

Communion

Peacemakers

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The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Ephesus:

“But now in Christ Jesus, you who formerly were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” (Ephesians 2:13)

We are not brought near to God because we feel righteous or good, or even because we’ve been baptised in the Holy Spirit. We come near because we are participants in the offering of Christ, in His sufferings and the work of His blood. We are able to draw near, with boldness, to the throne of grace, where we receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16). The Lord is inviting us to be bold as we participate in the body and blood of Jesus Christ, because:

“[Christ] Himself is our peace, who made both [Jew and Gentile] into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall by abolishing in His flesh the enmity...” (Ephesians 2:14-15)

Christ is our peace

Jesus *Himself* is our peace! Christ, who has made Jew and Gentile one and broken down the wall of separation that excluded all the Gentiles, including us. He has abolished in His flesh the former enmity.

Since the Lord has *abolished* enmity, and He is our peace, He wants to work that abolition and that peace in you and me. Can you let this fact, this word, pierce your heart?

When Jesus spoke what we know as His Sermon on the Mount, one of His key statements was:

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

The corollary of Jesus’ statement is that those who are *not* peacemakers shall *not* be called sons of God. People who merely believe that Jesus brings peace to their lives are not the *peacemakers* who are identified as sons of God. Rather, it is those who receive the peace of God then go forth as ambassadors of His peace, making peace, who are called sons of God.

The Book of Hebrews teaches us that legitimate sons of God undergo the discipline of God their Father.

“Do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprovved by Him. For whom the Lord loves He chastens...” (Hebrews 12:5)

This chastening is not only the love of God, it is the wisdom of God. It is not *our* wisdom, for our own wisdom argues that, ‘If God really loved us, He would make everything nice for us and we wouldn’t experience pain. We wouldn’t suffer or get hurt.’ But the wisdom of God is that whomever He loves, He chastens, because:

“... to those who have been trained by [His chastening], afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.” (Hebrews 12:11)

It is well and good to hear in the Gospel, and to believe, that Jesus Christ has made peace through His blood, and to know that because of the peace His blood has wrought, we have a point of access to God and to His throne of grace. However, it is not until Christ's peace abides in us and is producing peaceable fruit of righteousness in us that we are called sons of God. The peaceable fruit of righteousness is borne in sons of God who have not despised His chastening, who have walked with Christ all the way through the matters the Father is ministering to them *for* their chastening. They may not walk very well; they will not walk perfectly. But they have walked through with Him, and they have not drawn back.

Peaceable fruit of righteousness

If we remain with Christ, in His chastening, then we are remaining in the place of safety. We will be learning not to react; not to try and save our own lives; not to fight against the process of God by which the seed of His word and life become buried in the ground of our hearts so that we die with Him and are raised with Him, bearing the peaceable fruit of His righteousness.

The Parable of the Sower teaches us that full entry to the Kingdom of God is given to those who bear fruit of the word sown by the Sower (Matthew 13:18-23). We really must settle, forever, that bearing the fruit of the Gospel is fundamental to the Gospel. It is the peacemakers, bringing forth the peaceable fruit of Christ's life, who are called the sons of God.

How, then, do we *become* peacemakers? We participate in the peace that Jesus has already made, and we do that by joining and participating in the fellowship of the offering He has already made. It is in His offering that the enmity that is in us can be removed, so that

as we relate with others, we are making peace by the peace of God. We are bringing the peace of God to others whether those with whom we are interacting know Christ or not; whether they are in the Body of Christ or not; whether they are in our family or not. And just how great *is* the peace of God? So great that it passes all human understanding (Philippians 4:7).

We don't call *ourselves* sons of God, presuming we therefore have a mandate to bring peace. Neither do we, because we believe Jesus is our peace, set out trying to make peace with everyone. That won't make peace! That *can't* make peace. We can only minister the peace of God if His peace is established and true in us. The peace of God comes to us, by the grace of God, from Christ who is both Prince of Peace and King of Righteousness (Isaiah 9:6; Hebrews 7:2).

We make peace by bringing forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness through enduring with Christ in the circumstances we're in. As we abide with Him, not fighting against the chastening the Father is bringing to us, we become fully the son whom God named us to be.

Can you stop fighting against the Lord's chastening? Well, as long as you rely on your own strength you won't be able to stop resisting, but faith is coming to you in this word God is bringing to you, and by this faith and the grace of God, you *can* stop fighting against His hand! It may be, if you've never walked this way, that you will need to find fellowship with your brethren in Christ about how you can walk by the grace of God instead of by your own strength. But by His faith that has come to you in His word today, you *can* walk this way.

Do you want to be a peacemaker, blessing others from the hand of Christ in whom all reconciliation has been fully made? And do you

want to receive the blessing of peace from sons of God in the body of Christ who are peacemakers towards you?

During His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made this statement:

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."
(Matthew 5:6)

If you hunger and thirst for anything other than for the righteousness of God to be revealed in your life, you will *never* be satisfied. But if you hunger and thirst for His righteousness, seeking Him first and joining Him in the fellowship of prayer and in fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ, you will be satisfied. You will find in Jesus the end of all your agitations, for you will find Him who *is* your peace and who gives you *His* peace, just as He promised:

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful."
(John 14:27)

The peace Jesus gives

The peace Jesus gives is not like any peace the world knows, or like any peace we could ever try and make or understand from our own knowledge, traditions, self-righteousness or best behaviours. Christ's peace, which surpasses *all* human understanding and intellect, is of His Spirit, and is given to us and established in us, flowing from us for others and blessing them even though they may not recognise that what is blessing them is the peaceable fruit of Christ's righteousness.

Perhaps, as a peacemaker, your word in season to someone else will help them make peace with the Lord, to come into the body of Christ

and His Kingdom. As peacemakers among our brethren we can make peace. Even where we've formerly made trouble, been reactive or disobedient to the word of God, we can turn to Jesus, walk with Him and make peace.

We are also called to be peacemakers in our homes, where there can so easily be enmity, anxiety, anger, frustration, and reaction. We are to be sons of God in *all* the contexts in which He has placed us. When we experience suffering and difficulty, or when others around us don't understand, we can suffer these things with Christ for the sake of those around us rather than seeking our own ends in those moments.

As we walk with Christ, abiding with Him in the trials through which He leads us, He shows us the way. We can be patient with others as Christ is patient with us. As we participate together in the Communion meal, which is our fellowship in the offering of Christ, He ministers to us the work of His body and blood, and He who is our peace gives His peace to us.

God wants to deal with the strife and inner turmoils that are in our lives. He wants to answer them with His peace so that we become sons of peace; so that we become peacemakers, who are called the sons of God, welcoming others into our hearts and homes, breaking bread together in true fellowship and simplicity of heart.