

Matthew 5:9

God & Jesus – The Ultimate Peacemakers

This morning, in our study of the teachings of Matthew, we move into another description of what a person looks like whose prayers have been answered.

Again, let me emphasize how Jesus led us into this teaching.

A blessed person is...

Matthew 5:

Vs. 3 Poverty stricken in spirit. They know they are lacking

Vs. 4 Grieving over their sin and condition and the sin and condition of the world

Vs. 5 They are meek and open to teachings from Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit

This condition creates a hunger and thirst for righteousness, right living according to God.

And Jesus says the following in Verse 6, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied”

A person who has been satisfied by Jesus in their hunger and thirst for righteousness looks like...

Vs. 7 A merciful person

Vs. 8 A pure of heart person

Vs. 9 A peacemaking person

As we think about who God creates a righteous person to be, we can see how important, how relevant, how powerful such a person can be in the world we live in today.

Merciful, pure and one who strives to make peace in every relationship and every situation.

Of course we know the standard of mercy, purity and peacemaking is Jesus and on this Sunday before Christmas, He is the one I wanted to speak about and celebrate. In the coming weeks I will see what God has for us concerning us being peacemakers.

The word peace is the Hebrew word Shalom. Shalom is often used as a greeting or a departing word in much the same way we would say hello or goodbye although Shalom has a lot more meaning and depth to it.

Peace in Hebrew is Shalom. Shalom, in its fullness meaning, speaks of good health, prosperity, harmony and wholeness. It also expresses a blessing of perfect welfare, serenity, fulfillment and freedom from trouble.

When a Jewish person would say Shalom, they were wishing on one another the filling presence, peace and prosperity of all that God had to offer them. The benediction that some of you are familiar with in Numbers expresses this clearly.

Numbers 6:24-26, “The Lord bless you, and keep you; The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you; The Lord lift up His countenance on you and give you peace.”

This is the blessing God told Moses and Aaron to speak over the Israelite people. God Himself was pronouncing this blessing over His chosen people. And guess what.

- 1. You are now God’s chosen people and He continues to speak this blessing on you.**

God's blessing is on you and He keeps you in the palm of His hand. His face shines on you and He is gracious to you. His countenance, the general feeling He has towards you is good and His desire is to help you live in peace with Him and others.

God is the ultimate peacemaker and so is His Son Jesus.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, isn't it the fact that He came to make peace between God and us what we celebrate?

2. Christmas – Celebrating God making peace with us through Jesus

Look with me a passage in Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:1-2, “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days (He) has spoken to us in His Son...”

For a few thousand years, God spoke to the fathers of the Israelite faith. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David and others. He also spoke to many men who were called prophets, spokespersons for God. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and many others found in the later part of the Old Testament.

As you read through what God had to say to the Israelite people, His message was just about the same. Repent, turn your focus onto Me. As you read through these accounts of God speaking to His people there were some pretty strong words and warnings.

But then...then things got silent. Some of you know that for 400 years before Jesus was born, no one heard from God. There was no universal message to the nation of Israel. Through their own hardness of heart the people drifted from a relationship with God and they fell into all kinds of trouble.

Their nation, as a political force, as a government, as a country which owned a particular area of land, was no more. The only thing they could claim was a name, Israelite, and a promise from God that some day they would be delivered.

They still had worship services but they were just going through the motions. Even though as a nation Israel had turned their backs on God something unique occurred.

God, the author of peace sent His Son as a peace offering. Even though the people of the earth had rejected Him, even though they strived against Him, even though they invented and entered into all kinds of evil, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believed in Him, would not die but they would have their sins forgiven and they would get to live with Him for eternity.

Look at this next passage.

2 Corinthians 5:18a, “Now all these things (the blessings we receive at the hand of God) they are from God, who reconciled (brought) us to Himself through Christ...”

Even though the Israelites were rebels against God, worthy to be eternally rejected by God, God came anyway. He sent His Son and declared amnesty, forgiveness, for anyone who would accept His sacrifice.

1 Timothy 2:3-4, “This is a good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires for all men (and women) to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

It is amazing to me, the love God has for people. They can deny His existence, they can live their own lives with no appreciation or acknowledgement of Him. They can attack Christians, even kill them like Paul did but through it all, God still pursues them. His love is bigger and stronger than anything they can throw at Him and when the time comes. When the time comes when they are broken. When they have come to the end of themselves and they cry out to God He is there ready to receive them.

Our God is truly amazing isn't He amen? Amen.

On the night Jesus was born...

In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people. Not just some of the people, but for all the people. The good and the bad, any who would come to Him.

For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'

And suddenly, out in the starry expanse, there appeared with the angel a multitude, perhaps thousands and thousands of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men and women with whom He is pleased."

The angels saw something that overwhelmed them. God's love broke through in such a spectacular way they could not help but to break out in praise. Glory to God in the highest they said and probably sang. Then they said some else amazing. And on earth peace among men and women with whom He is pleased.

I don't know about you but I am overwhelmed by that statement. God was pleased with the men and women of earth.

After reading through the last part of the Old Testament, where people were prior to Jesus being born, and reading through Jesus' interactions with the people who were the religious leaders during His day, I find the statement, "peace on earth among men and women with whom He is pleased" incredible.

Who is this God we serve? What is this love He has that overcomes hate, rebellion and rejection? Love that causes Him to sacrifice His own Son in order to make peace with His own righteousness nature.

God is the great Peacemaker and so is His Son.

Jesus also is the ultimate peacemaker. Jesus came to establish peace between His Father and all of humanity. His message was a message of peace. His death purchased peace and His resurrection empowered peacemakers.

Look with me at just one of the messianic prophecies announced who Jesus would be.

Isaiah 9:6, "For a child will be born to us, and 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 and Prince of Peace."

3. Even before Jesus was born He was called the Prince of Peace

In the days before His crucifixion Jesus said the following.

John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.”

When Jesus would interact with people His greeting would be shalom or peace be with you. The life of Jesus was saturated with His mission to bring the peace of God to the world. He paid an enormous price for us to experience peace with God and with each other.

Both Jesus and His Father God were and are all about peace and it is when we come to know this peace and appreciate it then we become, as Jesus states in the passage in Matthew 5:9, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons (and daughters) of God.”

One day the peace prophecy of Isaiah will come true.

Isaiah 2:4, “And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will no longer lift up sword against nation and never again will they learn war.”

Some day, after Jesus comes back, there will be peace, an everlasting peace. A peace beyond anything we can imagine today. Peace between us and God and between us and other people. Peace on earth and in the heavens.

Jesus our Savior and God His Father, Father God, they are the ultimate peacemakers.