

THE LAW OF CHRIST:

God's Will

for

New Testament Believers

by

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RSP

Day 11

PEACEMAKER: THE CITIZEN'S MINISTRY

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David
a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. . . .
Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace, good will toward men
(Lu 2:11, 14).*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God
(Mt 5:9 NKJV).*

*And, having made peace through the blood of his cross,
by him to reconcile all things unto himself
(Col 1:20).*

*Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our
Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood
of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work
to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his
sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.
Amen (Heb 13:20-21).*

A few days ago, we discussed how the *nine* Beatitudes were intentionally structured to parallel and draw attention to the subsequent *Ten* Commandments of Christ's Law. Hebrew literature regularly creates various kinds of parallel structures and sometimes uses consecutive numbers to build to a climax of thought (see p. 69ff.; cf. Pr 6:16; 30:18).

Remarkably, the interior structure of the nine Beatitudes reveals a parallel substructure which distinguishes the life of citizens *before* and *after* their salvation. The first set of four "*before* salvation" characteristics are placed in parallel with the second set of five "*after* salvation" characteristics.

In a similar way, the second set of five "*after* salvation" Beatitudes are also subdivided into further parallel substructure. The first two describe the believer's reconciliation to other men and to God. The final three describe the believer's work as he serves Christ, the coming King.

- a) Two Beatitudes describing evidence of reconciliation:
 - 5. The compassionate (merciful)
 - 6. The pure in heart
- b) Three Beatitudes describing a citizen's work for Christ:
 - 7. The peacemaker
 - 8. Those persecuted for righteousness
 - 9. Those persecuted for Christ's sake

Each of these final five Beatitudes describes God's blessings upon believers who obey His commands.

The studies on the preceding two days (9 and 10) explored the fifth and sixth Beatitudes, which describe the believer's reconciliation to other men and to God. Man's sin caused his alienation, and only God could provide for man's reconciliation. The believer's compassion for other men and his pure heart are evidences that he has been reconciled with God.

The remainder of this week's study will explore the work of the believer serving Christ. Today's study will focus on the seventh Beatitude, which describes the active ministry of the heavenly kingdom citizen as he preaches the gospel of peace. The following two days we will focus on the eighth and ninth

Beatitudes, which describe the world's reaction to the citizen's gospel ministry.

7. The Peacemaker

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called sons of God (Mt 5:9).

Being a "peacemaker" is the third characteristic describing the life of a believer after he has received the salvation of the Messiah. Since the believer has been reconciled with God (sixth Beatitude) and with man (fifth Beatitude), he now has a new ministry. The purpose of his new life as a heavenly kingdom citizen is to serve Christ, the Great King of the Kingdom of Heaven. This seventh Beatitude describes the citizen's new vocation: he is to be a "peacemaker" while he is awaiting his coming King.

Meaning of "Peacemaker"

In the New Testament the word "peacemaker" appears only twice, once as an adjective and once as a verb. In this Beatitude it is used as an adjective substantive describing the citizens of the heavenly Kingdom (Mt 5:9). Paul uses the verb form of this word "to make peace":

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself. . . . And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled" (Col 1:20-21).

Clearly, the concept "made peace" describes the reconciliation bought by Christ's death on the cross. The blood of Christ paid the price which was necessary to "make peace" with God and appease His righteous wrath. The result is that men who were once alienated as enemies against God are now reconciled to Him.

Consequently, to be a peacemaker is to bring the message of the peace of God to those who are alienated from God and need the salvation which Christ's blood provides. God is the author of peace (1 Cor 14:33) and has made provision to "make peace" with mankind through His gift of salvation. He desires to do good things

for mankind. In spite of the fall of man and the curse in the Garden of Eden, God has worked to bring salvation to mankind. This good news ("gospel") is the proclamation delivered by the multitude of angels who appeared to the shepherds the night Jesus Christ was born:

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. . . . Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Lu 2:11, 14).

Peace is God's gift which comes to everyone who does His will (Rom 2:10), and more specifically, to everyone who comes to Him by faith in Christ (Rom 5:1). The peace of God will guard the hearts and minds of those who trust in Christ if they are faithful disciples (Phil 4:7-9). Thus, the peace of God should rule in the heart of the believer, directing him to do God's will (Col 3:15).

Work of a Peacemaker

The Beatitudes specifically mention only one occupation for the citizen of the heavenly Kingdom: to be a peacemaker. The proclamation of the gospel—this activity is the principal ministry of those who serve Christ. And for good reason:

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom 10:13-15).

Thus, the Kingdom of Heaven is for peacemakers, those who have made peace with God and then serve Him as prophets proclaiming God's provision of peace for all men:

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God, and

approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another (Rom 14:17-19).

Instead of food and drink, the nourishment sustaining the kingdom citizen is God's righteousness, peace, and joy, which come from serving Christ and doing God's will. We are to vigorously pursue peace, so that other men will also experience God's peace.

When Jesus talks with the Samaritan woman at the well, He speaks of this spiritual food which sustains those who do God's will by proclaiming His gospel of peace:

In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." Therefore said the disciples to one another, "Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work" (Jn 4:31-34 NKJV).

Like Christ, the believer is to find daily sustenance in doing God's will. Thus, proclaiming God's gospel of peace is the believer's every day work, and in a sense, his work boots: "And [have] your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph 6:15).

Status of a Peacemaker

One of the results of peace-making for the heavenly kingdom citizen will be that he becomes known as a "son of God." In the Old Testament age, believers who did God's will enjoyed the status of being known as God's "servants" (Jn 15:15). In the New Testament Age, a new privilege is offered to those believers who do God's will: the status of being called "sons of God" (Mt 5:9). Paul explains that those who live as "sons of God" are those who are willing to do God's pleasure and follow the Holy Spirit's leading:

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. . . . For if you live after the flesh, you shall die: but if you through the Spirit do mortify the

deeds of the body, you shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Rom 8:6, 13-14).

For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. . . . That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world (Phil 2:13-15).

In fact, Jesus explains this privilege of serving Him in another way: He calls those believers who obey His commands His "friends" (Jn 15:14). Jesus explains that a mere servant does not know his master's will, but those who are believers in Christ have been told God's will and what God is doing: "all the things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you" (Jn 15:15). Thus, if we want to be known as a "son of God," we must do God's will and be a peacemaker; if we want to be known as "Christ's friend," we must obey Christ's Commandments.

Honor of a "Peacemaker"

The children of God have the privilege of doing the work of Christ the King. The main task of citizens of the heavenly Kingdom is to proclaim God's gospel of peace—to bring the light of the good news of God's salvation to this dark world (Mt 5:14-16).

There is a particular honor which comes to those who proclaim the gospel: Jesus speaks of these peacemakers when He talks to God the Father. When Jesus warns of the persecution to come, He makes this very interesting point concerning the importance of a believer's witness before other men:

Therefore, whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will deny before My Father who is in heaven. (Mt 10:32-33 NKJV).

When citizens of the heavenly Kingdom faithfully proclaim God's gospel of peace before men, Jesus talks about these obedient sons of God as His friends in the presence of God the Father.

May we all be faithful witnesses!

The citizen who works to bring God's provision of peace to others will be known as a son of God.

Memory verses:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God (Mt 5:9).

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Heb 13:20-21).