do it. And so when He says that we, what should we use as an example, do this in remembrance of me, that's a command isn't it? We don't have an option about it. It's something we must do.

It's a direct, clear instruction. It's a command. Do this in remembrance of me.

We have no options about it. But it's also attainable. It's something which we can do.

But when He says that we must live at peace with all men, let's say God gave that instruction, which He didn't. Live at peace with all men. Would that be a just command? Would that be a legal command? No, because it's impossible.

So God doesn't tell us to do what is impossible. Why is it impossible? It's impossible because a relationship depends on two parties. And the one party can work as hard as he likes on that relationship.

If the other party is not willing to work on that relationship, you cannot have a relationship. You cannot have peace. And so you can drag people to the negotiating table and you can bring Israel, let's say, and Israel says, no, we want peace, we're committed to peace.

But the Arabs say, no, we don't want peace. You can never have peace. It is only when both parties are prepared to come to the table and to come to peace.

And so God understands that it is not entirely up to you or up to me to determine whether we're going to have peace with everybody. It's also dependent on the other party. And so He doesn't tell us that we must live at peace.

But He tells us to do what? Romans 12 verse 18. If it is possible, if it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. As much as it is possible.

And then He doubly qualifies it as much as depends on you. In other words, in every relationship, we need to be, as Christians, we need to be clear. We need to have done everything that is necessary in order to build that relationship.

But He recognizes that a bridge has to be built from two sides. You can't build a bridge from one side only. The bridge has to be built from two sides.

And if the other side is not built, there cannot be a bridge. And even if you have a bridge, if the other side is not maintained and the footings of that bridge are undermined or the foundations of that bridge are undermined, and that side of the bridge collapses, the bridge is not going to function as a bridge. And so He recognizes that it is not always possible.

But if it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with Christians. No, with all men. So this is not a thing which we extend only to believers.

This is extended to unbelievers as well. He says all men, whether they are friendly people or whether they are not friendly people, whether they are neighbors or whether they are unbelievers or whether they are nice people or not nice people, as much as is possible, He says, we need to be at peace with all men. In the book of Ephesians, chapter 4, you'll find the same softening of the command.

But at the same time, this is no excuse for us. Because I need to be sure that I'm building peace, that I'm trying to make peace. But in Ephesians, chapter 4, and verse 3, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

And then He gives seven reasons why, as Christians, we are supposed to be one. But endeavoring, doesn't say keep the unity of the Spirit, endeavoring, endeavoring. Understanding again, Paul is saying, I understand that you will not always achieve this.

This is not always possible. Because the other party may not always be willing. But endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

And so, John MacArthur says that there are three characteristics of peacemakers, and it just sums it up very well. First of all, he says, he himself has made peace with God. And so, the first question is, have we made peace with God for ourselves? Are we living at peace with God? There are many people who say, but I'm a Christian, of course I'm at peace with God.

And yet they're fighting God all the time. God wants them to do this, and they say, no, but I want to do that. They're following the carnal mind, and they're following their own desires, their own instincts, and they wonder why they don't have peace in their hearts with God.

And so, first of all, as peacemakers, we must be at peace with God for ourselves. Unless we have come to peace with God in our own rights, we will never be able to extend that peace to anybody else. Then, secondly, he says that they lead others to make peace with God.

They lead others to make peace with God. That is the message of the Gospel. That God and man can be reconciled.

The book of 2 Corinthians chapter 5 speaks about the fact that he has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation. The ministry of reconciliation. Part of the preaching of the Gospel is to say to mankind that man can be reconciled to God.

That man can have peace with God. That man doesn't have to always run away from God. Man does not always have to fight with God.

But man can be reconciled to God. And we have that responsibility to act as mediators in a sense. And I use that word advisedly because there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.

But to act in a sense as mediators or ambassadors. In that same passage in Corinthians, he speaks of us as ambassadors. And part of an ambassador's function is to negotiate peace all the time.

When the Russians do something that upset the Americans, then the ambassador is the one who goes along and says, sorry, we didn't actually mean it like that and so on. He's always negotiating, trying to make peace. Part of our function is to make peace between God and man.

How do we do that? We do that first of all by preaching the Gospel. By telling man that he needs to repent from his sin. He needs to turn to God.

He needs to accept the offer of salvation and of forgiveness. But also by interceding on man's behalf before God. And pleading for men to be saved.

Pleading for people to be changed by the Spirit of God, that there might be peace. And so we have this responsibility, this ministry of reconciliation, of leading others to make peace with God. And then thirdly, he helps others make peace with others.

He helps others make peace with others. And so we have to be at peace with God for ourselves. We have to bring men into a relationship of peace with God.

And we have to try to bring men into a relationship with one another in peace. Not causing division. And remember that the Scripture is very strong about this issue of division.

One of the bases of excommunication given to us in the Scripture is if someone is divisive. If someone causes division between brethren. This is seen to be a very, very serious thing in the Scripture.

Why? Because it goes against the very nature of God. God by nature is not divisive, but is a peacemaker. God wants to make peace.

And in fact, one of the books I was reading this week, I can't remember whether it was Martyn Lloyd-Jones or... But anyway, one of them was saying that if we are quarrelsome and always holding grudges and fighting and so on. He says there is a serious question as to whether we are actually saved. Whether we are actually born again.

Because the very nature of a true Christian is not one of causing division and difficulty and conflict. But one of peace and of reconciliation. A very, very serious question.

In 1 Kings chapter 18, I have two more Scriptures for you. And then we can have tea. 1 Kings chapter 18.

And I want to close with these two Scriptures because we have been emphasizing. Because there is such a wrong perception as to what peace is and how peace is achieved. The fact that peace cannot be achieved at every cost.

Peace cannot be achieved at the cost of righteousness and of holiness and of truth. Peace can only be achieved when purity, when righteousness, when truth are in place. And unfortunately, those who are true peacemakers are often blamed as troublemakers.

Because they speak the truth. In 1 Kings chapter 18. And you remember the story here.

Ahab was the king of Israel at this time. Under the influence of his wife Jezebel. They were bringing the people into idolatry.

Worshipping the Baal gods. And Elijah was seemingly the only prophet who was speaking out. Remember, God says, I had, what was it, 700 others who have not bowed the knee to Baal.

But the only one who was speaking out was Elijah. And he had closed up the heavens at God's instructions for three and a half years. It hadn't rained at this point.

And verse 20 of 1 Kings 18 says, So Ahab sent all the children of Israel and gathered the prophets together at Mount Carmel. And Elijah came to all the people and said, Sorry, wrong verse. Verse 17.

Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, Is that you, O troubler of Israel? You're the man who causes the trouble, he says. But in fact, who was making the trouble? Wasn't Elijah who was

causing the trouble, it was Ahab who was causing the trouble. But that's the problem, you see.

So verse 18, And he answered, I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and you have followed the Baals. Now therefore send and gather all Israel to me at Mount Carmel, and 400 and so on. And so you can see the problem.

Ahab says, but you're causing the trouble. But Elijah says, I'm not causing the trouble, I'm just simply upholding God's instructions. You're the one who's causing the trouble by teaching the people to follow the Baal gods.

And I think it's John MacArthur also who speaks about the fact that true peace cannot be achieved at the cost of doctrinal purity and spiritual holiness. And of course when we speak about doctrinal purity, immediately we have a problem. Because that's where the difficulty often comes, is over issues of doctrine.

But we cannot sacrifice what is doctrinally correct for the sake of simply having peace. And we know that the whole world is trying to make peace amongst churches today, the whole ecumenical movement. And on what basis is it? On the basis of sacrificing all doctrinal truths.

And so everybody is right. But everybody cannot be right. That's the unfortunate reality.

Everybody cannot be right. And so, but if we sacrifice what we believe about this way of salvation, then we can have peace with anybody. If we sacrifice what we believe with the word of God, well we can have peace with Islam and with the Hare Krishnas and with the Hindus and with everybody, as long as we just put the scriptures away.

But in fact, that's where the difficulty comes. And Elijah says, I'm not the one who's causing the trouble. You're the one who's causing the trouble because you've moved away from what God has instructed.

Luke chapter 23. Now, we must bring the balance and say that we are not encouraging contentiousness amongst Christians. There are some Christians who pride themselves on the fact that they are contending for the faith.

They're using that verse in the book of Jude. Contending for the faith. And so they're always arguing, always fighting.

No, we must not be arguing and fighting all the time. We must stand for the truth. We must stand for what is right.

But at the same time, it has to be done in the spirit of love. Truth and love have kissed each other. These two things have to come together.

And in Luke chapter 23, you find the accusation brought against Jesus. Verse 2, And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ the King. Verse 5, But they were the more fierce, saying, He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning with Galilee, to this place.

And so, what was the accusation against Jesus? He's a troublemaker. And Jesus himself said that I have not brought peace. Now, here's a contradiction that will rattle your mind.

I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. But a sword. Now, does that mean that Jesus wants us to be fighting? No, of course not.

And we can't preach the whole message again. But remember that peace cannot be achieved at any cost. It has to be on God's grounds.

It has to be on the basis of truth. It has to be on the basis of righteousness. And when that is done, that will bring true peace.

And we must not be disturbed when people say, But why don't you join with this or that or the other thing? Or this movement or that movement? Are you not for peace? Yes, we are for peace. But not on man's basis, on man's conditions. We are for peace on God's conditions.

And God's conditions are very clear and are very explicit. And so, God give us grace that we may be those who may truly be peacemakers. Of the right kind.

Not contentious. But at the same time, not trying to make peace at the cost of righteousness. At the cost of purity.

At the cost of holiness. And then he says, Blessed are the peacemakers because they will be called the sons of God. They will be called the sons of God.

Indicating God's identification with us. And I'm not going to preach another message. I'm almost finished.

God identifying with us. Prepared to say, what did he say of Jesus? This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. God was not ashamed to identify with the Lord Jesus.

But was proud to say, here is my son. Hear him. And he's giving us the same assurance that if we are peacemakers, he will identify with us.

And he will identify us as his sons. And he will say, here are my sons. I'm pleased with them.

And it says, they shall be called. Future continuous tense. This is not just a once-off thing.

And we know that the Father didn't just once or even twice on earth say, this is my beloved son. But throughout all eternity, he will declare to us. He will declare to the angels that he is pleased with his son.

And he says he will extend that same offer to us. That if we are peacemakers, blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called. Future continuous tense.

Future continuous tense without any cessation. God will continue forever and ever to declare us to be his sons. Why? Because we have become partakers of his very nature.

And entered into the very mission and purpose of God. Which is to make peace. Amen.

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