

Sermon: Peacemakers

Matthew 5:9

What is a peacemaker?

1. A peacemaker has peace.

Peace starts with peace with God.

Isaiah 48:22, Philippians 4:4-9

Peace requires a pure heart.

James 4:1-3

2. A peacemaker increases the peace of others.

A peacemaker does not avoid conflict.

The actions of a peacemaker

A peacemaker is considerate of others.

James 3:17-18, James 1:19

A peacemaker values peace above winning.

A peacemaker brings peace to everyone.

Hebrews 12:14, Romans 12:18

A peacemaker is at peace even in conflict.

1 Corinthians 7:15

Bible Study: Peacemakers

Getting to know you

1. Last Sunday's sermon was on peacemakers. Was there anything about the sermon or its subject that you would like to discuss in your growth group?
2. Describe a time when you saw a peacemaker in action.

Going deeper

3. Read Matthew 18:15-17. Here Jesus deals with a break in the fellowship of the church. What are the steps when someone “sins against us”?

We are supposed to begin by meeting with the person who has sinned against us. If we can work it out, it need not go any further. If we cannot, we should meet with two or three other trusted advisers who can mediate and lead to reconciliation. If that also fails, then the church as a whole should hear the conflict and make a judgment. If someone will not listen to the church, then that rebellious member should be treated as a “pagan or tax-collector,” i.e., a non-member.

4. What do you think Jesus meant by telling us to treat someone as a “pagan or a tax-collector”?

Many Anabaptist churches practice the “ban.” This is when someone is judged to be out of good standing with the church is treated as a pariah. Church members are not allowed to eat with them or fellowship with them in other ways. However, Jesus did not treat pagans or tax-collectors that way. He ate with them and spent time with them. I think Jesus is just saying that we should treat them as those outside the faith—people to be won back to the Lord.

5. This process is rarely practiced today. Why do we find it so hard to do what Jesus commands?

Most of us are not good at confrontation. We would rather attack people behind their backs, malign them anonymously on Facebook, or just break off all contact with those who disappoint us or trouble us in any way.

It seems that God values relationships more than we do. He tells us to go the extra mile to maintain or restore them because they are so precious.

6. Matthew 18 teaches us to make the first move when we are sinned

against. However, what about when someone else is upset with us? Read Matthew 5:23-24. What does this say about who should make the first move to reconcile a conflict in the church?

Matthew 5 says the offending party should make the first move. Matthew 18 says the offended should. So, basically, if you are a Christian with a broken or strained relationship, you should make the first move to work it out.

7. What about when you do everything and it doesn't lead to reconciliation? Read Romans 12:18 and 1 Corinthians 7:15. What do these two passages teach us?

It doesn't just depend on you. The other person has to decide whether they are willing to reconcile. If they do, great. If not, you should be at peace. Just do what you can, be open if the other person changes, and let it go without anger or stress.