

Blessed Are The Peacemakers

Sermon - February 20, 2022

Golden Verse: *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”* Matthew 5:9

This golden verse is part of Jesus’s sermon on the mountain. The world situation in which humanity lives today gives particular emphasis to this forthcoming verse.

These days, we often hear this very serious statement that today we humans have two options: either to live together in peace or to perish together in a catastrophe. In our time, with our high level of technology, the concept of war has changed quite a bit. In the past, we saw that some countries wanted to restore peace by attacking and destroying another country or groups, and this seemed to be legitimate. This is why so many soldiers joined the first and second world wars. However, today, a war cannot serve to restore peace. Today, the atomic and hydrogen bombs and the biological weapons cannot serve peace. After a new world war, there would be no life left on Earth, but the silence of death would fall on the earth.

Once, Einstein was asked by his students what weapons he thought would be used to fight in World War III. Einstein replied: “I don’t know, but if World War III broke out, I guess that in World War IV people would fight with stone axes.”

Experts say that today we have so much explosive and biological weapons that, in 24 hours, these explosions could destroy our planet five times and not even a single human being would survive the disaster. For this, today, we have only two options: either to live together in peace or to perish together in a catastrophe. This is not just a phrase; this is the sad reality.

Jesus said 2,000 years ago: “Blessed are the peacemakers, those who seek peace, for they are called sons of God.” Do you feel the weight of Jesus’ word in such a world of crisis? I can say that the most urgent political, social, and general human tasks for every Christian are to strive for peace and to work for peace.

Once, somebody expressed himself saying:

- If not you, then who?
- If you won’t do anything, then what?
- If not now, when?

You and I as Christians have a duty to work for peace. You and I have become children of God through a great reconciliation. As Christians, we have to acknowledge daily that God made peace with us in Christ Jesus. I, as a human being, made my Heavenly Father upset and disappointed with my thoughts and

actions. Following my own heart's desire, I estranged myself from God. However, for the merits of Jesus, God forgave me and forgives me daily. At the cross of Golgotha, there was a great bond of peace created between earth and heaven, man and God. And in this peace treaty, God was the initiator. In the child of Bethlehem, then on the cross and death of Jesus, God reconciled with you and me, and proclaimed peace to you and me from heaven. After Jesus proclaimed on his cross that "it is done ... it is completed", after the death of Jesus, God said to you and to me: My child, all evil, rebellion, transgression that you have committed against me are forgiven, buried, forgotten.

God did not want to destroy humanity again as he did once with flooding the earth. Our Heavenly Father wanted to reconcile with the people, with you and me. Jesus Christ paid the price of reconciliation and peace. Your freedom from sin, your new life as a Child of God, was such a great matter for Christ Jesus, that He sacrificed Himself for you. This is what the prophet Isaiah said: "*The peace of our peace is upon him*" (Isaiah 53:5) - on Jesus. God considers the crucifixion of Jesus as if all those who believe in Jesus have suffered the punishment for their sins in Him and through Him. Yes, for you and for me, Jesus suffered and paid the price of reconciliation.

This is why God does not accuse us, even though we were and we are hurting Him many times every day. This is why Christ Jesus does not recall our sin again and again, but simply points at the cross and says: See, I love you so much, you are so dear to me. that I was able to do this for you.

Dear beloved, God reconciled with us through the cross of Jesus, and so we all became children of God. This is why our duty is to make peace with each other and to work for peace, simply because we are Christians and children of God. This has to be the conduct of the Christian. You and I, as children of God, have to do the same thing as our heavenly Father did: passionately, we have to do everything for peace. We have to strive for peace, to work for peace, to create peace, and we have to do everything for peace.

At this point, we might raise a very important question: What can I do and what can our church do for peace today? I would say that it has to be our special task for us to pray from the bottom of our hearts: "*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*" (Matthew 6:10) Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me. Let us earnestly pray that international tensions between nations should be resolved.

We have to work for this word to be as true and pure, as mighty, as the word of God that proclaims peace of Christ to the world: true, pure, and mighty.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

Dear beloved, it is very important to be informed about the world’s problems. We should not isolate ourselves from the world’s problems, from those who suffer, who have no daily bread, daily water, and who are persecuted and executed for their Christian faith. It is not enough to say how sorry we are for them. It is not enough only to pray for those in deep need. It is extremely important to pray for this world, to stand before God for this world, and to pray for grace. But we have to do more because we all can do more. We have to bear the burden of responsibility for the people who are suffering.

God does pay attention to our prayers when we ask Him. There are gifts from God that He only gives into praying hands and hearts and gives to the world because of our prayers. Often, the future of a person, a group or a nation depends on the prayers of believers. This is why it is the primary task of our Church, to create prayer chains for those in need. A very special tool for a believer to create peace is prayer. It is so comforting to know that you and I and so many Calvin family members and friends are in this battle line praying for peace.

Let’s recall the previous saying:

- If not you, then who?
- If you won’t do anything, then what?
- If not now, when?

Just as the air is always polluted with all kinds of bacteria, so the spiritual atmosphere and our hearts are constantly saturated with the bacillus of strife, the explosive tempers of sensitivity, jealousy, envy, and distrust.

We must constantly cleanse this restless spiritual atmosphere with our prayers.

When a believer is praying from the bottom of the heart, it is as if he or she is entering heaven, because, when we pray, we are kneeling before the throne of God. And when we then get up from prayer, we are about to return from heaven, but not with empty hands, because we always bring something from heaven back to earth. That is why the apostle Paul says: *“Take heed to those who are there.”* (Colossians 3:2)

What is up there? Up there, in heaven, there is perfect peace, love, and harmony. When we pray, kneeling in the presence of God, we are filled with heavenly peace, and we bring this peace with us and we bring it into our house, the lives of our family, our church, and our society.

The person who seeks the peace of Christ first fills up him or herself with the peace of heaven so that any little spot of his or her life should be transformed. Any human temper, resentment, and anger should be resolved in the peace of Christ. Then this peace, received and brought from heaven, will be shared among the people. This peace is not just a certain inner spirituality, a feeling, but a productive force, a radiance power, a visible behaviour that wants and works for reconciliation. Therefore, Jesus does not say that blessed are those who have peace within the depths of their souls, but blessed are those who are children of God who seek divine peace. They do all they can to restore peace.

Sadly, we all know people who take pleasure in inciting people against each other. They ignite the fires of strife with lust; they like to stab thorns among friends, family members, spouses. Sadly, there are people who can tell so many bad and ugly things about others in a short time that we remain astonished with a heavy heart.

We, as God's children, are responsible to reconcile with everybody as friends. God's children are not people who stir up unrest and cause quarrels, but seekers of peace and makers of peace.

The word "peace" in the New Testament comes from the verb *eiró*, which means to talk to each other again. God's peace, gained through Christ, also means that, through Jesus, the opportunity for conversation between God and man was re-established. Blessed are those who seek peace, those who strive to re-establish the opportunity for conversation in a spirit of love and forgiveness wherever it has been interrupted by something where they have not yet understood each other's words.

Let's start talking again with those who have been disconnected due to some injury and help others to get closer in the same way. This is our peacekeeping ministry. And so our prayer for world peace becomes more true and credible.

Let me say again the three small sentences I have repeated several times before:

- If not you, then who?
- If you won't do anything, then what?
- If not now, when?

Let us pray together as we sing: "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace." Amen