

## Counter Culture "A Persecuted Peacemaker" - Matthew 5:9-12

Matthew 5:9-12 - "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

### I. Blessed are the peacemakers.

A. What is a peacemaker?

Romans 12:18 - "Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone."

Romans 14:19 - "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

Hebrews 12:14 - "Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord."

Peacemaking means reconciliation. God is the author of peace. His work in Christ is all about reconciliation. Colossians 1:20 tells us that through Christ, God was pleased to reconcile to Himself all things . . . by making peace by the blood of His cross.

The progression of God's person is clear. We left last week seeing that God's person is pure in heart; that is transparent, sincere in relationships. This is essential to reconciliation. Honesty and openness always precede a true reconciliation of estranged people.

B. How are we to be peacemakers?

1. In our own relationships with other people. God set the example.

Romans 5:6-8 - "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

2. In the relationships of others.

Philippians 4:2-3

3. In bringing others to God. The ultimate job of a peacemaker is to bring people to Christ, where they can find the ultimate peace with God.

2 Corinthians 5:17-20 - "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

C. The blessing is - "for they will be called sons of God." - When we imitate God as a peacemaker, a reconciler, we are imitating His best work. Naturally, then, we will be known as His children.

**II. Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness.** It may seem strange to go from peacemaking to persecution - from the work of reconciliation to the experience of hostility. Yet, however we try to make peace, some will refuse to live at peace with us.

A. Why? For some, our "righteousness" will be intolerable.

Jesus said in John 15:20 - "Do you remember what I told you? 'A slave is not greater than the master.' Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you..."

Remember...

- Joseph - dragged into a dungeon for saying no to Potiphar's wife.
- Elijah - threatened with murder for being faithful to deliver God's message.
- Daniel - thrown into a lion's den for being faithful in prayer.

B. The blessing - for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. To the one who has counted the cost of discipleship and is willing to follow that narrow road even when it leads to persecution and rejection, they have the promise of heaven.