

Matthew050112-091811  
Bridge of Hope  
September 18, 2011

## “The Messianic Exchange”

We have been talking about the Beatitudes found in Matthew 5. Matthew is teaching his readers about an exchange of ideas moving his readers from a distinctly Jewish understanding to the thought of the newly formed Messianic Community.

Jesus had taught them about a new way of living that was the opposite of the legalistic code that dominated Jewish faith and life. And in the Beatitudes Jesus immediately goes to work in teaching His new group of disciples what it means to live as His disciple. Here Jesus talks about something every disciple wants to know, He tells them how to experience the approval of God in their life. We have discovered that the idea communicated through the word “Blessed are” in each of the Beatitudes is the same as saying “approved of God are . . .” In other words, God smiles on those who live this kind of life. With this in our minds let’s take a look at the text and then work our way through the 7<sup>th</sup> Beatitude.

**Matthew 5:1-12 (NKJV)** *And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:*

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.  
Blessed are those who mourn,  
For they shall be comforted.  
Blessed are the meek,  
For they shall inherit the earth.  
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
For they shall be filled.  
Blessed are the merciful,  
For they shall obtain mercy.  
Blessed are the pure in heart,  
For they shall see God.  
**Blessed are the peacemakers,  
For they shall be called sons of God.**  
Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,  
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

*"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

- **BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS**

1. We start our conversation by recognizing the 2 thoughts brought together in the first part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Beatitude.
  - **Peace** – this is the same as the Hebrew word shalom which bears the idea of wholeness and overall well-being in a person’s life.
    - The Jewish audience listening to Jesus would have easily understood this.

- It meant that you wished more than simply the absence of trouble.
  - This meant you wished for them all that would make for a complete whole life.
  - Shalom or peace “is much more than the absence of strife; it encompasses all of the person, it is positive.”<sup>1</sup>
  - **Makers** – this is an action word as in making something happen that might not have otherwise taken place.
    - The person is not passive; they bring peace to the situation.
    - This is really a dynamic word full of energy and bursting forth.
    - They create what isn’t there already, they do something about the situation.
  - **Peacemakers** – together it “describes one who actively pursues peace in its fullness. He pursues more than the absence of conflict; he pursues wholeness and well being.”<sup>2</sup>
2. We must understand what a peacemaker is not in order for us to grasp what a peacemaker is according to Jesus.
- A peacemaker is not . . .
    - the kind of person who is easy going or has a laissez-faire approach to life.
    - always tolerant of everyone or everything around them.
    - an appeaser of people who only wants peace at any cost.
    - the diplomat who speaks in a low monotone voice void of any real help or direction for those listening.
  - The world often defines peacemakers in such light, but this is not what Jesus meant.
3. Before we talk about what a peacemaker is we must know the source of peace.
- Peace belongs to God which means it doesn’t belong to man.
  - Apart from God you cannot experience peace because “peace is the perfect harmony and tranquility that belongs to God.”<sup>3</sup>
  - Because man has been alienated from God by His sin he brings turmoil and destruction to life, he brings the absence of shalom.
  - The absence of shalom in a person’s life can cause them to search for peace.
  - “He is not only the God who is the source of peace, but also He is a God at perfect peace with Himself, a God characterized by perfect harmony and tranquility.”<sup>4</sup>
  - God alone is our source for shalom, a perfect peace given to us when we are reconciled through Christ.
4. So . . . what is a peacemaker like as presented by Jesus to His newly formed group of disciples in this 7<sup>th</sup> Beatitude?
- A peacemaker is characterized by **HONESTY**.
    - If there is a problem then they admit that there is a problem rather than trying to deny that it exists.
    - They follow the advice found in Ezekiel 13:10 and refuse to proclaim peace where there is no peace. They are honest about it.
    - People often want to gloss over or cover up a problem because they want peace.
    - But the truth is that peace cannot be gained by pretending trouble isn’t there. You cannot ignore or deny the absence of shalom, it is either there or it isn’t.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Kent Hughes, The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom, pg 62

<sup>2</sup> R. Kent Hughes, The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom, pg 62

<sup>3</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, The Sermon on the Mount: Contemporary insights for a Christian Lifestyle, pg 62

<sup>4</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, The Sermon on the Mount: Contemporary insights for a Christian Lifestyle, pg 62

- A peacemaker is someone willing to be honest about the situation.
- **A peacemaker is willing to RISK PAIN.**
  - Whenever you try to bring peace to a situation, personal or social, you risk misunderstanding. And misunderstanding can bring pain.
  - If you have been wrong about something there is pain in admitting it and apologizing for it.
  - If another person has wronged you there is the risk of pain when you address the wrong that has been done.
  - When you observe another person doing wrong, it is painful to challenge or rebuke them for the wrongdoing.
  - The temptation we all struggle with is to let it go, just let it slide on by, as we try to rationalize and excuse it away.
  - But the problem is it doesn't go away on its own, it just stays there and grows.
  - A peacemaker is willing to risk the pain.
- **A peacemaker is a FIGHTER.**
  - Kind of another paradox in the Beatitudes, here is what we mean; they are people who are willing to make some trouble in order to make peace.
  - They are people who actively pursue peace and that sometimes means they have to fight for it.
  - “St. Francis of Assisi understood this call to active pursuit of peace:  
*Lord, Make me an instrument of Thy peace.  
Where there is hate, may I bring love;  
Where offense, may I bring pardon;  
May I bring union in place of discord.*”<sup>5</sup>
  - A peacemaker as a fighter never gives a license to verbally assault another in thoughtless or pugnacious ways.
  - A peacemaker as a fighter must be permeated with the peace of God.
- **A peacemaker is someone who FOLLOWS THE EXAMPLE OF THE ULTIMATE PEACEMAKER, Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.**
  - Someone who understands peace is not cheap and there is nothing inexpensive about peacemaking.
  - As Paul said in **Colossians 1:19-20** (NIV) *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 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.*
  - “Jesus saw the gravity of our problem and he refused to sweep it under the rug. Only a drastic solution would suffice, and so He ‘[made] peace’ (the same root words as in Matthew 5:9 for ‘peacemakers’) ‘through his blood.’ Christ is our supreme example of sacrificial aggression in bringing peace.”<sup>6</sup>

**5. Approved of God are those who actively pursue bringing peace to others by living their lives as peacemakers . . . .**

- **FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED SONS OF GOD**

**1. The promise of this beatitude is far reaching, profound, and incredibly powerful.**

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<sup>5</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*, pg 63

<sup>6</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*, pg 64

2. Jesus said that those who are peacemakers are called Sons of God; that is breathtaking when you stop to think about it.
3. The Greek word used for the pronoun is once again emphatic, “for the sons of God shall be called.”
  - The idea in this statement is that they alone shall be called God’s sons.
  - And it is God who gives them the designation as sons.
4. By becoming our peace Jesus dispenses His shalom in our lives.
  - **John 14:27** (NIV) *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*
  - He gives us His peace and expects us in turn to be dispersers of His peace.
5. The language used in the title “sons of God” is referring to character in their lives.
  - A peacemaker is one who partakes of the character of God.
  - They are like God in the way they live.
  - They are sons of God which means they are peacemakers just like God is.
6. Peacemakers are missionaries on mission to bring peace to others around them.
  - J. Dwight Pentecost writes, “Blessed are those who go as the Son of man went to seek and to save that which is lost, to lead them out of the wilderness into the safety of the fold.”<sup>7</sup>
  - He continues to write, “To be a peacemaker, a man needs to know just one essential truth: Christ died for our sins and rose again the third day in order that we might come to peace with God. A peacemaker must know that truth, then impart it to men who are alienated from God.”<sup>8</sup>
7. As “sons/children of God” we start in the community of believers as we bring peace to God’s family.
  - We dispense peace to one another and the world watches with amazement as love is shared.
  - We freely give what cannot be given outside of Christ.
  - It starts with bringing peace between us and then it overflows to bringing peace to those who are troubled and watching the body of Christ.

Conclusion: “It is God’s plan that those who have come to peace with Himself should live in peace, believer united with believer in an assembly of believers. Believers have an obligation to maintain the peace God has provided through the blood of the cross.”<sup>9</sup>

We are to be peacemakers. People who are honest about the lack of shalom, who are willing to take risks of pain, and who will fight for peace. A people having freely received peace in their lives through the grace of God as we share in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. We give because He gave and share because Jesus shared with us.

As we finish today’s message we must know that this 7<sup>th</sup> Beatitude is the last that discusses the character of a Christ follower and that all the preceding Beatitudes build to this point. Peacemakers are developed one step at a time as they progress in the truth of the Beatitudes.

R. Kent Hughes presents this progression of thought, “Peacemakers are developed as they ascend the ladder (the spiritual logic) of the Beatitudes.

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<sup>7</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Sermon on the Mount: Contemporary insights for a Christian Lifestyle*, pg 64

<sup>8</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Sermon on the Mount: Contemporary insights for a Christian Lifestyle*, pg 65

<sup>9</sup> J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Sermon on the Mount: Contemporary insights for a Christian Lifestyle*, pg 65

- **BEATITUDE ONE:**  
These have experienced poverty of spirit (the recognition that there is nothing within them to commend them to God). In fact, it remains their ongoing awareness and as such is the ground for ongoing spiritual blessing.
- **BEATITUDE TWO:**  
These have come face to face with their own sin, and they mourn over it.
- **BEATITUDE THREE:**  
Due to the authenticity of their poverty of spirit and mourning, these experience gentleness and humility in dealing with others.
- **BEATITUDE FOUR:**  
Because these have experienced poverty of spirit and mourning and meekness, they hunger and thirst for all righteousness.
- **BEATITUDE FIVE:**  
The reality of their own need has made these merciful to others.
- **BEATITUDE SIX:**  
These have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, and their pure lives are focused on him, and thus they are blessed with an ongoing vision of God.
- **BEATITUDE SEVEN:**  
And now these, having been so infused by Christ's peace and the character of the kingdom, are peacemakers.

Peacemakers are those through whom the entire Beatitudes course again and again – sometimes in order, sometime out of order, sometimes singly, sometimes all together. They have the character of the King – they are peacemakers.”<sup>10</sup>

God is making us aware and calling us into action as He strives to build a family of peacemakers. It is now time to step up and follow Jesus!

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<sup>10</sup> R. Kent Hughes, The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom, pg 67-68