

STANDING ON THE SIDE OF PEACE PRT 2

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

I want to continue with the message I started last week – **STANDING ON THE SIDE OF PEACE PRT 2.**

- A disciple of Jesus is called to be a peace maker but foremost is called to know peace. Last week we spent the session walking through some few principles on how to know God's peace.
- To know and to live with God's peace is a lifelong journey and the moment you encounter the peace of God, you need to decide to stand on the side of peace.
- A person who stands on the side of peace will do only that which promotes peace.
- With every level of peace you attain, there is a responsibility that comes with it. That responsibility equates to standing on the side of peace, it means fighting for peace, it means defending and advocating for peace.
- I want to spend the rest of my talk this morning on that responsibility.
- Jesus says blessed are the peace makers, right. If you look at that statement, it is a statement of responsibility and He says that not everyone will rise to the challenge but whoever does, that person is blessed.
- In a world that is devoid of peace, there is a great need for peacemakers today.
- God is calling you to bring peace between warring parties – I don't know who is on a war path in your sphere of influence. Churches are at war, team members are at war, work colleagues are at war, marriages are at war – no wonder why Jesus said blessed are the peace makers.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21 (NIV) All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

- We discovered that our peace was obtained at the price of Jesus' blood – He had to die to make it possible for us to have peace with God.
- Having reconciled us with God, Jesus decides to entrust us with the message of reconciliation... *He has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*
- In other words, Jesus intends to use you to spread the message of peace to everyone around you.

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- Paul calls us ambassadors of Christ – in case you don't know, an ambassador is an important official who lives in a foreign country and represents his or her own country's interests there.

THE LIFE OF A PEACE MAKER – let me take you through a journey of what it looks like to be a peacemaker.

1. A peacemaker knows peace

- This is the starting point; you got to know peace for yourself. I am talking about having an intimate knowledge of the peace of God.
- When you have encountered the peace of God, the peace of God will be transferred to others around you – you can only pass on that which you have.

Acts 3:6 But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!

- Jesus is the prince of peace and as such He was able to say in *John 14:27 Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you.*

2 Corinthians 5:21 For He has made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- The great reconciler, the one we are trying to imitate set the benchmark for us.
- Jesus, the most righteous one allowed Himself to be sin for the sake of sinners who could not help themselves.
- He left the glory and the splendor of heaven for the sake of peace.

2. A peacemaker sacrifices for the sake of peace

- You are going to sacrifice something for peace. Sometimes the extend of peace is determined by the extend of the sacrifice.
- I am talking firstly about peace for someone who does not know God and secondly relational peace.
- People without Jesus don't have peace and they are waiting for you and me to sacrifice a bit of our precious time, a bit of our cash and a bit of everything for their sake to share Christ with them.
- What are you prepared to sacrifice for peace to return between you and your estranged friend and relative.
- People want peace but very few are ready to pay the price for it.

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- According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 21,000 people died from political violence during apartheid in South Africa:
 - 1948–1989: 7,000 deaths
 - 1990–1994: 14,000 deaths and 22,000 injuries
- Any meaningful peace is achieved at a price.

2 Corinthians 5:19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.

- When Jesus died on the cross, He died in faith that you and I will open ourselves to His forgiveness.
- You need to appreciate what Jesus was forgiving – He was forgiving the great betrayal that took place in the garden of Eden, the denial of God and the treason that was committed by man.
- It was a type of sin that didn't deserve forgiveness, but only punishment and eternal damnation. That is what Jesus erased entirely.
- This means that forgiveness is the only pathway to peace in certain circumstances.

3. A peacemaker forgives the unforgivable.

- Unforgiveness and peacemaking are like oil and water, they will never mix.
- The presence of forgiveness gives a chance for peace.
- What made Nelson Mandela popular was not the fact that he spent a long time in prison; it was the fact the he called for reconciliation and forgiveness when he was released.
- Peace dies at the mountain of unforgiveness and bitterness. At the mountain of unforgiveness, hearts are hardened and they become like impenetrable fortresses.
- Each time you are dealing with a hardened heart, you need to know that you are still far from achieving peace.
- Unforgiveness will end 20 years of friendship, 30 years of marriage and 10 years of a business partnership.
- Never underestimate the power of forgiveness in the life of a peacemaker.

Philippians 2: 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or empty pride, but in humility consider others more important than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

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- At the center of warring parties is this thing called self. When too much attention is given to self, anything that threatens self will be resisted.
- 4. A peacemaker prefers others over self.**
- Peace is only possible when you remove your eyes from self and land them on another.
- Peace is only possible when you put yourself in the shoes of the other person and feel their pain.
- Sometimes, the pastor must overlook bad treatment for the sake of keeping peace in the church.
- When you hear someone saying, “I don’t care how he takes it, as long as I make my self heard”, then you must know that you are dealing with a peace destroyer.
- To consider others more important than yourself means that you honor appointments, you keep your word, you respect meetings by being attentive and present, you communicate timeously.
- A self-ambitious individual will do whatever it takes to be in front of everyone. You hear them say “the end justifies the means”. This person wants the front seat, this person wants to be first in the queue, this person wants promotion regardless of the collateral damage that comes with it.
- Saints, these are the things that create a peaceful environment at work, at home and at church.
- When you look more at the interests of others, it means you are humble at heart.
- I have never seen peace in and around a person that is proudful. Pride destroys peace all the time.
- Let me talk about humility a little bit. Humility does not mean you allow yourself to be a door mat but rather humility is the ability to see yourself the way God sees you.
- God has anointed you and you know very well – humility means that you don’t have to parade your abilities for people to know that you are graced in a specific way.
- Jesus knew that everything was put under His feet but went onto wash His disciple’s feet. *John13:3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and went to God,4 He rose up from supper and laid aside His garments. And He took a towel and girded Himself.*
- Humility means you understand authority and submit yourself to authority all the time.

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- Authority is not universal but territorial – what I mean is that you are only in authority within your boundaries.
- I am in authority here as a pastor but when I go somewhere else, I am not in authority and therefore I must submit myself to the authority there.
- Peace is destroyed whenever you illegally exercise authority over people and communities.
- Husbands listen to me; you have authority over your wife and not over every wife around.
- Fathers, you have authority over your children and not over all the children. In other words, trespassing in authority destroys peace.

5. A peacemaker gives God a chance to fight for him.

- Each time you take a matter in your hands, you should know that you are about to spoil the chance for peace.
- You don't know how far to go and as such when you take the matter in your own hands, you destroy peace around you.
- We end up damaging cutlery in the kitchen, we end up destroying the guy's windshield and causing a scene in the process.
- How do you deal with people who have done you wrong as a peacemaker?

Romans 12:17 Repay no one evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as far as is in you, being in peace with all men. 19 not avenging yourselves, beloved, but giving place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord." 20 Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him. If he thirsts, give him drink. For in so doing you shall heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

- Peacemakers don't fight their own battles but rather they hand them over to the Lord.
- When you have an issue with someone, you need to know how to fight as a peacemaker.
- A peacemaker will pay lunch for the person who has been gossiping about them.
- A peacemaker will visit the person who has been bad mouthing him when they here that they are sick.
- In other words, you become a peace broker when you come with a different spirit. They came to you with hatred, but you go to them with love and smiles.