

Matthew 5:9

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Do you want peace? Maybe you want peace in your family. Maybe you want peace in the world. Maybe you want peace of mind. Or maybe you want peace with nature

Jesus said in Matthew 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

It sounds right doesn't it? After all, the Bible tells us that God is a God of peace. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. At his birth, the angels sang *Peace on earth*. Acts 10:35 says the good news of Jesus is the gospel of peace.

And most people are convinced enough that any person who claims to be a child of God, should be a peace loving person. There should be an inner serenity, an outward peace and a desire for peace. Is that not right?

Are you like that? Do you have that peace which passes all understanding? Is there a contentment in your life, no matter what the circumstances?

But Jesus did not say "Blessed are the peaceful", nor "Blessed are those living in peaceful surroundings"

He said *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

It is a statement of fact. But more than that, it is a word of encouragement for us, for we can be blessed in our own turmoil and battlefields of life. For there is a real need for peace. Are the people you meet peaceful, floating in tranquillity all the time, or are they frazzled, hurried and pushed, fighting others, carrying on feuds, and avoiding painful relationships?

There is a great lack of peace in many people.

It flows into relationships, into feuds and wars right across our world.

Why is there so little peace? Why is there so much fighting and quarrelling? James 4:1-3 says *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Do they not come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but do not get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight.*

It is there in history. It is full of arguments, battles and wars.

Even our most current recording of history, the daily papers, are fascinated by arguments, battles and wars. Good news does not sell, but fights, struggles and battles do.

The peace movement has been fighting for peace for over 30 years. Greenpeace uses commando style raids to make their vivid point. Peaceful United Nations peace keeping forces are driven out, and can only keep the peace by being hostile.

It is sad and ironic that people seem to need a war to make peace.

And on a personal level, peace is elusive. People dream of calm and polite families, marriages lasting until death, and a ceasing of the inner turmoil. People yearn for peace.

They look for peace in their nest egg, their holiday, their mind blowing drugs, their mind numbing drugs and alcohol, their brain vacating meditation, and their retirement package.

Too often we look for a quick and easy answer to unrest, to divisions, to a lack of personal peace, or home peace or work peace or world peace. And often the church has failed to give that peace, fighting more than others.

Where are the peacemakers? Are you one? Are you like Jesus, for He is our great peacemaker? It was through His blood shed on the cross that we now have peace with God. We're changed from enemies into his friends.

It was through his death on the cross that the barrier between God and Man was smashed. And he smashed the barrier between people too. As Colossians 3:11 puts it: *Now there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, & is in all.*

There is no need to make divisions between races, class and job, for in Christ we are one. That means that God accepts us when we trust in Jesus, and makes no distinctions.

But people love making divisions on minor things like race and jobs. The death of Jesus has also brought forgiveness. God forgives us for what we've done against him, so how much more should we forgive others.

But we are more like foreigners to forgiveness. We love receiving it, but we are often shy away from giving it; because it affects our pride.

When we get hurt, we do not readily want to listen for reasons, instead we block our ears and strike out. When pain bites, we often want revenge, to lash back, to share our agony, to make them suffer. Our needs rise to top priority and we stop caring for them, stop wanting what's best, and look for payback.

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Instead of loving, we get livid.

Then as they hurt more, they respond, and on it goes.

Father make us peacemakers. It does happen.

South African peace came about through a few Christians committed to making peace, who kept the sides together.

Middle Eastern peace has been greatly helped by a Scandinavian Christian couple, who dared to offer their place as the secret venue for the P.L.O. and Israeli talks.

How can we be peacemakers? By caring for people.

Listen to both sides. Help both sides really listen to each other, not just assuming what the other one is supposedly saying. Look for the solutions which are acceptable to both sides without too much compromising. Give them a time to try the new solution, and be prepared for setbacks and an ongoing fine-tuning of the solution.

If we are committed to caring for people, we will want them to be heard and to share in the process of growing together. It is a slow, hard process, yet is much better than on-going wars and feuds.

And the people who should have the most peace are those who have given their lives to Jesus. For now we no longer live for ourselves, but for God. We should want what he desires. But all too often, the most embarrassing situations occur because Christians selfishly want their own way, not God's way. This should not be!

We of all people should be resisting the temptations and striving for peace within and peace in our world.

Isn't God amazing? How he keeps loving us, and forgiving us because of Jesus, is so special!