



# Blessed Are The Pure In Heart Because They Will See God

**Matthew 5:8**

Last Sunday, after the sermon, I had a brief conversation with someone where I expressed to him that I think that many people, when reading the Beatitudes, insert the word “enough” in them. In other words, they read them as, “Blessed are those who are meek enough,” or, “Blessed are those who hunger enough for righteousness.” There’s a wrong tendency in us, when hearing Jesus’ words to automatically think we have to attain to being blessed. But that’s not what Jesus is saying in these Beatitudes. As we’ve discovered in the past weeks, the disciples were blessed once they turned to Jesus. Now, in Jesus declaring these Beatitudes, he’s revealing their new identity and how these characteristics are defining characteristics for them. In other words, those who follow Jesus are defined by these things. This is their identity. And (as we discover elsewhere in Jesus’ teaching), followers of Jesus are gradually empowered by the Spirit to live these characteristics out. We do not become blessed if we do enough. Instead, the only way we could ever do these things at all is by the grace of God! To quote from the 20<sup>th</sup> century British preacher, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, again, “. . .**there is nothing more fatal than for the natural man to think that he can take the Beatitudes and try to put them into practice.**” I would add that it is fatal for Christians to think they can do this without depending on the Lord. All the Beatitudes drive us to Jesus, and Jesus is the one who satisfies us completely!

So, as we approach the Beatitude for this Sunday, keep this in mind. The Beatitude for today is **The peacemakers are blessed because they shall be called the sons of God.** Don’t think to yourself, “If I’m peaceable enough, God will bless me.” You’re not attaining in order to get approval. If you’ve turned from your sins and turned to Christ, you are approved. On the basis of this approval and acceptance, rejoice in your identity and live it out by the promised power the Spirit gives to you! As in previous weeks, we will discover what the first part means, then we’ll ask what it means to be “called the sons of God.” Finally, I’ll end with application questions for each of us to ponder and pray through.

Before I get into the points, I do want us to consider what the 1<sup>st</sup> century audience might have thought about this statement of blessing. In Jewish teaching, the people took the Old Testament passage that said, “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,” and they twisted it to mean that God is essentially ok with revenge. Later in this chapter, Jesus speaks of this: “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 the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”<sup>1</sup> In reality, this Law of God was not intended to be used to speak of revenge. It was actually a law against injustice. God wanted laws that fit the crimes so he stated that an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. By the 1<sup>st</sup> century, people thought this was a command to exact strict revenge. This goes against being a *peacemaker*.

---

<sup>1</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Mt 5:38–39.

To add to this, many Jews in the first century did believe the Messiah was coming, and they believed that the Messiah would also come to confront and overthrow the Roman government. Now people's curiosity is piqued by Jesus' miracles. Then some of the first words of Jesus, in this sermon, is that the peacemakers are blessed? What?! No personal revenge? No governmental/societal revenge? How can this be? How can we be blessed if we submit ourselves to others like this?

Do you feel the tension? I've heard Christians talk like this in our day as well. People say, "I don't want to be walked all over." They assume that if they're a peacemaker, they're a doormat. So, they essentially reject the entirety of Jesus' command because they're afraid of being trampled on. But if everybody acts that way, there won't be peace, will there? But even as we look at this world and listen to governments and societies call for peace (which everyone longs for, and it is a good longing), the reality is that no society has ever had true, enduring peace. We long for it, but it feels like it's just beyond our grasp.

How can we have peace? How can we contribute to peace? These are good questions, and the answer is found only through Jesus. I pray you would listen to the Savior. I pray you'd embrace the Savior once again and realize his ways are truly the best – for his glory, your eternal good, and for the good of other's souls! With this understanding, let's move into discovering what this Beatitude means.

### 1. What is a peacemaker?

The Greek word for "peacemaker" simply means **to be peaceable; to restore peace**. But if you're anything like me, you were taught that a definition should not have a part of the word in that definition. So, we're still left with questions. What does peace mean? As we answer this, then we can move to seeing what a peacemaker is.

**Being a peacemaker is not primarily a feeling.** To be peaceable and to restore peace requires action. Jesus doesn't say we are to pursue feelings of peace. We are to be peaceable and we are to restore peace. So, let me give an example with a Bible verse. In Philippians 4:7, we read, **"And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."**<sup>2</sup> The context is Paul urging Christians to pray to the Lord and then discover the peace of God guarding our hearts and minds. Interestingly, I think in our Western culture, we've been so inundated with messages that *peace* is primarily a feeling of calm, we think that's what this is saying. We think we pray and if we feel a peace, then that's God's affirmation to us. That's actually not what is being said here. This word for peace was actually used in military to refer to a peace between societies. What I believe Paul is emphasizing is that as you commune with the Lord in prayer, the reality that you are at peace with God will comfort you. When you feel confused about things to do in this life and maybe you have struggles with others, you are reminded that you have full access to the God of the Universe. That peace means that he loves and cares for you! You are at peace with him – whether you feel it or not. If you have turned to Christ, you are at peace with God! This is the idea of peace. So, to be a peacemaker doesn't mean that you work to ensure everyone just feels no turmoil. That may be part of it, but if that's primary then you may be content just getting people to feel a certain way while never solving problems.

**Being a peacemaker is not the absence of conflict.** In Romans 16:20, we read, **"The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you."**<sup>3</sup> Here we have peace and crushing. The God of peace is at work through us to crush Satan! Why? Because sin is anti-

---

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Php 4:7.

<sup>3</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 16:20.

peace, and in warring against Satan and his devices, we will eventually come to a day of future peace. I'm also reminded of 2 Corinthians 13:11, which says, **"Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you."**<sup>4</sup> Let me ask you a question, did the Corinthians have unity issues? Did they struggle with relationships within the church? Yes! While Paul calls them to live in peace, he acknowledges there's a need for restoration and agreement with one another. And then he states that the God of peace will be with them as they live this out. But if you're a person who thinks that being a peacemaker means the absence of conflict, you'll never resolve issues and have true peace. Sadly, I think many relationships and even many churches function this way. We don't bring up stuff because we're just trying to "keep the peace." Jesus doesn't say, "Blessed are the peace-keepers." He says, "Blessed are the peacemakers!" Maybe a spouse never says anything because you just want "peace," but is the spouse's heart really being helped? This can happen in churches, too. No one really talks about Christ-based peace. Instead, we don't want to rock the boat for the glory of God and the good of others. Please hear this. Being a peacemaker doesn't mean the absence of conflict. (But I will add that being a peacemaker doesn't mean you love conflict. Nor does it mean that you must be a peacemaker if you're in conflict. The word means you're striving *for* peace. And sometimes conflict comes when you're moving to peace.)

In reality, I think (oftentimes) when I think of the idea of "peace" and being a "peacemaker," I end up focusing on myself. What does peace mean to me? Maybe you can relate with me, and if so, I want to add that this is not the right place to start. We aren't to start with ourselves and our perceptions and our feelings. We must focus outward. Honestly, to understand what peace is, we must look to God. After all, he's the God of peace. But you could say, "I can't see God. How am I supposed to know what peace looks like?" I love how the apostle John tells us in his gospel that we behold the glory of God in Jesus. Jesus says that if we see him, we've seen the Father! So, to know peace, we must look to Jesus.

In Ephesians 2:14-16, we read, **"For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility"**<sup>5</sup> Jesus is *our* peace! And we see two ways in which he makes peace for us. Jesus promotes peace with God and also creates peace amongst those who turn to him for forgiveness and cleansing from sins. These are the foci of peace.

**Peacemakers promote peace with God.** Jesus reconciles people to God. How did he do it? Well, we humans are born enemies of God. We are on the other side. We don't want to love and serve him, but we will take his gifts to us and spend them on ourselves as we see fit. We reject his justice and create our own justice. We live as enemies of God. As a result, we deserve to be brought into his courtroom and judged guilty. Yet, what Jesus did is he came into this sinful world and willing was treated as an enemy of God on the cross. He took the weight of just hostility in himself. He took it all for anyone who would turn to him and trust that he alone can grant you forgiveness and reconciliation with God.

This is the gospel. The gospel means good news. It's the truth that Jesus has won! He won on the battlefield. He conquered sin and death. Will you turn to him? If you haven't, why not now? And, if you have turned to Christ, how often do you let this peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ?

---

<sup>4</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), 2 Co 13:11.

<sup>5</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Eph 2:14-16.

Based on what the Scriptures teach us, to be a peacemaker means you proclaim the gospel message to those who don't yet follow Jesus, and you declare this message to believers, too! This would also imply that you are filling your own mind with God's peace. You long for the gospel of peace to permeate in and through all people! This means we must keep the main thing the main thing.

As we engage with an unbelieving world around us, I pray that the world would know we're seeking for their welfare. We're not culture warriors are trying to load our guns and destroy anyone who disagrees with us. We are peacemakers who will lay down our lives, like Jesus did for us, so that they might be saved and be changed into his image. As Jesus said: Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world."<sup>6</sup> The gospel must be in laser focus. We don't want to veer off the gospel, focusing on good things, but not central things. Why? Because our communion and relationship with the Lord is of utmost importance. I believe that if someone knows God's glory in Christ through the Spirit and the gospel, they will become more like him! Do you? Then let's trust God to do a transforming work as we meditate on and live out his peace.

In addition to this, **Peacemakers promote peace among believers.** Notice how often in Ephesians 2, that Paul brings up the ideas of unity, oneness, reconciliation between people of differing backgrounds. In that context, it was the unity that Jesus brought to Jews and Gentiles. But this can be broadly applied to all types of people. If we are people who have been saved by grace alone, then we all come to God on the same basis. It's not our skin color. It's not our race. It's not our gender. It's not our wealth. It's not our poverty. We come on the basis of Jesus. Jesus is central to our unity. Therefore, peacemakers long for believers to grow in peace with each other. Even though there will be differences (like those we read of in Corinth or any other New Testament church), because Jesus has saved us, we long for the saved to grow in realizing the beauty of unity around Jesus. We long to promote peace because we long for people to know the God of peace (and the peace of God). We long for them to see that the kingdoms of this world will never satisfy, but God's Kingdom does! There is peace, and thus those who follow Jesus seek to be peaceable towards each other. Now we can ask about the second part of the beatitude.

## 2. What does it mean to be called a son of God?

I believe to be called a son of God, in this context, primarily means **to be like God.** While Paul talks about sonship in terms of adoption, and Jesus clearly teaches that those who trust him have God as their Father, Jesus' primary (or maybe sole) usage of this phrase means something else. So, in John 17:12, we read that Judas was the "son of destruction." In Matthew 8:12, we read about "sons of the kingdom." In 13:38, we read about "sons of the evil one." In verse 45 of this chapter, we read about being "sons of God." You get to Acts, and we read about a man who was called the "son of consolation." That was his nickname! This all is referring to association and being "like" something. Barnabas was such an encouragement, it was like encouragement was his Dad! This is the primary way Jesus himself uses the phrase.

So, think of it this way. How many times have you looked at a child and you've tried to discern who they take after. Maybe their nose looks like mom, but their eyes are dads. But, have you ever met adult children and they have mannerisms like their parents and someone says, "You're definitely so-and-so's

---

<sup>6</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jn 18:36.

child.” I’ve heard that before, and I’m even somewhat surprised by that. But, I can’t argue. I’m the son of Daren and Karla.

This is the idea of the phrase here. Peacemakers will be called “sons of God.” Now, who’s calling them “sons of God?” Well, if we keep the consistency with all the other Beatitudes, which I think we ought to, the one calling them sons is God himself. Ponder this. We are never more like God than when we are making peace. There is nothing more God-like than being a peacemaker. Therefore, to be called a son of God means you are a peacemaker. To be a peacemaker means you are a son of God. You are acting like your Father in Heaven! Isn’t that amazing? So, Ventura, when you see this inclination of bringing peace and restoring peace where there might be chaos and people aren’t listening. Or maybe there is animosity towards God or one another, yet you’re inclined to promote peace, that is your Father coming out! You are looking like him! That should put a smile on our faces. Oh to hear people say, “I see God in you.” Wow! I don’t necessarily see it. Sometimes I’m too focused on my sins and weaknesses, and I need people to say to me, “I see the Lord at work in you.” We all need to hear this from one another. This reminds us of his grace at work in us and even compels us all the more to live life with joy, for his glory! Oh how wondrous that the peacemakers are blessed, being called sons of God!

Before getting into the application questions, I want to share with you how God has been working in me this past week. On a social media platform, I came across a Christian counselor and therapist who posted about how he offers intensive 4-day counseling sessions for pastors. This person is in the Holland area, and I’ve heard of him before, so I clicked his link and saw how much he charged. I was shocked, and I did what I shouldn’t have done. I let my emotions get the better of me, and I stated how ridiculous I thought the fee was. How could a pastor ever afford *that*? I was judgmental and prideful in my response. And, actually, I even stated these things on two different occasions, spanning about a month. After the second time, this man responded to me. But he did so privately. He took the time to answer my genuine questions, but he also lovingly showed me my pride and judgmentalism. Then he also offered to get to know me and to take me out to coffee sometime. I was personally shaken up by his response. I knew I had been wrong, but I wanted to defend myself. I went through mental arguments as to why I needed to hold my ground, but I knew I had no footing. At some point I remembered the sermon for this week, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” My heart sunk. I have been playing the hypocrite. I haven’t been living my identity and privilege as a peacemaker. I was a peace-destroyer. I responded to him and said I was sorry for my judgmentalism and pride. I thanked him for his grace towards me – showing me Christ by not only taking the time to explain, but also offering to pay for a coffee with me. I then told him I would make corrections on the posts, apologizing for my sin and also expressing my appreciation for his godly response.

Ventura, I tell this story because I need to admit that I’m weak, too. I can’t preach a message on peacemaking as though I’ve got it all down. I don’t. I’m still a little nervous about meeting with this man. But he’s pursuing peace, and I pray that I would pursue peace with him as well. I also pray that my story this past week might reach at least some of your hearts. Have you, like me, forgotten that the people on social media are real people and we are still called to be peacemakers with them, too? But listen carefully, I don’t tell my story to say, “Now, let’s wallow in self-pity, and declare how hopeless we are.” No! I’m reminded of Romans 8:14 that says, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”<sup>7</sup> We are imperfect, but we cry out, “Abba! Father!” And the Father gives us his Spirit so that we can grow. By the Spirit, we can grow as being makers of peace! Do you believe that? Now, let’s consider the implications of this in our lives.

---

<sup>7</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Ro 8:14.

- 1. Do I know the God of peace (and rehearse the peace of God to myself)?** If you have not turned to Christ for forgiveness, you don't have God's peace. No matter whether you feel like you're fine with God or not. God says that without faith, it's impossible to please him. That faith means dependence on him. If you don't have Jesus, you don't have peace. But you can have his peace. Will you turn to him today? You can even right now in your seat. But if you are a Christian, do you rehearse and remind yourself of the peace you have with God? Do you rehearse that reality as the greatest reality in your life? God is not at war with you! You are in his Kingdom! Maybe for you, your application is to rehearse the gospel of peace with yourself consistently throughout your days. Let this fill your heart and mind until it exudes from you to others around you!
- 2. Am I slow to listen, quick to speak, quick to wrath?** Whether it's your attitude on social media or with in-person interactions or in reading literature or listening to the radio. Do you embrace God's righteousness and wisdom for peace? As James says, "let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; <sup>20</sup>for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God."<sup>8</sup> Your anger won't help you or others. It doesn't promote peace. Will you join me in repenting of this? And maybe you say, "But they need to know how bad they are! And, look at John the Baptist and his correction of Herod." Yes, look! Herod was disturbed to have John killed. Would people be sad if you were? Think of Daniel in the Lion's den. Again, there was concern from Darius. Even Pilate with Jesus. Peacemakers are bent on seeing God's peace, and while the world disagrees, it seems they can see a difference between us and others.
- 3. Would believers see me as one who is "eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3)?** Oh how I pray that Ventura would grow in such ways that we can say to each and every one of us, "You show me God!" "You're such a peacemaker." By God's grace, we will. He who began his good work, will continue it! Praise his name. But even more importantly is that someday we will hear our God speak with his own voice. And in that day, we will hear him call each and every one of us "child." In that joy and hope, live out his glory today. Christian, live as the peacemaker you are.

**The peacemakers are blessed because they shall be called sons of God.**

---

<sup>8</sup> [\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Jas 1:19–20.

