

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Peacemakers

By Michael R. Baggett

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

Jesus tells us that peacemakers are blessed. We all agree that the world could use more peace. The fact is peace does not happen on its own. Peace is something we must work at every day.

Who are peacemakers? This Greek compound word is found only once in the New Testament. It carries the idea of rest and Pacificatory qualities (see Strong’s GK Lexicon). Peace is listed as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). Peacemakers are those who reframe from disharmony and work to reconcile broken or injured relationships. Imagine what a different world it would be if everyone worked together to reconcile our differences. How many divorces could be avoided if both parties were willing to work on the marriage rather than pull against each other? Sometimes local churches split over petty matters such as what color to paint the walls! Really, do we always have to have our way? (see Rom. 14:19). There is no Beatitude that says, Blessed are the selfish and contentious, for they shall be called the children of God.

The sad thing is that bringing peace and reconciliation back to a relationship will not always happen. Peace will certainly not come about on its own. We cannot simply say, *“Peace, where there is no peace.”* In matters between brethren, we cannot avoid telling the offender his fault (Matt. 18:15-19). Paul does tell followers of Christ, *“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men”* (Rom. 12:18). We cannot control what others might do, but we can help the outcome of a dispute of say two people clashing because both are having a difficult day, especially if we are one of them! We must take responsibility for our actions. We must take necessary actions to keep or help restore peace. As far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Is there anyone you need to reach out to today? Peacemaking includes being willing to forgive those who reconcile with you (Matt. 18:34-35). How are you doing with that?

One of the best examples of a peacemaker is Abraham. Abraham shared grazing pastures with his nephew Lot and his herdsman. Abraham and Lot’s servants began to argue about the lack of feeding land and strife developed over the matter. The land was too small for both of their flocks and herds. Abraham, the peacemaker, told Lot: *“Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsman and thy herdsman; for we be brethren”* (Gen. 13:8).

Brethren ought to be at peace! (Psalms 133:1). Abraham sought peace with his brethren by offering a solution to their problem. Abraham told Lot the land is before you. If you go to the left, I will go to the right; if you go to the right I will go to the left. Lot chooses the well-watered lands, so he took all that was his and -adding trouble to his own household – *“Pitched his tent toward Sodom”* (Gen. 13:9-12). Notice how Abraham gave Lot the first choice of lands. This is an example of an unselfish peacemaker who is willing to give the better land to his nephew to make peace (also consider 1 Cor. 6:7).

Some people have a more peaceful nature; others must work hard at it, being inclined to be cantankerous and disagreeable. I admit it, there are times I must work harder to be a peacemaker. The first step to improving ourselves is identifying our own problems. How are you doing as a peacemaker?

If we will truly be the children of God, we must realize becoming a peacemaker is not an option. In Hebrews 12:14 we are instructed to, *“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”* Just as it is true about loving others and being willing to forgive our brethren, it is true for working for peace with everyone. Without love, forgiveness, and peacemaking we will never see the Lord. Do not be deceived, no one will get to heaven who secretly hates his fellowman. If our love for our fellowman is the kind of love Paul discusses in 1 Corinthians Chapter Thirteen, being at peace with others should follow.

Look at what God did to bring about reconciliation between humanity and Himself: ***“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven: And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled”*** (Col. 1:19-21; see also 2 Cor. 5:19).

We are to be like our heavenly Father (Matt. 5:44-45, 48). The reward for being a peacemaker is to be called a child of God. The implied blessing is as God’s faithful children we shall be with Him one day. ***“Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it”*** (Psalms 34:14; 1 Pet. 3:11). May we all pursue peace in our homes, on the job, at school, in our communities, and in all our dealings with our fellowman. ■



Authorized Aids

By Larry Ray Hafley

The Bible does not state that Noah used hammers, saws, and axes in the construction of the ark. However, such instruments were authorized by the command, ***“Make thee an ark”*** (Gen. 6:14). Without the instruction to build the ark, the tools would have been unauthorized.

The Bible does not mention church buildings per se. However, they are scriptural because of the authority to assemble (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:18; 14:23; Heb. 10:25). Without the right to assemble, church buildings would be without divine authority.

The Bible does not refer to song books. However, they are authorized by the command to sing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). They assist us in carrying out the divine direction to ***“sing and make melody”*** in our hearts to the Lord. Without the authority to sing, songbooks would be unscriptural.

The Bible does not talk about chalk boards, computerized images, or overhead projectors. However, they are approved by the authority to teach (Matt. 28:19). They assist in doing what the New Testament churches did; namely, teach (Acts 11:22-26). Without the authority to teach, boards and projectors would be contrary to Scripture.

The Bible does not say anything about collection baskets. However, they are authorized by the command to ***“lay by in store”*** (1 Cor. 16:2). Without the authority for a contribution, collection trays would be unauthorized.

The Bible does not mention plates on which to serve the bread of the Lord’s supper. However, they are authorized by the command to ***“take, eat”*** (1 Cor. 11:24). Were there no communion, the plates would not be scriptural.

The Bible does not specifically cite a baptistry, an artificial pool in which baptism is performed. However, the command to baptize authorizes a place to baptize. Without the right to baptize, a baptistry would be without authority (Matt. 28:19-20).

Note These Contrasting Parallels

The Bible does not directly mention the use of pianos and organs in the worship of the church. If we had scriptural authority to “play music,” such instruments would be authorized. As there is Bible authority for song books because we are to sing, so there would be authority for pianos in worship if we were commanded to “play music.” When someone finds Scripture for “playing,” he will have found authority for guitars, trumpets, ***“and such like.”*** Until then, they cannot be used with the approval of heaven.

The Bible does not show where any church built and maintained recreation and entertainment facilities as a part of its work. As plates are authorized by the command to ***“eat”*** the bread of the Lord’s supper, so there would be authority for dinner plates and badminton nets if the church were authorized to provide social meals and recreation for its members. If we had the authority to “play” games, such things would be authorized. When someone finds authority for the church to furnish recreation, amusement and entertainment, he will have found authority for gymnasiums ***“and such like.”*** Until then, such things exist without scriptural authority. ■

Service Times — Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM — Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: www.lodicachurchofchrist.com — Email: lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com — Phone: 209-365-9250