

## **STANDING ON THE SIDE OF PEACE Prt 1**

*Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers! For they shall be called the children of God.*

- If you consider the growth and development of anything, you will realize that most of the time, it has to do with the environment around it.
- Whether it is the growth of a business, a child, a sporting team, a banana tree, or even a church, it has to do with the surrounding environment.
- Some environments are hostile to the growth and development of a child or a marriage.
- In April 2023, thousands of fish died at Hartbeespoort Dam due to low oxygen levels in the water. The low oxygen levels were caused by excessive algal growth, which was due to high levels of nutrients in the water.
- Let me ask you 2 questions; the first one is, what environment exists within you and the second one is, what impact do you have on your immediate environment.
- With those two questions in mind, I want to continue with our series titled DESIGNED FOR FRUITFULNESS. I want to talk to you on the subject matter **STANDING ON THE SIDE OF PEACE**.
- An environment of peace is key to your fruitfulness in this life. It is key to your well-being and for those around you.
- Peace is a stress-free state of security and calmness that comes when there's no fighting or war and everything coexists in perfect harmony and freedom.
- No one can be fruitful in this life, if there is turmoil within and without. Nations that are at war don't see much economic growth.
- The economy in Sudan has shrunk by 40 percent last year due to the armed conflicts in many places of the country and it is predicted to continue shrinking by about 28 percent in 2024.
- This goes beyond the macroenvironment and goes to the individual. People are without peace; children are coming out of conflict torn homes, young people are committing suicide, parents are running away from homes and healthy marriages have become an exception and not the norm.
- In other words, a peaceful life has become a rare commodity. It is in that environment that Jesus comes and placed a demand on His disciples. He says that one of the greatest distinguishing factors of God's children is that they are a people who stand

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on the side of peace. The Lord Jesus comes onto the scene, and He declares that peace making is the birthright and birth assignment of God's children.

- It is for peace that Jesus came, and all His disciples are identified as peace makers.
- The followers of Jesus are blessed because they make it possible for the world to experience peace.
- A disciple of Jesus must know peace before becoming a peacemaker.
- A disciple of Jesus is called to be a peace maker but foremost you are called to know peace.
- This peace comes from knowing that Jesus brought peace through the blood of the cross.

*Colossians 1:19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. 21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation*

- A disciple of Jesus is aware of the finished works of Calvary. You and I were enemies with God, destined for the wrath and the anger of God.
- Before Christ died for you, you were without hope for tomorrow. Now we have this hope in Christ as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.
- The peace we have in Christ covers all of life – this was pronounced when He said it is finished.
- The devil knows very well that when you are at peace, you will become fruitful where you are planted – guess what he does; he then comes and create chaos in your life to take away your peace.

*John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

The devil uses certain avenues to steal your peace.

- Some of the greatest peace robbers used by the devil are sin, sickness, poverty and regular and persistent challenges of life.
- The devil robs you of your peace by attacking believers on these soft spots. A soft spot is painful, and the pain feels like it lasts for a lifetime.

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- You need to know how to keep your peace each time one of these areas has been attacked by the devil.
- You must learn to respond appropriately otherwise; you will never experience the peace of God.
- The devil is fully committed to keeping peace out of your life and as such he is relentless.
- At the same time Jesus laid down His life for peace to be a reality in your life.

*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.*

- Jesus made provision for unconditional peace; it is not like the peace of the world that comes with conditions attached.
- The peace of God is not something that you can fight for but is received as a gift through faith.
- When sin lingers, when sickness torments us, when we are always facing challenges, it is tempting to worry about these issues. I don't know about you but worry and peace cannot coexist – they are mutually exclusive. One of them will give way for the other.
- What do you do to give a chance for peace to take root in your life.

*Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

- Here we have an answer to the question of how one can access and keep the peace of God – it is to pray about everything that can take away your peace.
- A prayerful person is more peaceful than a prayerless person. A person that talks to God has more peace than a person that only talks to people about their issues.
- When peace killers come your way, you ought to focus your mind on God's nature and character.

*Isaiah 26:3 (Amplified Bible)*

*3 You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind [both its inclination and its character] is stayed on You, because he commits himself to You, leans on You, and hopes confidently in You.*

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*Psalm 27:13 I would have lost heart, unless I had believed That I would see the goodness of the Lord In the land of the living.*

*Psalm 46:10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."*

- The coming of Jesus created peace between us and God by making a way for the forgiveness of our sins.
- Whenever there is unforgiven sin, there is no peace with God and with man.
- I don't know what sin has taken away your peace – could it be uncontrollable anger, could it be envy, could it be sexual sin, whatever it is, I want you to know that as long as you have not dealt with it, peace will remain elusive in your life.'
- Hey, Jesus made a way for peace.

*Ephesians 1: 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace*

- I want to say to you, peace can be found again when we talk to God about our sinful habits. Freedom comes when we are open to get and confess our sins.
- Any sin that is hidden remains powerful but that which has been confessed loses its grip on you.

*Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, says Jehovah; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool.*

*1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

- The devil will rob you of your peace by tormenting you with sickness and the spirit of infirmity. He will cause poverty and lack to pursue you.
- Each time your body is down, your peace can go with it, every time you don't have enough to finish the month your peace can run out as well. Each time you face the same problem year after year, it is possible to lose hope.
- Don't lose your peace but fight those stubborn situations like a good soldier of Jesus.
- The sickness can easily become a god in your life but there is a greater God who is faithful and able.

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- Your attitude in the face of adversity will determine your level of peace and ultimate victory.
- Your attitude will cause you to win major battles or perpetuate a situation. We need to learn how to suffer well.
- Paul knew how to fight, he adopted the right attitude when going through adversities of life.

*2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. 8 We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10 We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body... 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

- When we are sick, we don't lose our peace because healing was acquired on the cross for us.
- When we are rejected by society, we don't lose our peace because we know that in Him, we are accepted.
- Knowing that this world is not your home will help you to detach yourself from the things of this world. It will give you a peaceful perspective on the troubles of this world.
- God is calling us to trust Him for breakthroughs, that is why He says we should cast our burdens to Him.
- Whilst Healings, breakthroughs and having enough makes it easier to keep your peace but a disciple of Jesus knows how to keep his peace even in their absence.
- This was the attitude of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

*Daniel 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to return a word to you on this matter. 17 If it is so that our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, then He will deliver us out of your hand, O king. 18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods nor worship the golden image which you have set up.*