

# Blessed Are The Peacemakers

Good morning. Good to have you all with us today, especially our families and friends visiting for Baptism

And our elementary students who are joining us for Family Sunday. Welcome to all of you.

Today we continue our series, the Blessed Battle, getting to know the Beatitudes in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

And today we are exploring the blessing of the peacemakers.

Jesus says,

## **SLIDE: Matthew 5:9**

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

**Now before we dive in, we are going to learn a new word today.**

**Say it with me:**

***SLIDE: Mah shalomkah?***

**Pronunciation:**

**Mosh low 'mechh**

**There are a couple ways to say this but...**

**This is a common Hebrew greeting. Instead of how are you doing?**

How is your shalom? How is your well-being?

It's very specific.

**We are asking "How is your peace?"**

**This is the question we ask ourselves** and each other today as we explore what it means to follow Jesus' direction to us:

**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called Children of God.**

**The first thing that stands out to me** is the blessing on peacemakers as Children of God.

**Why is making peace what children of God do?**

**Jesus is saying that making peace is a crucial DNA trait of the family of God**

- Peace-making is *just what we do* as Children of God.

**BUT WHY?**

Because Jesus was the ultimate peace maker.

How did he make peace?

**By going toward the pain. Toward the chaos.**

**Toward people who were hurting or had uncertainty or conflict.**

**The prophets told us what to expect from the Savior, the Son of God**

**In Isaiah chapter 9, he says**

**SLIDE: Isaiah 9: 2-7**

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.

You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy; they

rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor. Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

**Isaiah is giving the context in which Jesus will arrive.**

There will be oppressors.

There will be war.

There will be people in darkness.

But Jesus is bringing his government, a kingdom of peace.

**In Isaiah 61, he foretells how Jesus will bring this freedom.**

**And he is talking in first person, as if he is Jesus.**

**SLIDE: Isaiah 61:1-3**

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has

sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

We see Jesus, not as the Hollywood hero walking in slow motion away from an explosion.

He is in the background, running straight into the fire.

Straight into the problem.

When Jesus arrived in the world, he did what God said he would do.

**Jesus is the one who saw all the people everyone else overlooked.**

- **He saw the women suffering for years with a reproductive illness.**
- **He saw Zaccheus up in the tree.**
- **He saw the crowds of people surrounding him and he healed them and fed them.**

**But Jesus' mission was far more than being an effective social service.**

**He was doing something on a cosmic, supernatural level, something that would reunite, make peace between God and humankind.**

**Ephesians 2 tells us about what he accomplished through his death and resurrection.**

**It explains the kind of supernatural peace between God and people and between fellow humans that Jesus was ushering in.**

**SLIDE: EPHESIANS 2:12-18**

Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

For **he himself is our peace**, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus **making peace**, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and **preached peace** to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

**For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.**

Jesus' ultimate act of peacemaking was to walk toward pain and suffering, to heal and restore when he encounters brokenness,

But more than that, he made peace by giving his life to bring people back to God, to restore people to each other.

**As Children of God, our role is to be peacemakers in a similar way.**

As Jesus did, we also walk toward the pain, the chaos.

**A peacemaker is not afraid of the darkness in the world.**

- A peacemaker is moving toward the conflict.
- Toward the broken relationship.
- Toward the awkward conversation.
- Toward the person holding a sign on the street corner
- Toward the estranged family member.
- Toward the person trapped in addiction or experiencing a major personal failure.
- Toward themselves with kindness, refusing to allow themselves to remain unhealthy or stuck.

**TRANSITION: THE STRUGGLE:**

**And yet, most of us are not living as peacemakers. We live as peacekeepers.**

**Many of us follow Jesus, or some of you might be considering it, if you aren't yet.**

**But one thing many of us have in common is we are stuck in conflict avoidance.**

**Many of us have come to firmly believe that PEACE IS THE ABSENCE OF CONFLICT.**

**This insidious belief shows up throughout areas of our lives, in our relationships and workplaces, in government and social spaces.**

**And nowhere was the belief that peace is absence of conflict seen more clearly than during the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s.**

As Black Americans and allies determined to peacefully and non-violently push back against the injustice of the status quo, then conflict ensued.

Some people saw it as unnecessary.

Conflict arose. There were protests and arrests.

There was violence against Black Americans in the form of firehoses aiming to remove them from the streets.

Their lives were threatened and some were killed.

They could have had "peace". They could have been quiet.

**But if they had not taken a stand and moved toward this disruptive conflict, we would not see the progress toward equality we have seen.**

**In a sermon at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Martin Luther King Jr addressed the difference between peace-keeping and peace-making.**

**His sermon is titled, *When Peace is Obnoxious*, which is believed to have been written in March 1956. In the early days of the Civil Rights Movement.**

**In his sermon, we step right into a moment when the tensions were beginning to build and there was pushback from everyone, even those in the Black community who were afraid and did not want to risk the wrath that comes with disrupting the status quo.**

**Let's listen in to that moment. Dr Martin Luther King said...**

**SLIDE: *When Peace is Obnoxious*, Dr Martin Luther King Jr, Published in *The Papers of Martin Luther King Jr, Vol VI: Advocate of the Social Gospel***

A few weeks ago, a federal judge handed down an edict which stated in substance that the university of Alabama could no longer deny admission to persons because of their race. With the handing down of this decision, a brave young lady by the name of Autherine Lucy was accepted as the first Negro student to be admitted in the history of the university of Alabama. This was a great moment and a great decision. But with the announcement of this decision, the vanguards of the old order began to emerge. The forces of evil began to



congeal. As soon as Autherine Lucy walked on the campus, a group of spoiled students lead by Leonard Wilson and a vicious group of criminals began threatening her on every hand.<sup>4</sup> Crosses were burned. Eggs and bricks were thrown at her. The mob even jumped on top of the car in which she was riding. Finally the president and trustees of the university of Alabama asked Autherine to leave for her own safety and the safety of the university.

The next day after Autherine was dismissed, the paper came out with this headline: **“Things are quiet in Tuscaloosa today. There is peace on the campus of the university of Alabama.”**<sup>5</sup> **Yes things were quiet in Tuscaloosa. Yes there was peace on the campus, but it was peace at a great price. It was peace that had been purchased at the exorbitant price of an inept trustee board succumbing to the whims and caprices of a vicious mob. It was peace that had been purchased at the price of allowing mobocracy to reign supreme over democracy. It was peace that had been purchased at the price of capitulating to the forces of darkness.**

This is the type of peace that all men of goodwill hate. It is the type of peace that is obnoxious. It is the type of peace that stinks in the nostrils of the almighty God.

The obnoxious peace is the type of peace that maintains a harmful status quo, that looks the other way, that allows suffering to continue

An obnoxious peace is when we ignore or minimize a conflict so we don't have to face its impact.

An obnoxious peace is allowing estranged relationships in our lives for years and choosing not to seek restoration when it is in our power to do it.

An obnoxious peace is thinking that when there are big problems, like poverty or racism or food insecurity, that we cannot solve it and so we do nothing.

**In another speech given in 1968, Dr. King would say this concept succinctly, “There can be no justice without peace. And there can be no peace without justice.”**

**The work of making peace is to work for justice.**

**To work on making things right in our world.**

**And this begins not necessarily in trying to solve the biggest problem you can find.**

Making things right and making peace will almost always start small.

**It's a series of choices, a muscle you build,** a position you take.

It may begin in your home, in your relationships, in your school, in your work place.

It is the way that you move toward a hard conversation or a need with patience, with grace, with confidence.

**It is the opposite of avoidance.**

**It is the act of turning toward** the other, turning toward a person or situation you believe to be a problem.

**So we know what we are supposed to do, BUT it's scary.**

**There is a reason we keep peace through avoidance.**

**TRANSITION: So how do we deal with the fear we face when we choose to move toward a problem?**

**SLIDE:**

- **Remember YOU are not the solution.**
- **When you walk toward the chaos, you are bringing Jesus with you.**
- **You can walk into chaos with confidence because it is not up to you to bring peace.**
- **Remember YOU are not the solution, my dear friend.**
  - You are bringing peace, which is Jesus.
  - HE HIMSELF is our peace.
- **When you walk toward the chaos, you are bringing Jesus with you.**
  - You can walk into chaos with confidence because it is not up to you to bring peace.
  - It is not up to you to solve it.

- **You can walk into chaos with confidence because it is not up to you to bring peace.**

**We are anointed for a great work, a great calling. Isaiah told us about it, and Jesus referenced it in describing his mission in the world.**

**But Jesus' mission is now our mission.**

**What is that mission?**

**REFERENCE previous slide or repeat it:**

**SLIDE: Isaiah 61:1-3**

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me (is on you), because the Lord has anointed me (YOU) to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

This is my mission, your mission. To walk toward places with no justice, where things are broken or wrong, and make peace.

**NEXT STEPS:**

1. **Allow God to make peace in your life by inviting Jesus into your life.**
  1. He himself is your peace, if you would have him.
2. **Invite Jesus to walk straight into your chaos.**
  1. We invite you to take that step, to even close your eyes and see Jesus approaching your mess without judgment.
  2. We encourage you to let him come to you to bring you peace.
3. **Choose to turn toward conflict and chaos with courage, instead of avoiding and keeping false peace**
  1. We have been pretending things are okay. We are looking the other way when there are problems.

Philippians 4 tells us that the peace of God transcends understanding, which means, "it doesn't make sense"

**SLIDE: NEXT STEPS:**

1. Allow God to make peace in your life by inviting Jesus into your life.
2. Invite Jesus to walk straight into your chaos.
3. Choose to turn toward conflict and chaos with courage, instead of avoiding and keeping false peace

**Close with the Blessing of the Peacemakers. Stand to receive the blessing.**

- People who are working in social services.

- Pastors and social workers and teachers, parents.
- Children and teens who are going to school and want to bring peace to your friends.
- People who want to be peacemakers but you have been peacekeepers.
- This is for you.

## **SLIDE: The Blessing of the Peacemakers**

### **Number 6:22**

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”

Pray.

Worship Team.

CUT FOR TIME:

#### **References:**

Blessed are the peacemakers, Messianic perspective

<https://www.emethatorah.com/blog/2014/january-26/blessed-are-peacemakers>

The first thing we can do to better understand his original intent is to attempt to put his words back into their original Hebrew. If we were to do so, this term in the words of our Master — “peacemakers” — would be rendered as עֲשֵׂי שְׁלוֹמִים (*osei shalom*),

**literally “makers/doers of peace.”**

It literally translates as “pursuers of peace” or those who “chase after peace.” Delitzsch could have chosen the more literal rendering which we previously examined, but chose to use the phrase *rodfei shalom* — “pursuers of peace” — instead.