

Dr. Bert Jones • North Carolina Capitol Commission • Bert.Jones@capitolcom.org

*“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God” (Matt. 5:9).* Peace is mentioned almost 400 times in the Bible. It is about more than the absence of war and fighting. It speaks of the presence of all that is good. The Greek “Shalom” indicates a desire for all of God’s goodness in our lives.

God is the source of peace. He is referred to six times in the NT as the “*God of peace*”. One of the OT names for God is “*Jehovah-Shalom*” (*The Lord is Peace.*) God is at perfect peace with Himself; all of His attributes dwell together in perfect harmony.

God’s will for us is peace. *Jeremiah 29:11* says, “*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.*” We should marvel and be humbled at the very revelation that *God thinks of us!* Since the deception in the garden of Eden, our adversary Satan has sought to convince us that God’s thoughts and plans are not for our best. But the person who is at peace with God knows better than that.

God created a peaceful paradise in the beginning, and a peaceful paradise in its perfection awaits the believer in Heaven. But, since the rebellion of sin, the world is at war with God. But even so, God has graciously revealed in His Word that the victory has been won at Calvary for all who believe.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace. At His birth the angel announced peace and goodwill toward men. But Christ was rejected, and so there is division, as Christ said, “*Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division,*” (*Luke 12:51*). Even on the day He fulfilled prophecy and rode into Jerusalem (“city of peace”), He wept and said, “*If you had only known this day what would bring you peace – but now it is hidden from your eyes,*” (*Luke 19:42*).

Speaking of Christ, *Ephesians 2:14* says, “*For He Himself is our peace.*” Christ has united believing Jews and Gentiles into one body, His church. Soon before His torture and death on the cross, He told His disciples, “*Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you,*” (*John 14:27*). Later He added, “*I have said these things to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*” (*John 16:33*)

When we focus on the darkness of this world, fear or anguish can disturb our peace. But when we focus on the Light of the World (the Lord Jesus Christ) and remember that He has overcome the world, we can enjoy the peace He gives.

Peace is a fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22*). If we are to be peacemakers, we must know God and draw peace from Him. There is no other source of true peace.

Sin is an enemy of peace. Unbelieving sinners falsely accused the Lord of being a troublemaker (*John 7:43, 9:16, 10:19*). Later, the same was said of God’s ambassador Paul (*Acts 24:5*). Those who will stand for righteousness in this world will sometimes invite declarations of war from those that will not. *2Timothy 3:12* reminds us that “*all who want to live godly lives in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.*”

James tells us (*3:18-4:4*) “*the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. What causes fights and quarrels among you? (It is) your desires for pleasure that battle within you. You lust after something ... so you commit murder. You covet something ... so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask God. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives ... your pleasures... do you not know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Therefore whoever chooses friendship with the world becomes an enemy of God.*”

We see here that people war with one another because they are at war with themselves (“*your desires that battle within you*”). God’s enemies are the flesh (v. 1), the world (v. 4), and the devil (v. 7). If we side with God’s enemy, we are His enemy too.

When people yield to sin, there will be war and strife. The only solution is the righteousness of God. Note that “*blessed are the peacemakers*” follows after “*blessed are the pure in heart*”. Only the pure in heart can be peacemakers. If sin is putting me at war with God, I cannot be a peacemaker.

When we experience the peace of God, we can share it. *Titus 3:3* reminds us, “*at one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived, and enslaved by all kinds of pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.*” But when we come to the cross of Christ, we find forgiveness for our sins. “*Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*” (*Romans 5:1*).

We minister peace when we control our anger (*Matt. 5:21-26, Prov. 16:32*), and “*overcoming evil with good*” (*Rom. 12:18*), not peace at the expense of compromising with evil. A false peace can be more dangerous than an open war.

Christ at Calvary is the greatest example from the greatest peacemaker. He dealt honestly with sin in paying the price for us. To enjoy peace with God, we must deal honestly with our sin. Then we can become peacemakers too.

## Matthew 5

### The Sermon on the Mount

5 Seeing the crowds, He went up on the mountain, and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

### The Beatitudes

2 And He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

10 “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you on My account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

### Salt and Light

13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

### Memory Verse for the Week

*“The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;  
who can know it?”  
(Jeremiah 17:9)*