

# Blessed Are the Peacemaker

by Dwight Pentecost

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of peace and the role of peacemakers in maintaining unity and bringing men to reconciliation with God.*

**Duration:** 29:39

**Scripture:** Isaiah 57:21, Matthew 5:9, Matthew 18:12-13, John 14:27, Ephesians 4:3, Colossians 1:20

**Topics:** "Peacemaker"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of maintaining unity within the body of believers. He refers to a parable in Matthew's Gospel where Jesus speaks of a shepherd who leaves his flock of ninety-nine sheep to search for the one that is lost. This illustrates God's desire for none of His children to perish. The preacher also discusses the process of reconciliation within the church, highlighting the need for peacemakers and the involvement of the whole assembly in restoring peace. He concludes by reminding the listeners of the power of agreement in prayer and the promise of Christ's presence when believers gather in His name.

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## Transcript

Matthew chapter 18, beginning at verse 12. Matthew 18, 12. How think ye, if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church. But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Verily I say unto you, that whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything, that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. May God add his blessing to the reading of this portion of his word. As we in these last days have celebrated the birth of the one whose name is Prince of Peace, we have been made conscious again that there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.

And the world cries out for peace. I was struck as I read in one of our news magazines just a few days past, an article on the common market in Europe, that while the nations of Europe have re-federated, they are looking for a leader who can bring them to peace. When our Lord described the blessings that he brought to men, that portion of Matthew's gospel we call the Beatitudes, he said in verse 9, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are the peacemakers. And it almost appears as though that which the scripture said the Lord Jesus Christ would do to bring peace to man, he has committed to others, as though it were our responsibility to institute peace on this earth. And I want to direct your thinking this morning into this Beatitude that has been so misused and so misunderstood.

And I trust as we consider this truth here stated, we will understand the source of blessing about which the Lord Jesus Christ is talking. Peace belongs to God. It does not belong to sinful men.

For sinful men are in a state of alienation, both from God and from fellow man. And one who is in a state of alienation, either from God or from his fellow man, cannot experience peace. Because peace is the perfect harmony and tranquility that belongs to God and to the members of the Godhead.

God is a God of peace. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Romans in Acts chapter 15 and verse 33, prays, Now the God of peace be with you all. He is not only the God who is the source of peace, but he is a God who is at perfect peace with himself, a God who is characterized by perfect harmony and tranquility.

This peace belongs to God because God is one. And in writing in Galatians chapter 3 and verse 20, the Apostle states that truth, that God is one. And since God is one, there can be no disunity, no disharmony, no conflict within himself.

And yet man is separated from God by sin. And the very separation of the creature from the Creator, the separation of man from God, makes it impossible that man can be at peace. He cannot be at peace with himself.

He cannot be at peace with God. And peace is impossible until man is brought to reconciliation with God, until man is reunited with the God from whom he is estranged by his sin. The fact of this alienation is made so clear by the Apostle Paul who wrote in Romans chapter 5 and verse 10, If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

This enmity about which Paul spoke in the tenth verse came about because, as he says in verse 12, By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. So death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. And because Adam sinned, and because we participated in Adam's sin, and because we are sinners, we are alienated from God.

And there can be no peace to the sinner until that enmity is removed, and that separation is resolved, and men are brought into unity with and harmony with God. The first great peace that must be provided and established then is peace between the sinner and God. And when Christ said, Blessed are the peacemakers, he was not providing a special reward for patient diplomats.

He was speaking of those who are themselves at peace with God, who bring a message of peace to men who are alienated from God, that they might be brought into harmony with the God from whom they have been alienated. Blessed are those who announce to sinful men the fact that a Savior has come. The angels who announced the birth of the Savior were essentially peacemakers when they announced, Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

In order to emphasize this truth, our Lord in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel referred to a shepherd who had under his care a hundred sheep, who as night fell and he led his flock back to the fold, discovered that one of his sheep was missing and was lost out in the mountains. And if this man have a hundred sheep and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine and goeth into the mountains and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep than of the ninety and nine which went not away. And in the parallel passage, our Lord tells that when this lost one is found, there is joy in heaven because that which was lost has been restored to its rightful place.

Our Lord in that parable is emphasizing the fact of man's alienation from God. And man will never find his way back to God without one to show him the way. A man will never come to a knowledge of salvation without a man to proclaim salvation to him, without the ministry of an evangelist.

Man will never come from his alienation to God, to peace with God, without a peacemaker. And recognizing the lostness of those in his day, religious as they were, our Lord said, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are those who go as the Son of Man went to seek and to save that which was lost.

Leave them out of the wilderness into the safety and refuge of the fold. In Colossians chapter 1 and verse 20, the Apostle tells us that Jesus Christ came into this world that he might make peace by the blood of his cross. The only way that a man can come to peace with God is through the blood of the cross.

And if men come to God only through the blood of the cross, men need to be informed of the way of peace. It has frequently been stated that sheep are the dumbest animals that God has created and that if lost, they will never by themselves find their way back to the fold. If separated from pasture, will never by themselves find pasture each.

And if not led by a faithful shepherd to waters, they will die of thirst. They need one to show them the way. And since peace has been established by the blood of the cross, men need to be pointed to the way in order that they might come to peace.

It is significant to me that the Apostle Paul, in each one of the epistles that he wrote, refers at the outset of his epistle to the fact that God is the God of peace. And that peace comes from God the Father and God the Son. And there is no epistle that Paul wrote in which that truth is not mentioned in the introductory sentence.

It had been impressed upon the Apostle Paul that God, who is at perfect peace with himself, has provided that men who are alienated from God might come to peace with him. And he recognized that he had been appointed by the God of peace as a peacemaker. And as Paul traveled the length and breadth of the Roman Empire, he saw himself as God's peacemaker.

He came to tell men that Christ had established the way of peace by the blood of his cross, and that through the cross, men may come to peace with God. And I turn to 2 Corinthians chapter 5, and I discover there that God has appointed us his peacemakers. I read in verse 18, All things are of God, who hath reconciled us, or brought us to peace with himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation, or the ministry of being a peacemaker.

God was in Christ reconciling the world, or bringing the world to peace unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation, or has committed us the responsibility of being a peacemaker. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ that be ye reconciled, or come to peace with God. Three times in verses 18, 19, and 20, the apostle emphasizes the fact that we who have been brought to peace with God have been made by God to be peacemakers.

And to let men know, men who are alienated from God, how they can come to peace with God, and experience the peace of God as their portion. And to be a peacemaker, a man needs to know just one essential truth. Christ died for our sins, and rose again the third day in order that we might come to peace with God.

That's what's required of a peacemaker, to know that truth, and then to impart that truth to men who are aliens from the peace of God. As I turn again into Matthew chapter 18, I find a second aspect of peace that was of concern to the Lord, because man is not only separated from God, but man is also separated from man. And believer may be separated from believer.

And such was not the purpose of God. In Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 3, the apostle says we are to endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And it was God's plan that those who have come to peace with himself should live in peace.

Believer united with believer in an assembly of believers. And an obligation is placed upon believers to maintain the peace that God has provided through the blood of the cross. And where there is strife and jealousy and discord, a man is not experiencing the benefit and blessing of God's peace.

And a man, tragically it is true, may have come to peace with God and not experienced the outworking of that peace in his life so that he lives in the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. And after our Lord in Matthew 18, verse 12 to 14, speaks of the work of the peacemaker bringing the lost to peace with God. He speaks of the work of a peacemaker maintaining unity in the fellowship of believers.

And here our Lord lays down certain principles that are to be followed where there has been an estrangement of believer from believer. So he says in verse 15, If thy brother, here he is moving into the area of the relationship of one believer to another believer, if a brother shall trespass against thee. You will notice that this is not the confession by a guilty party to the one whom the guilty one has wronged.

This is the step to be taken by one who has been wronged by the guilty party. The one who has been wronged is not to wait for contrition and confession on the part of the guilty and to remain in an estranged state until he sees the error of his ways. But he says, If you have been sinned against, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.

The one who has been wronged is to go to the one who has done the wrong and show the offense privately so that there should be no scandal in the assembly and so that other members of the assembly

should not be involved in this one man's offense. That is the first step that is to be taken. And the one who sees or knows the offense of a brother and goes privately to that brother is a peacemaker because he is seeking to reestablish the peace that has been disrupted by the action of this offender.

And our Lord says, If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother, and peace has been restored, and there is no disruption, further disruption, in the life of the assembly. But if going privately to that brother does not bring the brother to restoration, to peace, that is not the end of the matter. The one who is cognizant of the wrong cannot say, I tried to be a peacemaker and he wouldn't come to peace.

He is to take this second step, verse 16, If he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of three witnesses, two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And here the one who is cognizant of the wrong or of the offense or of that which would disrupt the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace is to take two or three witnesses that the offender might be faced with these three witnesses so that there should be a restoration. These three are peacemakers.

And the blessing of God is promised upon them. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church, to the assembly, so that the weight of the whole assembly may be brought to bear upon this one who by his action has disrupted the peace of the body. Do you see, beloved, how serious it is in God's sight that the unity of the body should be maintained? This is to be made a matter of concern to the whole assembly.

And if the man will not be restored to peace as the whole assembly becomes a peacemaker, this man is to be put out of the assembly. He is to be treated or to become as an heathen man and a publican. Now, why is this maintenance of the peace of the assembly so important? Our Lord tells us in verse 19 and 20, "If any two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And what our Lord is indicating here is that answered prayer is conditioned upon unity between the one asking and the God from whom the petition is sought. If a man is not at peace with God, he cannot pray with any confidence his prayer will be answered. But if a man is not at unity with his fellow believer, he cannot be at unity with God.

And the disruption of the unity of believers brings about the disruption of the unity between the believer and God. This same truth is emphasized in 1 Peter 3, where Peter is speaking of the relationship between husband and wife in the home. And Peter insists that the right relationship must exist between husband and wife in the home, or your prayers will be hindered.

Where there is not perfect unity between husband and wife, there will be no answered prayer. And it brings us this vital, important principle. Answered prayer depends not only on an individual being at peace with God, but that he be at peace with his brethren in Christ.

For if our vertical relationship is not right, our horizontal relationship cannot be right. And if the horizontal is not right, the vertical never can be. And the effectiveness of an individual's prayer and the effectiveness of a congregation's prayer depends on the maintenance of peace.

That is why our Lord said, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. I find not one syllable in Scripture that ever gives us any hope that man will bring peace to this earth. Swords will not be turned to plowshares and spears to pruning hooks until the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus

Christ, comes to this earth and subjugates all to his authority.

And he has not transferred to us the responsibility of making peace among nations, but he has given us the responsibility of telling men who are alien that they can come to peace with God through the blood of the cross. And has given us the sobering responsibility to keep the unity of the body and the bond of peace. You may be a peacemaker, and you may receive the blessing of God that has been promised to peacemakers as you tell men that Christ died and that you seek to maintain the unity of the body and the bond of peace.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. We pray, our Father, that God the Holy Spirit may bring to our hearts the truth that is presented in this portion of the Word. We thank thee for the one who is our peace, who has purchased and provided peace through his death on the cross.

May that peace we experience with thee work itself out in peace with the brethren. Dismiss us with the riches of thy grace and mercy and peace upon us. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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