

Peacemakers

Matthew 5:9

June 8, 2014

Series title: 2 Roads; 8 Sign Posts

Review:

Blessed are the poor in spirit--those who don't make SELF (happiness) the center of their life.

Blessed are those who mourn--who take seriously the awful dilemma of SELF committed to staying central in our lives.

Blessed are the meek--those who turn away from "ME-ness" and move toward God and others.

Blessed are those who hunger ...for righteousness--who are driven to God for the inner change needed to be more caught up with God and others than SELF.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy--this calls for a dramatic change in the way we think of people, and relate to them. We were critical of people when they didn't come through for us. Now we see the awful SELF that drives being critical. We want to extend mercy to them!

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Just getting our "act together" is not enough. Not by a long shot. God is after our hearts—clean hearts, and devoted hearts to Him and people.

DAY 1: Who is a peacemaker?

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God.

1. When you think of the term, "peacemaker," what comes to mind? Who is it? What is he/she doing?
2. When we think of peacemakers we usually think of horrible conflicts. Peacekeepers are troops or policemen. But Jesus is not talking about them. He is talking about garden-variety people like you and me, who have some type of "ability" to make or create peace where there is conflict, drama or hurt feelings.
3. After reading the note above, now who comes to mind? What are they doing? Why would you call them a peacemaker?

James 3:17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. [18] Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

4. What character qualities are associated with the process of being a peacemaker? Which ones are your strongest qualities? Which are your weakest?
5. Ask God to strengthen the qualities you need to be an agent of peace with people in your life.

DAY 2: What causes conflict?

1. Why do we even need peacemakers?

James 4:1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? [2] You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God.

2. What specific things cause conflict?

3. In James 4:1-2, how committed are we to our way?

Prov. 13:10 Pride breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

4. What does Proverbs add to our understanding of why we have conflict and drama?

5. Let's now look at what a "peacemaker" is. Place a check next to any of the following you think defines a peacemaker:

Passive person

Easy-going person

Peace-at-any-price person

Avoids conflict

Peacenik

6. #5 was a trick question. None of those define a peacemaker. In fact, they all are likely to inadvertently cause conflict by not addressing issues.

7. The place to start with being a peacemaker is not to be a "conflict maker." If you are easily hurt, easily offended, looking for slights, talk about others' weaknesses, touchy, or defensive, the place to start being a peacemaker is with you!

8. The peacemaker is the person who is not looking at something from his point of view or of the effect of something upon himself. "What is this going to mean to me, to us? Is this fair to me? What about my rights?" That is the very spirit that leads to arguments and quarrels, to hurt feelings and estrangement!

9. Finish today with prayer, asking God to make you less committed to "self" and more committed to peace with others.

DAY 3: What do peacemakers do? Part 1

1. A peacemaker must be a good listener. He must seek to understand the person with whom he is talking. Below each of the verses, jot down why listening is important, and what listening can accomplish...

James 1:19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry...

James 1:20 ... for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

John 7:24 "Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment."

Proverbs 18:17 The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him.

Proverbs 24:3 (Living) Any enterprise is built by wise planning, becomes strong through common sense, and profits wonderfully by keeping abreast of the facts.

2. Which of these verses struck you the most?

3. Why?

4. How do you do at listening?

5. Are there some people with whom you need to listen better? Do you find yourself "jumping in" too soon? Answering questions too quickly?

DAY 4: What do peacemakers do? Part 2

1. We looked at the importance of listening. Another quality, even more important is humility.
2. In the following verses, Jesus describes two situations:
 - a. Situation A: You suddenly realize that someone else has something against you.

*Matthew 5:23-24 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, [24] leave your gift there in front of the altar. **First go** and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.*

- b. Situation B: Someone else has sinned against you. You are unable to overlook the sin or forgive the sin. A breach in the relationship remains.

*Matthew 18:15 "If your brother sins against you, **go** and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.*

3. Taking Situation A and Situation B, what is your responsibility? Who is to take the initiative to make peace?

4. How hard is it to take the initiative in Situation A? How hard is it to ask forgiveness for something you've done?

5. What are you tempted to do *instead of* asking forgiveness?

___ Hope the person overlooks what you did.

___ Hope the person forgets what you did.

___ Hope the person doesn't think what you did is "that big a deal."

___ Other: _____

6. How hard is it to initiate a conversation with someone who has sinned against you?

7. Why is humility necessary?

8. How would genuine humility help you with either Situation A or Situation B? What would talking to these people be like *without* humility?

9. Is there someone with whom you need to take the initiative? Ask God to give you humility.

DAY 5:

Ephes. 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

1. What do you think Paul means by "unwholesome talk?"

2. Paul lists three "guards" that are to stand at the edge of our mouth, acting as "security" to let only appropriate words pass through. Jot down the three "guards" below. Then, jot down what strikes you about each "guard."

a. _____:

b. _____:

c. _____:

3. Sometimes making peace means "extending an olive branch," or something bigger! Before we do that, we may need to leave what we'd "rather do" in God's hands!!!

Romans 12:19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

4. What is our "action item" from this verse?

5. What helps us to actually leave retributive action to God and not drop the hammer ourselves?

Romans 5:20 No, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

6. Paul tells us to do something that is counter-intuitive. What he advocates is "undeserved kindness!"

7. What does he say should be the effect of undeserved kindness?

"...they shall be called children of God."

8. When we are peacemakers, we emulate God who made peace with us!

Col. 1:20 ...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.

9. What is your biggest takeaway from today's study?