

Peacemakers Are Sons of God

GANDHI WAS “THE FATHER OF THE NATION, THE APOSTLE OF PEACE” in the eyes of some men and women. He was called the Mahatma (“great soul”). He was considered India’s conscience. His ideas and approach to nonviolent confrontation, or civil disobedience, not only captured independence for India, but have influenced many political activists throughout the world. Yet, ironically, he was assassinated in Delhi on January 30, 1948, by a Hindu fanatic who thought he was pro-Muslim and pro-Pakistan. Over a million people attended his funeral, and he was cremated at Raj Ghat on the banks of the Holy Yamuna River. He pursued civil liberation from the British and found it. Down through the ages of time, our world has known great men in the military, in science, and in the arts and philosophy. Regardless of their contribution or success, almost all have desired peace. Yet, peace has been momentary and illusive. There has only been One who has offered real peace - spiritual peace, and He is Jesus. In the Sermon on the Mount He told us who have found peace,

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

THE PEACEMAKERS. After reading the Sermon on the Mount, some have thought that Jesus was a pacifist - someone who yielded to everyone. Why? Because Jesus encouraged His listeners to not murder, nor be angry, or hate (Matthew 5:21-26). In Matt. 5:38-42 He calls us to defer to others with

You have heard that it was said, ‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.’ But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. (NASB) Matt. 5:38-42

Was Jesus a pacifist? Listen to Him in Matthew 10:34,

Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. (NASB) Matt. 10:34

Or, how about

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. (NIV) Matt. 11:21-23

Speaking of the religious leaders of His day, He said,

Woe to you, because you are like unmarked graves, which men walk over without knowing it. (NIV) Luke 11:44

These are words that can incite anger. If Jesus is not a pacifist, what does He mean by “peacemaker”? The answer is not in the English reading Bible. The answer lies in the Greek word Jesus uses for peacemaker - a rare Greek word that ONLY occurs here in Matthew 5:9. The Greek word has the idea of “one who restores peace, favors good understanding, settles quarrels and stops conflicts.” It was a word used only of emperors who bring about peace. A peacemaker is one who comes alongside, who seeks to understand the reasons of the conflict and helps two people to come to peace.

PRINCE OF PEACE. On the night Jesus was born the angels said,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests. (NIV) Luke 2:14

During Christmas this verse is often quoted, but did you notice what it says? God only gives peace to those He favors. In John 14:27, Jesus, speaking to His disciple, says,

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. (NIV) John 14:27

God gives us peace. How? What kind of peace? Jesus gives the answer in Luke 7:48, 50 when He tells a woman,

Your sins have been forgiven . . . Your faith has saved you; go in peace. (NASB) Luke 7:48, 50

That woman was spiritually at war with God (Romans 5:1, 10-11) until she met Jesus who forgave her sins and gave her peace with God. You see, the peace that is most important to Jesus is spiritual peace, not political or civil peace. In fact, God will use strife to help us see that we need Him because there is no one else (Acts 4:12), no man, no woman, no saint, no one but Jesus who can rescue us from the judgement we deserve because of our disobedience to Him. Only Jesus is the real peacemaker. He is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), and He sets people free from their sins. Are you at peace with God? Have you been rescued from the penalty of your sin? Are you free at last? Do you have peace at last?

SONS OF GOD. When God forgets your sins, He calls you a child of God (John 1:12) - a son of God (Gal. 3:26). We become sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ. As we have seen in our study of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has been giving us the characteristics of true Christians. He has told us how true Christians behave. He is not telling us how

to become a Christian. He is telling us how to relate to God and how Christians treat others. In this beatitude Jesus tells us that the real peacemakers are the sons of God. In Matt. 5:3 He has said the “blessed one” will see the kingdom of heaven. In the next and following verses, the “blessed one” will be comforted, inherit the earth, be satisfied, receive mercy, and see God. Now He says the “blessed one” will be called the son of God. These things are only true of Christians! Is your life characterized by being a peacemaker?

CONCLUSION. Now if Christians are peacemakers, then the opposite must also be true. Those who are always angry and those who create disunity and conflict must not be sons of God. Do you have the attitude of an “eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”? Do you hate an enemy or take others to court? Do you keep a record of wrongs done to you? Is Romans 12:17-18 true of you,

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. (NASB) Romans 12:17-18

Are you a son of God? If you are, peace will not always be possible because people

will sometimes hate us because we speak God’s truth and desire to be holy like God (2 Timothy 3:12). The ultimate test that you are a son of God, a real peacemaker, is when you seek to make peace between men and women and God,

And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. (NASB) James 3:18

The sons of God sow the message of peace to others. Jesus came to bring us spiritual peace. The test that you are a son of God is that you seek peace with other people and you desire to bring them to peace with God. A true son of God wants others to find peace with God through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Free at last. Peace at last.

