

TRUTH

“... Your word is truth” (John 17:17)

July 2025

“BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS”

It is no surprise that Jesus says peacemakers are blessed, for He is the “*Prince of Peace*” (Isaiah 9:6). Throughout human history, peace has been a highly sought-after commodity, yet also one of the most difficult both to obtain and maintain. With few exceptions, humans want peace with self and with other humans. And though many suppress and ignore it, God created humans with an intrinsic longing and need for peace with their Creator. What can we learn from Scripture about those “*blessed*” peacemakers?

What is a peacemaker? God’s people are to be peaceable. James says, “*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits*” (James 3:17). However, “*peacemakers*” are not *just* peaceable people; they are organizers and promoters of peace. Maintaining peace is challenging enough, but to craft peace out of conflict is truly difficult. It is no wonder, then, that Jesus says, “*Blessed are the peacemakers!*”

Where do we need peacemakers? In what areas of life are peacemakers needed? Consider just a few:

- Peacemakers are needed in the home. When two unique individuals are united in marriage, there is tremendous potential for conflict, due to different temperaments, backgrounds, desires, needs, etc. Children also have individual wants, needs, temperaments, etc., thus increasing the potential for conflict. When conflict inevitably arises, homes need peacemakers. It is easy enough to fuel conflict, but Jesus did not say, “*Blessed are the piece-makers!*” Whether in conflict between spouses, children, parents and children, or extended family, blessed are the homes that have a Christ-like peacemaker. Truly, “*Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife*” (Proverbs 17:1).

- Peacemakers are needed in the church. God hates the sowing of discord among brethren (Proverbs 6:19), and the opposite of sowing discord is making peace. If there is anything Satan loves as much as a home filled with discord and division, it is a congregation of God’s people filled with the same. How many disastrous splits and distractions from our God-given mission would be avoided, if only a peacemaker would step in and promote peace!

- Peacemakers are needed in the world. Jesus died for lost humanity, while we were yet sinners and enemies of God (Romans 5:6-10). Thus, Jesus is **the** Great Peacemaker. Jesus commissions His disciples to proclaim His “*gospel of peace*” (Romans 10:15; Mark 16:15). Those who work to bring lost souls to Jesus are some of the greatest peacemakers of all!

How can I be a peacemaker? How does one accomplish being a peacemaker?

- Desire peace, even when others do not. Psalms 120:7 says, “*I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.*” I cannot control others, but I can control my own desires and actions. Thus, Paul writes, “*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men*” (Romans 12:18). Being a peacemaker begins with earnestly desiring peace.

- Work for peace. I must “*seek peace and pursue it*” (1 Peter 3:10-11). Whether at home, in the church, or helping others to obtain peace with God, “*pursue peace with all people*” (Hebrews 12:14). Peace is not always easy to achieve, and it often requires hard work, but **it is worth it** (Psalms 133)!

- Speak for peace. “*Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt*” (Colossians 4:6). “*The words of a wise man’s mouth are gracious*” (Ecclesiastes 10:12). Sometimes, peace is difficult, but sometimes, it is as simple as speaking graciously and peaceably. “*A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger*” (Proverbs 15:1).

When Jesus says, “*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God,*” He underscores the blessing of being called a child of God by Deity. Indeed, it is a tremendous blessing to be called God’s child! Writing to Christians, John says, “*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!*” (1 John 3:1). God Himself is the originator of peace (1 Corinthians 14:33), and His Son Jesus is the ultimate peacemaker, providing for mankind’s peace with God (Ephesians 2:14-17). The moniker “*peacemaker*” carries such a divine blessing because those who are such imitate the “*Prince of Peace*” Himself.

-- Chad Dollahite

TAKEAWAYS FROM 2 SAMUEL 13-14

Sometimes we may see a warning at the beginning of a news report saying, “For mature audiences only.” This portion of history regarding David’s household could properly carry such an advisory. Having just seen the shocking situation that David caused with Bathsheba and Uriah, there is a shameful similarity in what now takes place.

2 Samuel 12 concludes with David returning to Jerusalem. God, in His mercy, has forgiven David (2 Samuel 12:13), but also told him there would be earthly consequences that would follow. As chapter 13 begins, we see the ruin unfold in David’s family.

13:1-14 – The situation begins with Absalom, David’s third-born son, and his beautiful, virgin sister, Tamar, who is sought after by Amnon, David’s first-born son and Absalom’s and Tamar’s half-brother. She is the focus of Amnon’s desire. The problem for Amnon is that she is unattainable. He did not see how he could have her due to her separated life and her purity. Amnon’s friend, Jonadab, also David’s nephew, suggested a way for Amnon to get what he wanted. By pretending sickness, Amnon lured her into his bedroom to take care of him and then forced himself upon her.

13:15-22 – After the heinous deed was committed, Amnon’s feelings toward her were very different. His hatred toward her was more powerful than his desire had been. He attempted to send her away, but she refused to leave. He called a servant to remove her by force. Her brother, Absalom, seeing her mourning, took her in and sheltered her. David was angry because of what had happened, but he did not do anything about it. It was David’s duty as her father and her king to punish the criminal (Exodus 21:12-17; Leviticus 18:9,29; Numbers 35:14-21). Absalom, understanding what Amnon had done, hated him for it and began plotting against him.

13:23-33 – Two years passed and Absalom sees his opportunity for retribution. A great celebration was planned at the time of sheepshearing near Ephraim. David rejects Absalom’s invitation, not wanting to be a burden, but finally allows all of his sons to attend, including Amnon. Absalom had planned and commanded his servants to strike Amnon during the feast. David received news that Absalom had killed all of his sons and fell into great mourning. Jonadab, David’s nephew, corrected the erroneous report and told David that only Amnon had been killed, and that Absalom had been working out this vengeance since the day that Tamar was violated.

13:34-39 – Absalom, no doubt fearing his father’s judgment, fled to his mother’s father, Talmai, the king

of Geshur. The rest of David’s sons returned home to him and they were all consumed with mourning for Amnon. Absalom remained at Geshur, in Syria, for three years and David wanted to be with him.

14:1-22 – Chapter 14 begins with palace intrigue. Joab, David’s nephew and chief military commander, re-enters the scene. He determines to try to affect reconciliation between David and Absalom. Joab sees that David’s heart was always concerned with Absalom. If it were that David was simply missing Absalom and wanted him back at home, he could have sent for him at any time. This is, more than likely, a statement that David longed for Absalom (13:39), while at the same time his heart was against him because of what he had done (14:1). Otherwise, why would David need convincing to bring Absalom home?

Joab recruits a wise woman from the town of Tekoa, located about 10 miles/16km south of Jerusalem, to go to king David with a heart-rending story about her two (non-existent) sons. The plan was to trap David into having to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem or look terribly hypocritical. She comes to the king for “help” with her situation and delivers a tale that is only too familiar. Upon hearing her story, David asks if Joab is behind it. She confirms that Joab sent her and even gave her the very words to speak. David relents and sends for Absalom to be brought home. Once again, as by Nathan, David is trapped by his own sense of judgment.

14:23-33 – Joab follows David’s order to retrieve Absalom. He is brought to his own house, but is not allowed in the presence of the king. David, being duped by Joab’s now transparent scheming, has allowed his murderous son to return to Jerusalem. Absalom’s self-centred and violent attitudes are brought to the forefront. And yet, in spite of what has happened, Absalom is returned to the presence of his father, accepted and honoured as a prince in Israel.

There is little doubt as to why David did not act in justice upon Amnon for forcing himself upon his half-sister, or upon Absalom for killing his half-brother. Just prior to this, David himself was guilty of the same sins. He had taken Uriah’s wife in adultery, and when his sin was going to be discovered, plotted Uriah’s death. How could he punish his sons for committing the same wrongs? His own sins are now being carried out in front of him through his children! We should have no doubt that sin brings disaster into human lives. It is also crucial to understand that we are not supposed to be enamoured with these kinds of transgressions, but repulsed by them.

-- Dave Leonard

Practical Suggestions for Leading Public Prayers

It is scriptural for God's people to pray when they come together in a public forum (1 Corinthians 14:16,23). Some Christians have heard thousands of prayers offered in a public assembly of the church or when a group of people were together outside of a church setting. Let me share some Bible-based and common-sense ideas about leading public prayers.

What might a prayer include? There is no order required, but a prayer, private or public, could include *praising God* (1 Chronicles 29:10,11), *thanksgiving* (1 Thessalonians 5:17,18), *general requests* (Philippians 4:6), *specific requests* for people or activities (Romans 15:30,31), and *confession of sin* (1 John 1:9).

Speak so that others can hear and understand. Speak loud enough for those present to hear you. If you whisper, God still can hear you, but the rest of us cannot. Also, when you pray, open your mouth and **speak clearly**. If you mumble or talk too quickly, some of us cannot understand what you are saying. If those present cannot comprehend what you are praying, we might as well scrap the plan of having a prayer leader and ask everyone to say a silent prayer.

Be yourself: Be as comfortable as possible in your prayers. Talk in your normal tone of voice. Say things in the way that *comes natural for you* to say them. Do not feel obligated to mimic the words, phrases, or styles that other brothers use in their prayers.

Spiritual emphasis: While a public prayer might touch on a wide variety of topics, in general, the thrust of our prayers ought to be heavily tilted toward spiritual matters . . . things such as magnifying God (Psalm 19:14), seeking His help (Hebrews 4:16), godliness (1 Timothy 2:1,2), evangelism (Colossians 4:2-4), and recapturing scattered sheep (Matthew 9:36-38). Like Jesus did, our appeal should be for God's will to be done (Luke 22:42).

Leading prayer for a specific occasion: If we are asked to lead prayer for a specific matter (such as giving thanks for food, Acts 27:33-35), do not forget to pray about that matter. If you are leading a prayer for the communion, consider thanking God for His love, for the death/blood/cross of Jesus, or for Jesus' willingness to sacrifice His life for our salvation. Remember: as we address the Father in prayer, it was the Son, not the Father, who died on the cross.

Leading a closing prayer: Why not thank God for allowing us to come together to study and/or worship? Why not ask Him to bless us as we leave our gathering to head back out into society? Why not express again a desire to live a holy life for His glory?

-- Roger D. Campbell

How can Christian women be the daughters of Sarah?

The message of 1 Peter 3:1-6 was addressed to sisters in Jesus who were wives. The general appeal is for them to be a good example for their husbands, in the process putting their emphasis on inward, spiritual beauty rather than their outward appearance.

In this regard, Peter pointed to the example of some women of the Old Testament era: *"For in this manner, in former times, the holy women, who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror"* (3:5,6).

Christian wives in the first century, in some sense, could be Sarah's daughters. The same is true of sisters in the Lord in every generation. Being the daughters of Sarah does not refer to being her biological offspring, but rather, to being *imitators* of her in the spiritual realm and in their roles in the family. What was there about Sarah and other women which is worthy of imitation for Christian women/wives?

They were "holy women" (3:5). God charges all of His children to be holy (1:15,16). Christian wives are "at their best" when they live holy lives, dedicating themselves to the Creator above all else.

They "trusted in God" (3:5). Any marriage or family is blessed by a wife/mother who trusts in God with all her heart (Proverbs 3:5). She sees God as her Refuge, Strength, and Helper (Psalm 46:1), and she will not be moved from her commitment to Him!

They were submissive to their husbands (3:5). They were not inferior to their husbands, of less value, or less impactful. They did, however, choose to submit to them. That is God's will for wives (3:1).

Sarah obeyed Abraham (3:6). In verse five, we read of holy women/wives in general. In verse six, the message zeroes in on Sarah as one such person. She obeyed Abraham, who was her husband. Again, it is God's will for wives to be *"obedient to their own husbands"* (Titus 2:5). When Christian wives do not do such, God and His word will be blasphemed (2:6).

Sarah called Abraham lord (3:6). She was not his slave, but she did show reverence for him and his role. When Sarah did good, she was not terrified to do so (3:6). The new covenant teaching: *"... let the wife see that she respects her husband"* (Ephesians 5:33).

All Christians, including sisters in the Christ, should hold in high esteem every woman who sets a godly example, as Sarah did. We need to train our young women to dream of being like Sarah, Ruth, and Eunice rather than having a misplaced infatuation with irreverent, sensual women in the entertainment world.

-- Roger D. Campbell

JESUS' CONVERSATION WITH JEWS ABOUT HIS WORKS (John 10:22-39)

The Book of John really is an amazing portion of the Bible, do you not agree?! The conversation we are considering in this study took place in the temple in Jerusalem during the Jewish Feast of Dedication (John 10:22). That means the events recorded in this passage occurred only about four months before Jesus died. It was another occasion when some of the Jews wanted to kill Him. Let us consider some takeaways from this section of the Scriptures.

"The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me" (10:25). Jesus affirmed this right after the Jews appealed to Him to tell them if He really was the Christ. He said, *"I told you, and you do not believe"* (10:25). Jesus reasoned that if His words did not convince them of His Deity, His works ought to persuade them. Yes, His works/signs proved that He was Whom He claimed to be — the Christ, the Son of the living God (20:30,31).

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (10:27). Jesus is able to determine who are His genuine sheep and who are sheep in name and claim only. What do His true sheep do? They hear His voice, and when they learn what He expects of them, they follow Him. Put another way, legitimate disciples of Jesus abide in His word (8:31).

"I give them eternal life" (10:28). "Them" points to the Master's sheep. The Good Shepherd has the power and authority to give or deny eternal life. Yes, eternal life is a gift from the Godhead, granted by His grace (Romans 6:23). It is a gift that humans receive conditionally. How? By obeying Jesus (Hebrews 5:9).

No one can snatch Jesus' sheep out of His hand or out of the Father's hand (10:28,29). If one is in the hand of the Son, he is in the hand of the Father, too. This shows the authority that Jesus possesses. No one, neither another human nor Satan, can snatch a sheep out of Jesus' hand or force one to leave the Lord. What if the sheep itself decides not to follow the Shepherd? That is another matter entirely. Some of Jesus' disciples decided that they no longer wanted to walk with/follow Him (6:66). They were sheep who chose to desert the Good Shepherd. By doing so, they departed from the living God (Hebrews 3:12); thus, they took themselves out of Jesus' hand.

"I and My Father are one" (10:30). In the context, Jesus already had pointed to the Father and Son working together. The Father gave the sheep to the Son (10:29), and the Father and Son together provide security to the sheep (10:28,29). The Son and the Father are not one person, but are one in nature, purpose, power, and will. Paul and Apollos were "one" (1 Corinthians 3:8); not one person, but one in

purpose. The same is true of Jesus and God the Father.

"Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him" (10:31). When? Immediately after the Christ claimed to be one with the Father (10:30). Why? Why would they be so upset with Jesus? When they heard Him say that He and the Father are one, they interpreted that to mean, "He is claiming to be God/Deity." Since they did not believe Jesus was Immanuel, God in the flesh, they considered His claim to be arrogant, blasphemous, and worthy of death. There were earlier instances when Jesus's claims resulted in some Jews wanting to put Him to death (5:17,18; 8:58,59). The devil has used such a tactic throughout history: if you cannot answer/refute the truth presented by the messenger, then silence him by killing him.

"Many good works have I shown you from My Father" (10:32). It is a historical fact that Jesus *"went about doing good"* (Acts 10:38). According to our Lord, He showed the Jews works, good works, many good works, many good works from His Father. With such words, Jesus reaffirmed that He was God's Son. It was an irrefutable truth: if the Father were not with Him, Jesus could not do such amazing signs (3:1,2).

"For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, make Yourself God" (10:33). This statement verifies the conclusion we noted earlier: they considered His statement about Himself and His relationship with the Father to be blasphemous. They later reiterated that idea when Jesus stood before Pilate, saying, *"... He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God"* (19:7). Wrong. Jesus did not make Himself God/the Son of God: He was God (1:1,14).

"The Father sanctified and sent" the Son into the world (10:36). Why did the Father do that? So sinners could be saved through the Son (1 Timothy 1:15). That plan was in place, and the Son was sanctified as the Redeemer, before the creation (1 Peter 1:18,19).

"If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him" (10:37,38). Jesus again emphasized (1) the demonstrative power of His works and (2) His unity with the Father.

If humans choose to reject Jesus and His teaching, valid evidence is still valid evidence. The truth is still the truth, regardless of how people respond to it.

-- Roger D. Campbell

[Unless stated otherwise, all quotes in all articles of TRUTH come from the New King James Version; ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.]

TRUTH is published each month in order to help educate, edify, encourage, and equip the saints of God.