

Sermons 9 and 10, Blessed Are the Peacemakers, Matt. 5:9

If there is peace in the heart, there will be peace in the family.

If there is peace in the family, there will be peace in the city.

If there is peace in the city, there will be peace in the nation.

If there is peace in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

—Confucius (taken from Peter Kreeft, *Ecumenical Jihad*, 94)

Opening hymn: Christ shall have dominion; Scripture reading James 3:13-4:10

Definition of peace:

“Peace implies a twofold union, as stated above ([Article 1](#)). The first is the result of one's own appetites being directed to one object; while the other results from one's own [appetite](#) being united with the [appetite](#) of another: and each of these unions is effected by [charity](#)--the first, in so far as [man](#) loves [God](#) with his whole heart, by referring all things to Him, so that all his desires tend to one object--the second, in so far as we love our neighbor as ourselves, the result being that we wish to fulfil our neighbor's will as though it were ours.” Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II.29.3

“Peace is the union of the [appetite's](#) inclinations.” Ibid, ad 3

“The highest place in the royal palace belongs to the king's son.”--Ibid, I-II.69.4 ad 3

Peace is only possible for the pure in heart. A divided heart is at war with itself and thus cannot possibly be at peace with its neighbor.

We must so make peace with men that we do not break our peace with conscience. ‘Follow peace and holiness’ ([Hebrews 12:14](#)). We must not purchase peace with the loss of holiness.--Watson

If we ought to lay down our life for Christ's sake, shall we not lay down our strife for his sake?--Watson

“This is not just someone having peace, it is a peacemaker! It is a very active quality, not a passive one.”--Allen Tomlinson

And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. (Isa 32:17 ESV) "There is no peace for the wicked," says the LORD. (Isa 48:22 NAS) ‘The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable’ ([James 3:17](#)) Those who love Thy law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble. (Psa 119:165) My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; For length of days and years of life, And peace they will add to you. (Pro 3:1-2) Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, But

counselors of peace have joy. (Pro 12:20) Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. (2Co 13:11) In his days may the righteous flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more! (Psa 72:7 ESV) For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this. (Isa 9:6-7 NAS) 10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth. (Zec 9:10 NAS) Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. (Joh 14:27 ESV) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phi 4:6-7 NAS)

Examples of Peace:

David was for peace (**Psalm 120:7**), but he would not sit on the ale-bench with sinners (**Psalm 26:4, 5**). --Watson

Solomon: Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon [Shlomo], and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. (1Ch 22:9)

Example of Peacemaking:

Moses was a peacemaker: "And on the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, 'Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?' (Act 7:26 NAS)

God: "Dominion and fear are with God; he makes peace in his high heaven (Job 25:2 ESV)

The world's concept of peace: "They make a desert and call it peace." "Kill the person who disagrees with you." "Avoid the person who disagrees with you." "Don't bring up the subject with the person who disagrees with you."

God's concept of peace:

How do you get peace? By loving what is good. By keeping the law of God. By submitting to the Prince of Peace.

How do you make peace? You must first have peace with God in your own heart. Then you must lead others to peace with God in their hearts.

Enemies of Peace

Things opposed to peace: envy, pride, self-will

Things opposed to peace-making: heresy, schism, sowing discord (Prov. 6:19); carelessness about national divisions and a system that denies the existence of the common good;

Questions to Answer

What is peace?

How do you get peace?

What is opposed to peace?

What is peace-making?

Who is a peace-maker?

How does one make peace?

What are the enemies of peacemaking?

What is the reward of the peacemaker?

Why is this reward appropriate?

Proposition: Pt. 1: Peace and peacemaking are both dependent on a right relationship with the God of peace. **Pt. 2:** God is a peacemaker, and those who have peace and make peace will be recognized as His sons.

Outline

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 - 3. Spiritual Sins: Envy, Pride, Self-will

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- D. How Does One Make Peace? [Pt. 2 begins here]
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 - a) Personally Submitting to the Prince of Peace, Zech. 9:10
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- E. The Enemies of Peacemaking
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- A. Its Nature: Recognition as Being Like God
 - B. Its Fittingness: Conformity to the Image of the Prince of Peace

Manuscript

‘The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable,’ comments the apostle James (**James 3:17**). Do you think he might have based that comment on these words of Jesus? After all, what did we hear about last Sunday? That we must be pure in heart if we would see God. Well, after purity comes peaceableness, says James. And Jesus says the same thing. If you are pure in heart, then being a peacemaker will flow from that heart reality.

Every one of you longs for peace. We all have conflicts in our daily lives. We all have bosses and co-workers and children and parents and spouses who don’t see eye-to-eye with us. We are all very aware of the deeply divided nature of our country. How can you really say you have a lot in common with someone whose identity as “American” is as good as yours, but who believes that government exists to pay for sex-change surgeries and that he has a right to beget and murder children indiscriminately? Or, forget the divisions within our borders; we are even more deeply divided from other nations. Can we be friends with Russia? Will China attack us over Taiwan? Will the Middle Eastern countries ever play nice-nice with us? Brothers and sisters, conflict and division are rampant in our world. People in the newspapers are saying all the time that they have never seen America so deeply divided.

Why is that? What's the connection here? Well, as usual, Jesus has diagnosed the illness and provided the cure in two sentences. The first part of the diagnosis was last week. "Blessed are the pure in heart." Now, how is that beatitude connected to this one? Remember, we defined purity of heart as willing one thing. But that's also the definition of peace. Here's the connection between heart peace and world peace.

If there is peace in the heart, there will be peace in the family.

If there is peace in the family, there will be peace in the city.

If there is peace in the city, there will be peace in the nation.

If there is peace in the nation, there will be peace in the world.⁸

Now, those words aren't mine. They were said by Confucius, five centuries before Christ. But don't they immediately ring true? I believe that they do. Our hearts are divided, pulled between competing lusts and virtues. Our families are divided, whether by outright divorce or by quiet resentment and desperation. Our cities are divided, white vs. black, poor vs. rich, cops vs. criminals. And so our nation suffers from partisan politics and our world hovers on the brink of open warfare between superpowers.

It's in this environment of conflict that Jesus Christ declares a blessing on the peacemakers. That's why you need to listen: because you need to see that peace and peacemaking are both dependent on a right relationship with the God of peace. God is a peacemaker, and those who have peace and make peace will be recognized as His sons. We will see this by looking at peace, by looking at peacemaking, and then by looking at the reward of peacemakers.

I. Peace

I realize that a one-word point doesn't say much. But we're going to look at the nature of peace.

A. Its Nature: Harmonious (not Clashing) Desires and Persons

Purity of heart, as I just said, is to will one thing. That's what peace is too. James teaches this: fights and wars come from our warring pleasures. That's the literal Greek word. Not lusts. Not passions. No, the word is *pleasures*, as the NKJV and NASB have translated it. "Peace is the union of the [appetite's](#) inclinations," said Thomas Aquinas. And he was right on. Peace is what you have when your heart is undivided from itself and when you're undivided from those around you. If you and your wife agreed on everything, from the depths of your hearts, then you wouldn't be in conflict. You wouldn't wish that she was doing things a little differently, because you would agree from the bottom of your heart with how she does them. I know, such a vision of peace sounds utopian. It's hard to take in with respect to any of our worldly relationships. So think for a second about the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Is there anything Jesus does that makes the Father unhappy? Does the Spirit act contrary to Christ's wishes in any way? No! They are all three perfectly united and at peace with one another. Whatever one does the other two are completely on board with. The Son does nothing except what He sees the Father do!

⁸ Confucius, quoted in Peter Kreeft, *Ecumenical Jihad*, 94.

That's why God is called so often in Scripture *the God of Peace*. The three Persons are always in perfect harmony and perfectly at peace. And this is the goal, not just for your heart's inclinations, but even for your relationships with every person you know. Perfect peace is harmonious desires and interpersonal harmony. A world where everyone agrees with you, and you agree with everyone, and you're all mutually satisfied in each other! It's so different from the world that now is that it's hard to believe that this is what peace is. And indeed, we will not have this kind of perfect peace within our hearts and with all men around us until we are in heaven. But we can and should strive for it now. Now, little disagreements about immaterial things are consistent with peace here on earth. You're never going to be at perfect peace even with yourself, never mind with your spouse or the grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia. But nonetheless, if we are going to think about the blessing that comes to peacemakers, we must know what peace is.

B. Its Source: Rest in Pursuing One's Chief End

Now, the obvious question that arises is, "Can't I have peace by agreeing with an abortion doctor that abortion is good?" "Can't I have peace by agreeing with my mistress that my spouse is rotten?" In short, we want to know why we can't have peace by harmony with wicked thoughts and wicked people. The answer is that God has made us for Himself. There is no peace to the wicked, as God says in Isaiah 48 and 57. Your heart can never be fully united with itself in pursuing wickedness; nor can the wicked ever know the blessing of true peace among themselves. Your heart was made to love the good and to seek God, and no matter how hard you try to efface that reality, you can't. It's hard-wired. It's built-in. It's part of your conscience, and you can't lose it without ceasing to be human.

So peace doesn't just come from harmony with yourself and others. Peace ultimately has to come from harmony with what you were made to be. You can only have peace when you're pursuing your purpose of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. You can only be at peace when every desire of your soul fits with the purpose stamped on you by God Himself. We talked about all this last week, and I'm not going to repeat everything I said then. Just know that without purity of heart, you will never know peace of heart. You can't; your warring pleasures will see to that. Remember what we read in James this morning. Notice how he progressed from talking about quarreling to talking about peace to talking about how to have peace you have to purify your double-minded heart and become a single-minded person, a person who wants only one thing. That is purity of heart, and that is internal peace. And you can only have peace in the family, the city, the nation, and the world if you first have peace in your own heart.

C. Its Enemies

Well, peace comes from seeking to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. But peace has enemies.

1. The World's "Peace"

The first of these enemies is the most subtle and dangerous. It is a counterfeit peace, and one we can mistake for the real deal — even one we *want* to mistake for the real deal. Let me share some of these slogans of worldly peace with you.

The most egregious manifestation of this spirit was well expressed by the Roman historian Tacitus, talking about the imperial methods of his own city: “They make a desert and call it peace.” In other words, they wipe out everyone who might resist Roman occupation and then say that they have pacified that particular territory. Some people still think this is a good method of producing world peace. They want to “make the sand glow” in the Middle East.

Less dramatic, but the same basic idea, is what we at least popularly (if maybe inaccurately) associate with Muslims: “Kill the person who disagrees with you.” Well, that’s one way to make peace, but again, it’s the world’s way. It’s not God’s way.

I know none of you want to kill everyone who disagrees with you. Maybe you hope your boss, or worse, your spouse, will have a bad heart attack and just slip away peacefully. But you would never lift a finger against them. But how about this slogan: “Avoid the person who disagrees with you.” I have news for you: that’s not God’s definition of peace. That’s the world’s counterfeit peace. There is nothing godly about avoiding people, tacitly ending relationships because you can’t agree. The same spirit manifests itself like this: “Don’t bring up the subject with the person who disagrees with you.” That’s not peace! That’s a counterfeit of peace. That’s not actually being united in heart and united with your neighbor. That’s simply submerging the difficulty. You are not at peace with someone with whom you can’t bring up certain topics. You are not at peace when every conversation is a minefield. I think you know that.

Now, why I do list these kinds of measures as “worldly peace”? Because they are substitutes for peace. They aren’t the real thing. Now, I’m not saying that it’s always a sin to avoid certain topics or people. Not at all. But don’t think that you are at peace with that person just because you mutually avoid each other. That’s a substitute for peace. Sometimes it’s the best you can do. God tells us to be at peace *as much as depends on us*. He knows that we can’t live at peace with people who are radically opposed to Him. Not in the full sense, anyway. But you know, if you always avoid the people you disagree with, you will never come to agreement. You will never find peace with them. That’s why I say counterfeit, worldly peace is the opposite of true peace. Sometimes the counterfeit is your only option. But don’t settle for it. Don’t believe that you’ve actually found peace when you’ve found a way to avoid the point of divisiveness. Biblically speaking, you haven’t found peace at all.

2. A Divided Heart

The second enemy of peace is a divided heart, for the reasons we’ve already discussed. If your heart wants mutually exclusive things, then it is at war with itself. Ultimately, your heart wants God. It was made to enjoy everything else in the world with reference to God. So if you attempt to cut God out of the equation, your heart is by definition divided. You want the satisfaction and wholeness that only God can give, and yet you also want to avoid Him. That’s not peace. When your pleasures are at war within you, you cannot have peace.

3. Spiritual Sins: Envy, Pride, Self-will

The sins of the heart, of the spiritual part of the human being, also prevent you from having peace. Envy hates the good of someone else, and yet you know that someone will always have it

better than you. Even if your life is the best human life imaginable, God will still have it better than you. When your heart is envious, it is not at peace with God's providence. Nor is it at peace with God. And thus, of course, it's not at peace with itself either.

Pride does the same thing. As long as you think you're better than someone, you'll have something to prove. You won't be at peace. You'll be at war, wanting to show the other person just how superior you really are.

And of course, self-will is the enemy of peace too. One of the students at my homeschool co-op growing up was called into the principal's office and asked to account for his behavior in some class or other. "I want to do what I want to do when I want to do it!" he wailed.

The principal said, "That pretty much sums it up." But I think we all see the connection. If you are bound and determined that your lust must and will be law, then you can't have peace. It's just not possible. People around you are going to resist your whims, and you're never going to be satisfied with that thing you so desperately wanted.

Well, knowing what's opposed to peace, we need to talk about the things that make for peace. How do you become a peace-maker?

II. Peace-Making

You see, that was all background. "This is not just someone having peace, it is a peacemaker! It is a very active quality, not a passive one," as my NH pastor Allen Tomlinson put it. Yes, before you can be a peacemaker you need to know what peace is, but once you know what peace is, you must strive to be a peacemaker. So what is peacemaking?

A. Its Nature: Bringing Reconciliation, Ending Strife

Well, it's just what it sounds like. Jesus was not an obscure teacher. He spoke in words that anyone can understand. The peacemaker is someone who brings reconciliation and ends strife. Our mind immediately jumps to doing this on the grand scale. Think of Jimmy Carter bringing the Israelis and the Egyptians together in the Camp David accords. Think of Theodore Roosevelt negotiating the peace treaty between Russia and Japan in the Russo-Japanese War back in 1905. TR won the Nobel Peace Prize for that effort. That's where my mind goes when I hear "blessed are the peacemakers." I think of glorious, universally acclaimed efforts that bring peace between warring nations of the earth. But Jesus wasn't only talking about that. Yes, what TR and Carter did was good as far as it went. But I think what we need to think of first and foremost when we hear this beatitude is ourselves. In your personal life, you need to be a peacemaker. The likelihood of Russia and Japan asking anyone in this room to negotiate a treaty is pretty much nil. But the likelihood of you needing to make peace between your fighting children, or between yourself and your spouse, co-worker, or boss approaches 100%. Virtually all of us will need to be peacemakers before the day is out, if only by swallowing our quick words and admitting that the other person has a point. Most of the time, you're not going to be negotiating treaties. You are going to be getting along with the people you already know, and living peaceably even with those who drive you nuts. Peacemakers are those who live in harmony with their families. Peacemakers are those who deal calmly with combative and disagreeable people at work.

B. Biblical Peacemakers

Let's scan some quick examples to see what peacemaking looks like.

1. Moses, Act 7:26

Moses was trying to reconcile his fighting brothers in peace. He was effectively telling them to break it up. Now, he got a little carried away. This didn't end well. But nonetheless, he was trying to bring reconciliation.

2. Solomon, 1 Chronicles 22:9

As you probably know, the Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*. This means peace, in the sense of wholeness and flourishing. Solomon's name is built on this Hebrew word. In Hebrew, he's called Shlomo. He was a *man of rest*, according to God--not a warrior, like his father, but a man who lived in peace and harmony with himself, his people, and the nations around him. Solomon didn't fight wars; he engaged in trade and built the Temple.

3. God, Job 25:2

God makes peace in heaven. Now, obviously heaven is a peaceful place, except when Satan is loose there causing war in heaven. But God brings reconciliation.

C. Biblical Peacemaking

We've talked in general about what biblical peacemaking looks like. But now we need to get specific. With whom do you make peace?

1. Between Yourself and God, Romans 5:1

Well, you must have peace with God. And this, in turn, you can only have if you're justified by faith. We've seen this theme over and over in these beatitudes. Only the true Christian fits this description. Only the believer is a peacemaker in the Biblical sense, because only the believer has made peace with God. This peace is only possible through faith in Jesus Christ. Unless you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He did the things recorded of Him in the pages of that book on your lap, you will never know this peace between yourself and God.

2. Between Yourself and Fellow Christians, Ephesians 4:3

But further, you must be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace with your fellow believers. This involves living meekly. This involves living mercifully. Most of all, this involves laying down your own rights in order to maintain that unity of the Spirit. Remember how self-will is opposed to peace? Well, it's especially opposed to peace between you and your fellow believers. If you have a complaint against someone, you need to talk to that person and work it out. What you don't need to do is wrap yourself in your armor of self-righteousness and insist that you're really the person who's been in the right the whole time. You must be more interested in peace than in self-gratification.

3. Between Yourself and Non-Christians, Romans 12:18

As much as it depends on you, you should be at peace with all men. This means that you must not try to antagonize your neighbors, your co-workers, your children, etc. They may not be Christians, and so you cannot have peace in the truest and deepest sense, but nonetheless your

lives together can be marked by harmony and good-will as much as it is in your power to produce those things.

4. Between Fellow Christians, Philippians 4:2-3

Paul sought to reconcile two particular sisters in the church who were at odds with each other. You and I have that same calling--not obtrusively, not in busy-body fashion, but as much as it depends on us. For example, someone may ask for your help as a witness in following the steps of Matthew 18. You should be willing to do that, in the service of the cause of peace. Someone may be starting an argument in your presence. You should say, "Excuse me, can we talk about something else?" and try to tactfully change the subject. Now, again, a great deal of wisdom is called for here. That's why I said the primary element in being a peacemaker is not negotiating treaties between warring powers, but rather is living in peace with the people you see every day. Proverbs 26:17 warns, "Whoever meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a passing dog by the ears." Don't meddle. But if the situation appears, to your sanctified common sense, to call for it, then intervene. It is never right to let fellow Christians come to blows, or come to the point of suing each other, if you can do something to prevent it.

5. Between Non-Christians

There is no direct reference to this in the Bible, unless you want to count Prov. 26:17. Therefore, be extremely cautious. Do not get involved in making peace between unbelievers unless you have been asked to do so, or unless you clearly (by that same sanctified common sense we just talked about) see an opportunity to prevent a fight without being an officious meddler. If a few words of explanation will solve the whole thing, or a few dollars paid in the right direction can tamp down animosity, then do it. But silence and withdrawal is sometimes a good option--particularly the more closely related the combatants are.

My brother-in-law lives in London, England, and he called me a few weeks ago to say that the neighbors like to come out on the driveway and yell at each other. Though he can't stand it, he wisely doesn't go over and try to break them up. If they're married to each, the only one who can make peace between them is Jesus Christ. You don't stand a chance. Remember, pride is the enemy of genuine peacemaking. Yes, quench the coals of growing strife--but remember that with married couples, and with many other quarreling parties, any attempt to directly quench the strife will only result in igniting a bigger conflagration.

6. Between Fellow Humans and God

Thus, the best way to make peace between fighting parties is to evangelize. It is only peace with God that can give peace in the human heart. It is only peace with God that can produce peace with one another. Let me read you the words of Confucius again. Where does peace begin? Not in international forums. Not at the UN. Not in the White House. No, peace begins the heart, and heart peace is only possible for those who know the Prince of Peace.

Poverty in spirit is only realized by spending time with God. Your heart will be broken over sin only as you become attuned to God's heart. Your life will manifest meekness only as you learn it from Jesus Christ. You will hunger and thirst for righteousness only as you see how

empty you really are. You will be merciful only when you have received mercy, and you will be pure in heart only when your heart is purified by faith in Jesus. So why should this Beatitude be any different? You can only become a peacemaker in the power of the Prince of Peace. You can only see peace on earth when you see every human person submitting to the government of the Son of God, under whose rule the increase of peace shall have no end. Do you long to see that peace? Then pray for opportunities for evangelism. Ask people about their religious views and their eternal destiny. Tell people how much God has done to bring peace on earth. Pray for our missionaries. Give financially to the work of missions, and give your time to the work of evangelism. Oh, and be peaceable yourself. That's how you begin to fulfill this beatitude. That's how you begin to be a peacemaker.

We'll talk next week about the how-to. For now, go in peace.

D. How Does One Make Peace? (Pt. 2 begins at this point)

Last week, brothers and sisters, we examined the nature of peace and began to talk about peacemaking. We addressed the reality that peace is dependent on purity of heart, and we talked about the different groups with whom the Christian must live in peace and between whom he ought to try to make peace. This is really a continuation of that same sermon, because the Bible is so rich with material on peace and peacemaking. I just couldn't say everything that needed to be said in only one sermon. I promise that I won't preach two sermons on a single verse very often. But I can't promise that I never will!

Peace means an undivided heart and undivided relationships. Peace means that from the bottom of your heart with agree with someone else and want to see that person's goals accomplished in the world. We talked about worldly substitutes for real peace. We also talked about how peace-making means bringing reconciliation, "quenching the coals of growing strife." Today we will talk more about peacemaking, and about the reward for peacemakers. What I want to show you is that God is a peacemaker, and those who have peace and make peace will be recognized as His sons. This week, we're going to get into the nitty-gritty of that. Last week, we introduced the subject of how to make peace. Today we're going to cover it in more depth. How do you make peace?

1. By Getting "on the same page" with Others

So peacemaking presupposes a lack of peace. That should be obvious. But a lack of peace means that two people or groups disagree with each other and are seeking different, mutually exclusive goals. How do you address that? Well, there are only two ways: either you can start to agree with others, or they can start to agree with you. Peacemaking is not possible so long as both sides are committed to their original opinions.

The first, obvious way to make peace is to agree with your adversary. Go along with his view of what ought to be done!

a) Personally Submitting to the Prince of Peace

This is clearest in agreeing with God." Acquaint yourself with Him and be at peace," Job recommended thousands of years ago. That advice is still rock-solid. If you are not a believer

today, I can promise you that you are at enmity with God. God commands you to submit. God commands you to love Him and His law. So long as you rebel, you are making yourself His enemy. What's the solution? How do you make peace in this situation? By submitting to the Prince of Peace. If you know that your heart is in rebellion against Christ, turn away from that rebellion. Turn to God. Confess your sin and run away from it towards God. Unless you submit to Christ, there is no peace possible for you. Your heart will be permanently divided against itself. Again, I put this front and center in this sermon, because without it all the rest of the sermon is pointless. You will never know peace until you know Jesus. The same is true on the national level: "And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, And the horse from Jerusalem; And the bow of war will be cut off. And He will speak peace to the nations; And His dominion will be from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth" (Zec 9:10 NAS). Who is it that speaks peace to the nations? Only the Prince of Peace. Only He can bring true peace to international conflicts. Only He can make wars to cease to the end of the earth.

b) By Backing Down and Letting the Other Person Win

Now, when you have gotten on the same page with the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you still have some options as to how you will make peace. First of all, you will need to back down and let the other person win sometimes. If your spouse wants to do something a different way, or if your coworker is determined that the project will be done his way and not yours, then you will sometimes need to back down. In fact, you should be willing to give up anything and everything except holiness for the sake of peace. Peace is not the highest goal, but it is the second-highest goal, you could say. Follow peace and holiness, says the Hebrew writer. Don't sacrifice holiness for the sake of peace. "We must so make peace with men that we do not break our peace with conscience. 'Follow peace and holiness' ([Hebrews 12:14](#)). We must not purchase peace with the loss of holiness," says Thomas Watson. But if the other person's way is not sinful, then Christian, you need to lay down your own way and let the other person win! Again, need I remind you that being a peace-maker is not an optional add-on for the super-Christian, but is a necessary part of the ordinary Christian life? Paul says that you are better off being defrauded than going to law against a Christian brother. "If we ought to lay down our life for Christ's sake, shall we not lay down our strife for his sake?" asks Thomas Watson.

Yet at the same time, Christianity does not demand that you always let the other person win. Sometimes it's better to let yourself be ripped off. But you are not obligated to let people steal from you and walk all over you. Another legitimate form of peacemaking is to get others over onto your page.

2. By Getting Others "on the same page" with You

Now, the hazards of this approach are obvious. The courts in this republic are full of people who believe that the justice of their cause is so obvious that they are simply bound to win. Yet of course, by definition at least half of them are wrong! Thinking you can get someone else on the same page with you is a risky proposition. But it is not impossible; indeed, it is a legitimate method of peacemaking.

a) By Teaching and Explaining

The first way to get people on the same page with you is to teach them. Sometimes, if they are reasonable people, this is all they need. Once they understand why you do the things you do, they will agree with you. Once your motivations are clear, they will be on board with you.

In other words, don't rule this out as a way of peacemaking. If you have a certain way you want to do things, you might be able to convince people to get on board with you just by explaining the advantages. Particularly in the church, this is my call as a minister of the gospel. I am supposed to proceed with all patience and teaching. If you are confused, alienated, or angered by how something is in this church, and you don't understand why it's done that way, then that's my fault. I have not taught or explained enough. You don't have to agree, though of course if we aren't at peace at least one of us is sinning. But I do hope you understand why we do everything we do around here. The same goes for how you lead your home and how you interact with your co-workers. I realize there are people who don't want to understand. I've worked with them. But many people do want to understand, and even if they don't agree, you owe it to them to attempt to make peace by carefully explaining the advantages of your way of doing things. This is what being a peacemaker is all about.

b) By Evangelizing

Well, second, the other way to bring people onto your page is by giving them the good news. Remember the worldly substitutes for peace? Avoiding the issue, avoiding the person, killing the person? Well, at some level, unless the people involved in conflict are Christians, they will not be able to find true peace. The peace in the heart that is the gift of the Holy Spirit applying the work of the Prince of Peace will not be there for anyone who does not believe in Jesus.

So you want to make peace by getting your adversary to agree with you? Pray for his salvation. Tell him the good news. If you're in conflict with your spouse, both of you need to soak in the gospel. Initiate prayer times. Ask her to sing hymns with you. Ask him to read the Bible with you. Remind him or her of what Jesus Christ has done and how that changes everything for us. If it's a co-worker or fellow student or someone like that, you have to be a little more creative. But it's still possible to bring up the good news of peace. Let me remind of what Jesus told the disciples before the crucifixion: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (Joh 14:27).

E. The Enemies of Peacemaking

Well, what is opposed to peacemaking? There are some things that will defeat it every time.

1. Antinomianism

The first is these is a disregard for the law of God. Being a "peace at any price" kind of person will never yield peace to you. Where does peace come from? Well, the Bible is quite explicit about this question.

- And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever. (Isa 32:17 ESV)

- "Those who love Thy law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble. (Psa 119:165)
- My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; For length of days and years of life, And peace they will add to you. (Pro 3:1-2)

Did you catch the close connection between the law of God and peace? I hope so. The Bible is insistent on this point. Unless you keep the law, you will not know peace. Don't ever give up holiness in an attempt to buy peace. You can't buy peace with the loss of holiness. It's impossible.

2. Heresy, Schism

Well, these next two sins both take place within the confines of the church. Heresy is the sin of teaching and believing false doctrine. Schism is the sin of separating from the true church and starting a new church that will declare other churches to be false churches. Both of these are serious sins. And you probably know heretics and schismatics. Now, every time someone leaves a church is not an example of schism. Schism is leaving a true branch of the visible church and declaring openly that in your infallible opinion that branch is not a true branch at all. It is not schism, however, when the church leaves you.

Take my seminary professors. They were members of the PCUS, and it started denying the deity of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and openly advocated and funded the sin of abortion. They didn't leave the church; the church left them. Just because they believed what the PCUS had historically confessed, they were outcasts in the church in which they had grown up.

Be careful what you believe and what church you leave. Actions have consequences; indulging in the sins of heresy and schism is radically opposed to peacemaking.

3. Sowing Discord (Prov. 6:19)

This sin is listed in Prov. 6 as an abomination and as something God hates. How do you sow discord? By repeating gossip. By intentionally trying to get your friends to fall out with each other. By telling someone something that they won't like. Oh, don't look so innocent. We all know how to do it. Sometimes we just enjoy a good argument, or we have our own purposes for creating discord. Children, listen here: are you guilty of trying to make your brothers and sisters fight with each other for your own amusement? Adults, are you guilty of trying to set various departments at work against each other?

4. Carelessness About National Divisions

Thomas Watson in his exposition of this text asked his readers to weep for England. And indeed, if you would be a peacemaker, your heart ought to be sorely grieved by the deep divisions in the American republic today. Are you sad that the Democratic party, with its anti-life, anti-property, anti-God platform is openly at war with those of us who believe in life, private property, and the fear of God? I trust so. Not caring about these things is a sign of a very hard, very careless heart. If you would be a peacemaker, you must do what you can to heal the wounds of this nation. You must evangelize, educate, explain, and convince people that the anti-God, anti-life agenda comes from Hell itself and must be stopped at any cost. Oh, pray for the divisions in our country to be

healed! Pray for God to stop the libertines from their reckless career of fornication and pillage through our land.

5. A Political System that Denies the Existence of the Common Good

Conservative Christians are sometimes accused of not believing in structural sins. And indeed, you won't hear me preaching that the US is a racist nation that needs to repent, or that it's an anti-poor nation that needs to repent. I think reports of structural sin in those areas are greatly exaggerated. But here's a structural sin that every one of us must oppose with our heart and soul, because it is so diametrically opposed to peacemaking. That is the system we largely have in place today, a system that says the national good is the sum of everything special interest groups want. There is no common good; law is simply an expression of the will of different interest groups! There is something white single mothers want, which is different from what seniors want, which is different from what college students want, which is different from what the LGBTQ want, which is different from . . . name it! Our country is riddled with special interest groups, all clamoring to be fed. What is Washington doing for the single black mother of four in St. Louis? In our day, that is a serious question. But can you seriously imagine George Washington trying to pass a law that said banks must lend to people no matter who they are? Can you imagine Andrew Jackson trying to protect "gay rights"? Of course not! Why not? Because these men believed in a *common good*. They believed there was something good for the whole country that was greater than the sum of its parts. They believed that a moral framework dependent on the laws of nature's God and administered by God-fearing pious citizens was the only way to produce and keep that common good.

Do you see how special interest politics are so opposed to peace? Peace is where all agree, where all work together in harmony. But requirement that I pay for someone's abortion is asking me to give up righteousness. It's asking me to hate that little baby and defy my God, or give up my peace with my government and my fellow citizen. You see, in a special interest group system, you have a zero-sum game. That's the premise of the system. Every favor that goes to black single mothers in St. Louis doesn't come to me, a married white male. Every dollar of pork-barrel spending that goes to Alaska doesn't go to Gillette. There's only so much pie, and it can only be sliced so many ways.

The common good says, "We want to do things that expand the whole pie." Interest-group politics says, "We want to do things that expand *our share*; forget the rest of the pie!" In short, the system is wired for disharmony because your gain is my loss. And of course I'm going to be opposed to that. Every dollar the government gives laid-off steelworkers is a dollar it took from We the People. Every dollar the government gives corn farmers is a dollar it took from We the People. Their gain is our loss. But the Constitution was written so that the Federal Government could provide for the *common defense* and promote the *general welfare*. There is a way to do politics where everyone benefits, all the time. And we'll see that way manifested in the rule of the Prince of Peace.

For now, pray for the common good. Vote for common good. Reject the idea that Washington needs to help 25-year-old pastors in Gillette, Wyoming. Washington needs to do what's good for the U.S.A. Remember, the idea that the common good doesn't exist is a heresy that prevents peacemaking.

III. The Peacemaker's Reward

Finally, we come to the peacemaker's reward. What blessing comes to the one who makes peace? James tells us that the peacemaker receives the fruit of righteousness. At least, the fruit is sown for him; he still has to harvest it. Nonetheless, righteousness is the result of making peace. That's the harvest you get when you sow peace. Our Lord promises a different version of this same reward--not righteousness per se, but rather recognition.

A. Its Nature: Recognition as Being Like God

The verb in this blessing is *called*. You become a son of God through faith, not through peace-making. Peacemaking doesn't make you a son of God. Rather, peacemaking makes you recognizable as a son of God. Like Father, like son! That's the idea Jesus is invoking here. God makes peace. He makes peace in heaven. By sending His Son, He made peace on earth. By sending His Spirit, He made peace in our hearts and in the hearts of countless millions of our fellow Christians. God is the God of peace, the God who wants us all to be united, having the same mind and desiring the same outcomes. He gave up His own Son to purchase peace with us.

And so, if you pursue peace with your whole heart, not by sweeping disagreements under the rug but by changing your own mind and changing others' minds so that they want to get along with you, you will be recognizable as a son of God. His image will be stamped upon you.

Further, it is the true Son of God who is the Prince of Peace. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who not only brings peace, but *is* our peace, according to the New Testament. How is He our peace? He kills hostility. In Him, we and our traditional enemies can suddenly be united in love for God and for the souls of His people.

If something takes its name from something, the thing it takes its name from is a very important thing. The Cam-plex takes its name from Campbell County. The Rocky Mountains didn't get their name by having one solitary rock outside Pagosa Springs, Colorado. No! Well, in the same way someone gets to be called a son of God not by having one tiny, isolated characteristic that's like God, but rather by having a prominent characteristic that is analogous to some characteristic of God Himself. If you are a peacemaker, you will be so much like God that you will be called His son.

B. Its Fittingness: Conformity to the Image of the Prince of Peace

This reward is eminently appropriate. God predestined you to be conformed to the image of His Son. He is engaged in remaking you according to the unchanging standard of the character of Jesus Christ, the greater Solomon, the true man of peace who brought peace on earth, peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. Brothers and sisters, to be like the Son of God is the greatest aspiration and the highest goal any human being can ever have. To be like Jesus! Ah, that is why you should seek peace: because you love Jesus, because you adore Jesus, and because imitating

Jesus is the thing you love best. Is your heart full of love for the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you just dying to be like Him? Then I beg you to be a peacemaker. Be at peace with Him, and He will reward you with noticeable likeness to Himself. You could have no greater goal and no better reward. Amen.