

## 17. Creativity and Peacemaking

Matthew 5:9 says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.” In this verse, we see that God says He blesses those who are peacemakers. Today, we will see that, as Christians, we have been given creativity by the Lord to become peacemakers. That is one of the things that helps give our lives great meaning and purpose as Christians. As a result, as we ask the Lord to develop His creativity in our lives, we will see that our lives begin to have a great impact in the lives of others.

To understand what it means to be a peacemaker, we must first define the difference between “peacekeeping” and “peacemaking”. The world focuses on peacekeeping because the world has no understanding of the meaning of peacemaking. In recent years, there have been many conflicts in nations and between nations. Often, the world responds by sending military troops to get between the two groups that are fighting, in an effort to stop the conflict. Such efforts provide temporary peace between two groups, but they do not make peace. In fact, the soldiers in the middle may get attacked from both sides. We call these soldiers “peacekeepers”, because they try to keep peace, but they are unable to make peace between the two sides.

In contrast, Ephesians 2 describes what it means to be a “peacemaker”. Ephesians 2:12-13 describes the fact that Christ is the true peacemaker. He is the One who calls us to be peacemakers. Those verses say, “That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.” We were separated from God. We were separated from the promises of God. We were separated from the Jews who had the promises of God in the Bible.

We needed a peacemaker to make it possible for us to make peace with God. We see that Christ became that peacemaker by bringing us to God by His blood. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ had never sinned. However, He was willing to have our sin placed on Him as He hung on the cross. This verse tells us that Christ did that, so it would be possible for Him to place the righteousness of God on us. As a result, every Christian now has peace with God. As the Father looks at us, He sees the righteousness of Christ, instead of our sin. Christ became the peacemaker to make it possible for us to have peace with God.

However, what Christ did also makes it possible for us to have peace with others. Ephesians 2:14-18 says, “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.” Christ reconciled both the Jews and the Gentiles to God and created a new group of people called Christians. In Christ, it no longer matters whether we are Jews or Gentiles, because Christ made us One in Him

thus making peace.

However, we see that Christ did more than just make peace for us. Matthew 5:9 shows us that Christ also calls us to become peacemakers. This is a great privilege because it means that Christ is inviting us to follow in His steps and have a part in His ministry of making peace. It is the privilege of every Christian to become a peacemaker, because Christ says that peacemakers are called the sons of God. We will become peacemakers if we yield our lives to the Lord, so that His creativity can work in and through our lives and we can begin to create opportunities to lead people to Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 gives us the foundation for this creativity. Those verses say, “For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” Colossians 2:6-7 says we are to be rooted and built-up in Christ. Ephesians 3:17-19 says that we are to be rooted and grounded in love. First, we see that, as we grow in our understanding of Christ and His love, His love places such a strong urge in our hearts that we cannot keep quiet. (Christians who keep quiet about Christ, and His love, are showing that they have never learned how to take root in Christ and His love and need a spiritual parent to walk alongside them to help them learn to really take root in Christ and His love.)

Second, in addition to the love of Christ placing this strong urge in our hearts (inspiring us), we see that we are also dead with Christ. Romans 6:4 says that we were buried with Christ, and raised up by Him, so that we are given the power to walk in newness of life. This newness of life is the creativity of Christ working in our lives and giving us the creativity to live a new life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 describes this new life, by saying, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” Christ recreated our lives so that we now have the creativity that Adam had before He sinned. As we yield the control of our lives to Christ, moment-by-moment, this creativity, given by Christ, will impact the lives of those around us.

Third, we see that this creativity will give us a desire to live for Christ, instead of living for ourselves. 2 Corinthians 5:18 tells us that this creativity gives us a purpose for life that changes and transforms our lives. That verse says, “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.” The word “reconcile” means *to bring back together*. We realize that, as we yield the control of our lives to Christ, our lives will become very creative because of the fact that Christ has given us the ministry of reconciliation, and we are able to help others be brought back into a right relationship with Christ. This is the ministry of a peacemaker. Christ gives us the privilege of following in His steps and having an eternal impact in the lives of others as we share with them how they can be reconciled to God.

Then, we see how this principle works itself out in a practical way, in 2 Corinthians 5:19. That verse says, “That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” Christ gave us the “word

of reconciliation”. That word is the Word of God. Isaiah 55:8-9 tells us why we will carry out the ministry of reconciliation by sharing the Word of God, instead of sharing our own words. Those verses say, “‘For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.’” The more thoughts of God that have taken root in our hearts (not just our heads) through memorization, meditation, and personal application, the more creative we will be able to be in sharing this message of reconciliation with others.

In fact, 2 Corinthians 5:20 says, “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.” An ambassador is one who speaks for another and speaks the words that the other person wants him to say. Since every Christian is called to be an ambassador for Christ, we are given the freedom to speak for Christ to others. We choose to speak the words He wants us to speak, because we long for others to be reconciled to God. We realize that the message we are sharing with others has the power to make an eternal impact in their lives, so they can be reconciled to God for eternity.

To know what to share, we need to carefully listen and observe the people we will be talking to. In Acts 17:23, Paul said, “For as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.” In this case, Paul recognized that he must begin with Creation, because the people had no understanding of God, or the fact that He is the Creator.

In Acts 17:11, Paul began with Clarification, “These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” These people were familiar with the Old Testament. So, Paul used the Old Testament to help them understand how to be reconciled to God. In John 4, Christ used Compassion to show the Samaritan woman how to have peace with God. In John 3, Christ used Confrontation as He talked with Nicodemus, because Nicodemus thought he could be right with God through his own efforts.

Studies say that only about three percent of Christians have ever led someone else to Christ. That means that ninety-seven percent have never been shown how to let the creativity of Christ work in their lives, as they have never led people to Christ. They need to let the love of God work in their lives and flow through their lives as they learn to yield to Christ. Christ wants to use His creativity to help you lead others to Christ so they can be reconciled to God. Christ also wants to give you the privilege of showing others, by your example, how the creativity of Christ can work in their lives so they can also become peacemakers. May the Lord richly bless you as you are a peacemaker, and as you show others, by your example, how they can become peacemakers.