

Peace Lover or Peace Maker?

by

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“May the Lord give strength to his people! May the Lord bless his people with peace!” Ps 29:11

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Matthew 5:9

In the first passage, we see the words “strength and peace” mentioned. Some would argue that in some situations the only way to have peace is through strength. Ask Israel about their perspective, for they believe that if not for the strength of their arsenal and their will to resist, the nations around them would have removed them from that small place on the earth years ago. Those opposing nations have said clearly that Israel doesn’t have a right to exist, and they would try to remove them if they could. They have tried several times, and every time Israel has been the victor. I don’t think Israel would believe their peace could exist without the strength of their weapons, at least that is the belief of most Israelis. But remember, by in large, the typical Israelis are not religious, for over 30-40% are atheists. So the common opinion over there is that there is no God to protect them and if there is, He is uninvolved. Therefore, they think it is up to them. Make no mistake in thinking that Israel doesn’t love peace. They would love to have it. I also think the Palestinians who live there also love peace, and want it. But neither side is willing to be peacemakers, and as a result they have no permanent peace between them. There is a difference between being a peace lover and a peacemaker and until someone figures that out, the conflicts will remain.

But there are a small number of Israelis who are Christians and see it differently. There are also many Christians around the world, including myself, who would connect Israel’s protection and amazing battlefield victories with God’s strength and protection, not their own. I think it is because there is an obvious reminder of the prophecies of old, and the signs of the times mentioned before Christ returns that causes Christians to see Israel as a *heavenly timepiece*. God has a plan for Israel, and I think that all manners of battles can come against His plan and them, but they will not prevail. Now that thought is about Israel, but, what about you and me as peacemakers?

In the second passage, we read where Jesus told the people when He gave them the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount that being a *Peacemaker* is a blessing. How so? To begin with, Jesus mentions that we will be called “*sons of God*.” Now that is a major identity change for most of us. Can you imagine how significant this statement is? Jesus didn’t say that we would be a “friend or ally or partner” in His work. He said we would be a *son of God, which would also make Jesus our brother*. Why would Jesus use such an intimate, relational description to describe a *Peace Maker*? I think it is because being a peacemaker is a reflection of God in us when we serve as peacemakers. I think it is a “God-thing” for us to be peacemakers, for God is a peacemaker. It is so easy in our carnal nature to be an agitator, a divider, a gossip and a slanderer, especially in the dark and behind the scenes. Those things come natural to us and it is highly perfected in some, for it is our fallen nature at work in us. But that is not the nature of Jesus. Jesus came to give peace. He enabled peace between God and mankind. He also enabled peace between man and man, if we would be peacemakers instead of just peace lovers. Jesus is the peace giver and the *Peacemaker*, and it is in the core of His relationship with the Father to be a peacemaker. Little wonder that He would identify a person who is a peacemaker as a *son of God*, for it reminded Him so much of the Father and Himself. When we abide in Christ, we begin to take on His characteristics and become a peacemaker, for it is a natural fruit of our abiding in Christ. Believe me. Jesus gave the greatest compliment He could give to you and me when He said

that we would be a *son of God* because we are a peacemaker. There could be no greater identity with Him or the Father.

Now some would argue that if being a peacemaker is a result of abiding in Christ, then being able to be one comes later, after we are walking rightly with Christ. There is some truth to that argument, except being a gossip, slanderer, divisive, and creating disturbances among people hinders our intimate, abiding relationship with Christ. Therefore, I would tend toward thinking that being a peacemaker helps foster an abiding fellowship with Christ, and being divisive hinders it. Our attitude should be that we are peacemakers because we are obedient to Christ first, not because we feel like it, want to, or expect a positive result. I will say clearly that we deceive ourselves if we feel that our fellowship with Christ is not disturbed by our personal behavior that creates divisions, especially in the Body of Christ. It will come back to haunt us, for disturbing the peace that God creates in a family, or friends, or church, or ministry is actually taking on Christ Himself. He will make His displeasure in this known sooner or later to the person who is doing it and it will not be pleasant. Therefore, if any of you readers are unsure of this in your life, I encourage you to look at your life and your activity in that area. What you are doing might be out of sight and no one but God and you know that it is going on. But God knows it, and others will eventually find it out. If you see that you have been creating divisions in any way, then go and repent to God and all people concerned, and ask God to restore you to His *son ship*. Your life will be miserable until you turn from what you are doing, no matter how justified you feel you are in doing it.

As we approach a new year, it is a time for new resolutions for the year. I cannot think of a better personal resolution to have than to do everything I can this year to be a *peacemaker*. It will be a challenge to me with some people. But, I have a great motivation to override the negative thoughts I have toward them, for I like being a *son of God*. That means more to me than anything. I like the fact that He sees my efforts when I try to be a peacemaker, and it brings delight to Him. It makes it a lot easier on me to forgive, to pass mercy on someone, and then hand them off to Christ to teach them what is missing in their life, rather than for me to hold onto a grudge. It is a new year! Let's do it right and make it our greatest effort this year to bring some peace to the people around us by being peacemakers. God bless you and Happy New Year. *Give em Heaven, and give em peace.*