

The Brown Street Beacon

"...Shine out among them like beacon lights,

holding out to them the Word of Life" (Phil 2:15-16)



Volume 2

September 28, 2014

Number. 34

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

The famed Sermon on the Mount, preached by Jesus on the side of a mountain just off the shores of the Sea of Galilee, begins with what we refer to as the beatitudes. The seventh beatitude states, *"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God"* (Matthew 5:9). The opposite of this beatitude would be *"cursed are the troublemakers; for they shall be called the children of Satan."* All those who divide and make trouble are of Satan, not God. The Bible is full of exhortations and admonitions to live in peace with our fellowman. Paul said, *"If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men"* (Romans 12:18). We are to be at peace with brethren, and even strive for peace with those of the world.

Being at Peace with Brethren

This is not always easy to do. This is due to the fact that the kingdom of God is made up of all kinds of people. In Matthew 13:47 Jesus likened the kingdom to a net that was cast into the sea and gathered out of it all kinds of fish. The church is like that net full of different kinds of fish. It is composed of people of different backgrounds, races, and colors, as well as different opinions, ideas and personalities. As a result peace is sometimes hard to achieve. Let's observe a few things that will enhance peace among brethren.

A Spirit of Compromise

When it comes to the truth of God's word, there should be no compromise. However, when it comes to matters of opinion, we must be flexible. When it comes to liberties that we enjoy, we should be willing to sacrifice. We should compromise, at times, our own desires and wants, if it will further unity among us. Liberties that we enjoy in Christ might not always be expedient (Romans 14:14-15; 1 Corinthians 6:12). And who serves as the greatest of all examples in this area of sacrifice? The answer, of course, is Jesus (Romans 15:1-3).

A spirit of Humility

Pride has not only separated many from God, but it has also done great things to divide men. It has stopped many from saying "I am sorry" or "I am wrong." It has stopped many from taking the first step in amending differences with brethren. As one man said, "Being a peacemaker is much easier when we realize we are not the center of the universe." It is also the reason why some won't

make application of the previous point, that is, developing a spirit of compromise. Pride stands in the way of considering anyone's ideas or opinions as better than one's own. Pride is so busy causing one to think of himself that it doesn't make room for the consideration of others. Thus, pride is not only an obstacle to peace, it makes peace almost impossible to regain once it is lost.

Attempting to Understand Others

Peace comes through understanding. Will Rogers once said, *"There goes a man I do not like; I think I'll get to know him."* When we understand someone, there is a better chance that we will accept them. This is especially true with regard to one's words. Sometimes people say things that are a little confusing, or at least give the wrong impression. If you know the source, you will probably better understand what was said or, perhaps, better realize what was meant or not meant, and that helps peace to remain. Obviously, this takes some effort. We usually don't get to know others by accident. In the church we should make a conscious effort to get to know one another. Being hospitable helps with this. Making an effort to talk to more people before or after a worship service can help too. The point is, the better we know one another, the better the chance for peace to prevail.

Willingness to Forgive

What happens when there is no misunderstanding? What if a brother or sister in Christ simply sins against you? How can peace possibly be maintained or restored in such cases? Well, it is not easy, that's for sure. However, the answer is to be willing to forgive (Colossians 3:12-15). To hold a grudge is, not only to purposely sabotage peace, it is also sinful behavior. It was the inspired Paul who wrote, *"Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger"* (Eph 4:26). When a person repents of a sin that he or she has committed against us (Luke 17:3), we have a divine direction from Christ to forgive. If we refuse to forgive, we ourselves will not be forgiven by God. Listen to Jesus on this.

Matt 6:14-15

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

This is non-negotiable. If you are unwilling to forgive those who sin against you, your relationship with God is in danger. Did you notice the first part, though? If we do forgive, God will forgive us because, not only have we obeyed God, we have done our part in being a peacemaker in the body of Christ.

Being at Peace with Non-Christians

Obviously, what we have said so far will go a long way in making peace with all men, Christian or non-Christian. However, there is something else that I want to point out in regard to making peace with those of the world. Preaching the gospel is one of the best ways of making peace. When we turn to the Bible, we find man is separated from God because of sin (Isaiah 59:1, 2). There is only one solution to this problem, and, of course, that is Christ and His gospel (Romans

7:24, 25). The Old Testament spoke of the time when the Messiah would bring peace.

Isaiah 11:6-9

6 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. 7 The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. 9 They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

These beautiful words of Isaiah, picturing for us the harmonious scene of the wolf dwelling with the lamb, and the calf and the lion eating together, is a picture of the future peace that would be brought by the Son of God. In Romans 15:12 Paul quotes Isaiah eleven as being fulfilled at that present time. Some are waiting for the literal fulfillment of the words of Isaiah when lambs and wolves will lie down together. However, these prophecies were figuratively speaking of what would transpire in the dispensation of Christ, that is, of the peace that would come as a result of the preaching of the gospel (Isaiah 52:7; Romans 10:8-17; Romans 5:1). Those who are peacemakers of the highest sort, are those who take the source of peace, that is, the gospel of Christ, to a lost world, and strive to establish peace between God and man. When you take the gospel to sinful man, you are engaged in the highest kind of peacemaking.

Don