



March 22-23, 2025

Historical Context and Summary

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God (v. 9)

According to one source, of the 3,100 years of recorded history, the world has only been at peace about 7.3% of the time (a total of 227 years).¹ During this time, around 8,000 peace treaties have been broken. In fact, the vast majority of peace treaties that have been signed since 1975, collapsed within five years.² We may want peace, but it is hard to maintain. Additionally, it seems that the modern world continues to be in conflict due to racial, religious, and political reasons. This all doesn't even include families, workplaces, and schools. So, what kind of peace is Jesus speaking of? It is not the absence of conflict. After all, there can be an external perception of peace but strife in the heart of all involved. Neither is it a willingness to compromise our core beliefs and values merely for the sake of unity.

God's peace is internal. For Christians, their peace comes from Jesus, the Prince of Peace. As one scholar writes,

“Those who work for *shalom* (wholeness and harmony rather than strife and discord in all aspects of life and who reconcile others to God and each other will ‘be called sons of God.’”³

Unfortunately, it seems that Christians are known more for who/what they are against and for starting fights rather than being peacemakers. Jesus wants us to be peacemakers, striving to be known by what we are “for” more than what we are “against.”

¹ Gary A. Fine & Barry O'Neill, “Policy Legends and Folklists: Traditional Beliefs in the Public Sphere,” *Journal of American Folklore*, 2010, 123(488): <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/378895>. (Accessed March 20, 2025). There are a lot of sources that falsely claim a total of 286 years. However, 227 is more accurate according to this article and other articles.

² Reema Saleh, “What is the Path to Lasting Peace in Global Conflicts?,” <https://news.uchicago.edu/story/what-path-lasting-peace-global-conflicts#:~:text=Nearly%2040%20percent%20of%20peace,evident%20today%20across%20the%20globe>. (Accessed March 20, 2025).

³ Craig L. Blomberg, *Matthew* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1992), kindle edition.

Discussion Guide

Break the Ice

-Who was your rival growing up? (Was there sibling rivalry? A school that you always faced in sports? Or just someone you often compared yourself to?)

Up

-Read 2 Corinthians 5-17-19. What stands out, confuses, or challenges you from this passage or the message?

-Throughout the story in the Bible, the story is about peace or the restoration of peace (Shalom). What does this say about God? As His image bearers and ambassadors- how do you feel about that?

-React to the statement Ron made this week: "True peace is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of reconciliation/wholeness."

In

-Pastor Ron gave four typical stances when it comes to conflict. Peace Breakers-Peace Fakers-Peace Keepers-Peace Makers. Spend some time talking through what each of these fosters and which one you naturally have a bend towards.

-What conflicts come to mind that you are navigating within your live right now?

Out

-What situations cause you to lose your ability to be a peace maker? What factors often contribute to this?

-Describe the person who you would be willing to allow into the middle of your conflict. Which of these qualities could be said about you? Where is there work to be done for you to be a person able to be trusted in bringing godly wisdom into situations of conflict?

Prayer

-Spend time praying as a group for each other and our conflicts. Pray not for resolution per say, but for the resolve to be holy in our conflicts. Also, thank God that He resolved our ultimate conflict-giving us mercy to show mercy to others.