

“#blessed: The Peacemakers”

Matthew 5:1-9

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Rev. Dave Baldrige

Palm Harbor United Methodist Church, Palm Harbor, Florida

Peace, peace, wonderful peace. Ah...calm, still, serene, respite, quiet, de-stressed, relaxed, tranquil, placid, harmony, oneness, peace, peace, wonderful peace.

WAKE UP!!!! In our world there is YELLING, SHOUTING, anger, cars honking, doors shutting, noises, interruptions. Phones go off, doorbells ringing, notifications beeping, alerts dinging.

ALL I WANT IS PEACE AND QUIET!!! Anybody with me??

And parents of babies and younger children...bless your heart...that sacred bedtime hour comes for your child...you put them in bed, shut the door, go to the couch, and you wait, wait, wait for it...and then you say... “Do you hear that?” What? And you smile and say, “Nothing.... it’s quiet!”

We live in a world where there is noise, calamity and interruptions.

There was a Peanuts cartoon with Lucy saying to Charlie Brown, **(image)** “I hate everything. I hate everybody. I hate the whole wide world.” Charlie Brown says, “But I thought you had inner peace.” Lucy replies, “I do have inner peace, But I still have outer obnoxiousness.”

Oh, we certainly need to have inner peace, but how do we deal with outer obnoxiousness. It could be said that until we have inner peace we cannot be at peace with other situations. Our personal space, our personal life is often invaded at the most unexpected times with turmoil, tension, and stress. Oh, to have peace.

Inner peace comes with your deepening relationship with Jesus. However, our ultimate hope and peace is in Jesus, but we sometimes must deal with fear and anxiety in the real world. Jesus said, **John 14:27 New International Version (NIV)** ²⁷ **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.**

Oh, I know that, but it is so difficult. The hope is that the Peace Jesus gives is not a short time peace, but an internal and eternal peace. A peace that can help you make it through the storms of life. We live in anxious times. We hear of wars and conflicts. We are afraid and fear for our nation and we want peace. We are peace lovers!

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book the Cost of Discipleship says this, “The followers of Jesus have been called to peace. When he called them, they found their peace, for he is their peace. But now they are told that they must not only have peace, but make it.”

Let me relay a story that is in Mark 4. Jesus is in the boat with His disciples. He is in the boat asleep. A fierce storm comes up. There is wind, rain, lightening, thunder. The boat they are in is being pounded. High waves are rolling and tossing the boat and water is splashing into the boat and the boat began to fill with water. The boat is about to sink.

Jesus is still sleeping. The storm didn't wake Him up. It says, "they woke him up." I wonder who the "they" were. "Hey, you wake Him up!" "No, you wake Him up!" I wonder if they kind of poked Him, to see if He would stir and open His eyes. I wonder if they went to Him and whispered, "Jesus, Jesus." Or maybe they said, "Wakey, wakey, the boat is shaky." Well, Jesus was awakened. He got up. Yes, He stood up against the storm and simply says, "Peace! Be still!" Suddenly the wind stopped and there was a great calm.

Woo-hoo!!! Whoa—oh! Who is this Man that even the wind and the waves obey Him? More than just a peace lover. More than a peace keeper. He is the Peace Maker!!!!

First, we need to have Jesus calm the storms in our life and be that peace maker. Whatever storms you have in your life today, as you receive Communion know that you are receiving the gift of the Peace Maker.

Our Beatitude scripture says, "**⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.**"

Not simply peace lovers, or peace keepers, but peaceMAKERS. Now it is important to love peace. It is important to keep the peace. I've noticed an ironic oxymoron of a term in the United Nations Peace Keeping Force. How can you force peace??? Be at peace NOW!!!!

Blessed are the peaceMAKERS for they will be called children of God. What does it mean to be called children of God?

After serving as Associate Pastor for 3 years, I served as Pastor of a small church in Plant City. The house the church owned for us, called a Parsonage, was literally across the street. In case there was any doubt there was a little plaque underneath the doorbell that said, "Parsonage of Trinity United Methodist Church." Wasn't that special??

A half block from the parsonage (our house) was an elementary school that Ben went to. He was in at least kindergarten and first grade there. He has always made friends easily. Well I was outside by the church when a boy stopped, looked at me and said, "Do you know Ben Baldridge." I said, "Why yes, he's my son." The boy kind of shook his head and said, "Well you look like him."

Now you would normally say the son looks like the Father, but this boy said I the Father looked like the son. Children often look like or have attributes of a parent.

When our daughter Jenny was in elementary school and Sarah and I went to an open house/meet the teacher night at the school, the teacher met us at the classroom door. We introduced ourselves and the first thing she said was, “Which one of you is the perfectionist?” Sarah gave me ‘the look’ and pointed to me.

Andy was a baby/toddler and Sarah had him outside with her. Our neighbor looked at Andy and said, “Well, looks like his Daddy spit him out.” So...I want to apologize to my children, but the reality is children usually have some traits, habits, or looks of their parents.

Hold it---if we are children of God, should we not look like, act like, and have attributes of our Heavenly Father? Are you with me? XXXXXX

Attributes of being more than peace lovers or peace keepers, but being peace makers.

Mother Teresa said, **(image)** “Peace begins with a smile.” Let me see some peace!!!!
Yeah...I’m feeling it.

Besides, smiling makes you light up, plus, **(image)** “Smile it makes people wonder what you are up to.”

Concerning smiling---it is easy to do that, but do we really smile when we get cut off in traffic, or someone cuts in front of you in line. I think part of our lack of showing peace and even making peace is derived from our feeling of entitlement. I deserve for things to go my way. Don’t interrupt me, or get in my way. I’ll be at peace as long as we agree and see eye to eye.

How do we make peace with those who think differently than we do? I’m getting ready to say a dirty word. I hope you are not offended, but please take it in context. Here is the word: Politics. All you have to do is mention the word and it causes unrest and a lack of stillness. It seems to cause conflict and a lack of peace.

Now being a peacemaker doesn’t mean you are always right and it doesn’t mean you give in, so how do we as children of God be peacemakers?

Let’s do a little Bible study in the midst of the sermon. Let’s look at James 3:13-18.

James 3:13-18 New Living Translation (NLT)

¹³ If you are wise and understand God’s ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying.

¹⁵ For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. ¹⁶ For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.

¹⁷ But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. ¹⁸ And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

****Verse 13:** IF wise...prove it. How? By living an honorable life. How do we do that? By doing good works with humility.

Verse 14: BUT---in contrast, if you are jealous, have selfish ambition in your heart—don't cover up truth with boasting and lying.

Verse 15: Jealousy and selfishness are not God's way of wisdom. We are living in between two worlds, the heavenly and the earthly. We may be living as a product of our culture and society but that may not be God's way. In fact, those ways may be earthly, unspiritual, and even demonic.

Verse 16: For where jealousy and selfish ambition are there you will find disorder---that is chaos, and lack of peace. In fact, evil of every kind.

Verse 17: God's wisdom is pure. It is, here you go, Peace loving. Gentle when you are in the right---no gentle on weekends, not gentle at ALL times.

And then willing to yield to others---no entitlement, but putting others first. Full of mercy, have we not received mercy, having the fruit of good needs. Always sincere.

Verse 18: And these who are peaceMAKERS---will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.

Another translation (Common English Bible) puts that last verse this way: ¹⁸ Those who make peace sow the seeds of justice by their peaceful acts.

Oh, to be peacemakers. Now you may not be able to anything directly about peace with North Korea or Russia, but first of all are you at peace with God? Are you at peace with yourself? Is your home a place of peace? At peace with those who may think and believe differently that you do?

Another quote from Mother Teresa: **(image)** “If we have no peace it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

All created by God.

As we prepare for Holy Communion, may your hearts pray the prayer by St. Francis. “Make me an instrument of thy peace.”

VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYt58OGGSxo>

Peace Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.