

**1.17.21**  
**The Way of a Peacemaker Is NOT Easy**  
**Matthew 5:9-12**

One of the things I said last week is we are in the midst of a grass roots movement. A movement within each of the local churches in each community to get back to what Jesus has called them to be and that is His disciples and a church who makes disciples.

Change in this world will only come when we allow change to come into our own heart. From there it will flow out of us into this community of believers and into the community around us.

That is why I believe, that in the past several weeks, God has been leading us through Jesus' sermon on the mount as found in Matthew 5 and we will continue to look at Jesus' teachings as found in Matthew throughout this year. So far, we have pretty much taken a verse at a time. This morning, I think the verses following our main verse found in Matthew 5:9 have a bearing on our teaching. So let's read verses 9-12.

**Matthew 5:9-12, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons (and daughters) of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad; for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."**

If you read through the last several verses, verses 3-10, what is called the Beattitudes, you will see Jesus's teachings are filled with blessings. You are blessed if you have and live in these attitudes Jesus says over and over again.

Living the blessed life with God is where Jesus wants us to be isn't it? That is the reason He died on the cross for you and me. Not just so you would be blessed with eternal life with Him and God, but so you would also be blessed in this life.

I again want to put the passage from Jeremiah in front of you this morning.

**Jeremiah 17:5, 7-8, "Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. For they will be like a tree planted by water, that extends its root by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit."**

No anxiety, no fear, green leaves, looking good and still producing good, everlasting fruit for the kingdom of God no matter what is happening in the world around us.

Sounds good to me, how about you? Amen?

But I want to re-emphasize as I did last week spiritual warfare is occurring around you. There is one who is doing everything in his power to keep you from producing fruit for God's kingdom and from living a blessed life during your stay here on earth. It is all Satan cares about. Keeping you from walking with God and your ability to help others walk with God.

But we know that greater is He who is in us than He who is in the world. Through the great work of Jesus on the cross, for those who accept His forgiveness and the new life He offers, Jesus places His own powerful presence inside of them.

But that is not all Jesus did. He also left us His powerful teachings that when we follow them, the power of the Holy Spirit is engaged and that is when the blessings begin to flow.

That is my first point.

**1. When obedience to the teachings of Jesus is coupled with His Spirit inside of us, blessings from heaven flow into your life**

That is what we want to focus upon this morning. But as the title of this sermon says, the way of a peacemaker is not easy, not always pleasant and the rewards are not always immediate.

**2. True Children Resemble Their Father**

If you were to take a picture of my father when he was 30 years old and you placed a picture of me when I was thirty, the resemblance is striking. We looked very, very similar at that age. It is not always that way with father and his son but it was the case with me.

Our main passage says something similar. **Matthew 5:9, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons (and daughters) of God.”**

What I think Jesus is saying here is the children of God will always resemble their Father. As the Father is, so are the children.

The fact that some people come to be children of God is found in **John 1:12, “To all who received Him (Jesus), and who believe in His name, He gave them the right to become children of God.”**

And **Galatians 3:26, “For in Christ Jesus you are all sons (and daughters) of God through faith.”**

We become the children of God by trusting in Christ Jesus for our forgiveness and our new life. Then in our passage in Matthew Jesus says those who have become sons and daughters of God have the character of their heavenly Father.

Now we know from scripture that God is a God of peace. You can look on-line for the sermon entitled God and Jesus, the Ultimate Peacemakers and read about some of the peacemaking work they did and how they continue to be peacemakers.

Jesus created peace on earth, peace between God and the men, women and children He created. Peacemaking is what Jesus and God are all about. By the work of Jesus on the cross, if you have accepted it, you have peace with God now and for eternity.

So if God is a peacemaker and we are called the children of God then the new nature we have been given is one of a peacemaker.

**Paul said in Galatians 4:6, “because you are sons (and daughters) God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying ‘Abba Father!’”**

**Paul also said in Romans 8:14, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons (and daughters) of God.”**

Being led by Christ’s Spirit includes bearing the fruit of the Spirit and we know that one of the fruits of the Spirit is what? Peace. Love, joy and peace. One of the fruits of the Spirit is peace.

If we are children of God, and if we are being led by the Holy Spirit then peacemaking should be a natural outflow of who we are. If we are not peacemakers, then you have to question if you are being led by the Holy Spirit. Right?

### **3. What does peacemaking children look like?**

Jesus teaches us right here in this sermon. Look with me.

**Matthew 5:43-45b, “You have hear that is was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons (and daughters) of your Father who is in heaven.”**

Did you get that last part? Remember, this is Jesus talking about what it looks like to be a son and daughter of God. Pretty clear and strong statement isn't it? Fits pretty well blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons and daughters of God.

Let's think about this first action step of Jesus concerning being a peacemaker like God, loving and praying for our enemies. Jesus gives us a little more teaching on this. Let's look at it then we will break it down.

**Matthew 5:46-48, “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father in heaven is perfect.”**

Whew right? Be perfect as your heavenly Father in heaven is perfect. Pretty tall order. And remember, this is from Jesus. This is not just a suggestion. This is pretty much a commandment. Be perfect as God is. Wow.

How is this going to happen? Are you going to be able to love your enemies and pray for them as purely as God would? Probably not in your own power and Jesus knows this. But He does want us to give it some effort and when we do, He super naturally energizes our weak offering of love and prayer.

This goes back to where we started. When obedience to the teachings of Jesus is coupled with His Spirit inside of us, blessings from heaven flow into your life.

**4. When as children of God, we make an effort, no matter how feeble, to love and pray for our enemies, be peacemakers, then I believe the Holy Spirit inside of us in activated and great things happen.**

Not necessarily in the person you are praying for but certainly in you.

As a parent, when you see your child at least try to do something right that you have taught them doesn't it do something inside of you. Isn't some kind special feeling generated. They may fail miserably at whatever it is they are trying to do but they are at least trying and that makes you proud. I think it also makes you want to try harder to encourage your child.

If you think this way about your children, how do you think a perfect God thinks about you? He's not looking for perfection in you loving, forgiving or praying for someone, He is looking for a heart that is trying to be obedient. And when we do, He will take care of taking your offering of obedience and perfecting it.

As we bring someone, enemy, friend or family, I always think of this next story.



Luke, the writer of the gospel which carries his name, tells of a time when Jesus was teaching inside of a house. The house was crammed full of people so no one outside of the house could get near Jesus. There was a man who was lame and on a stretcher. Fortunately for this man he had some friends who cared about him. They knew they couldn't get their

friend through the door so Jesus would heal him. So they went up on the roof of the house, removed some of the ceiling and lowered their friend down right in front of Jesus.

When Jesus saw this He said, **“Luke 5:20, 24b, “Seeing their faith, He said, ‘Friend, your sins are forgiven you...get up, and pick up your stretcher and go home.’” (The man was healed, got up and walked away)**

The man was healed through the effort and faith of his friends. They had faith and they put forth the effort to get their friend in front of Jesus.

The same is true for us for our friends and for our enemies. When we are faithful and bring them in front of Jesus, when we are the stretchers bearers putting forth the effort and have the faith that Jesus will heal them, great things will happen.

Just a quick note about enemies. How many of you have real enemies? People who are out to attack you, mistreat you, who have evil intent in their heart. Not very many would be my guess. I think enemies is a pretty strong word.

I think there is two levels of what Jesus is talking about here. First, I know there are people we disagree with, even strongly. They don't hold the same Christian values we do. I believe we are going to see more and more of this in the next several years. They are not necessarily our personal enemies but they are enemies of the life as Christians and as a nation that we value.

There is also another group of people I believe Jesus would have us put in this category of enemies. Is there someone you just don't like for whatever reason? They rub you the wrong way, your personalities clash or they have offended you in some way and they don't even feel sorry about it. Maybe they don't like you?

In both cases what is our recourse according to Jesus? Be a peacemaker like your Father God and begin by loving them by praying for them.

Now at times this can be an effort but here is how I believe you can pray for them.

Use the Lord's prayer found here in Jesus' teachings in chapter 6. When you begin this prayer, think of yourself like a stretcher bearer, carrying this person in God's presence. The Lord's prayer begins how?

Our Father, who are in heaven, hallow be Thy name. You first give God praise yourself and then you ask the Holy Spirit to overwhelm the person you are praying for so they will come to this place of honoring and praising God and Jesus. Then you pray for God's will to be done on earth and in your life as it is in heaven. Then you ask for the same thing to occur in the person's life that you are praying for.

Praying in this way will protect you from having the following attitude.

**Luke 18:11, "The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people-robbers, evildoers, adulterers-or even like this tax collector.'"**

Is this a prayer from a pure heart? Thinking we are better than the one we are praying for? Not so much.

Jesus teaching continues.

**Luke 18:13, "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts themselves will be humbled, but the one who humble themselves will be exalted."**



We are honored and humbled to be in God's presence and we honored and humbled to be able to bring others into God's presence as well.

I believe this is where peacemaking with others begins. As we pray for them. Before we ever speak a word to them or say about them, we pray for our enemies. And as we are obedient to do this God will soften our hearts and maybe even soften their hearts so true, spiritual healing can occur in their lives.

By the glorious work of God's grace, rebel human beings are born again, and brought from rebellion against God and His ways to faith, and we are made into children of God. We are given a new nature, after the image of our heavenly Father. If God is a peacemaker, then His children, who have His name and His nature, will be peacemakers too.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons and daughters of God.

This is where we will end this week.

I thought we might get deeper into this teaching but we will need to pick up the following verses next week. Here's what might happen when you are obedient as a child of God.

**Matthew 5:10-12a, "Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad; for your reward in heaven is great..."**

Your efforts as a peacemaker may be rejected and you may even be persecuted for trying to do what is right in God's eyes. But in the end, you will be blessed. God promises it.

We will hear more about this next week.

Let's recite this verse together in closing.

**Jeremiah 17:5, 7-8, "Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. (Blessed are the Peacemakers) for they will be like a tree planted by water, that extends its root by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit."**