

Small Group Questions

Sermon Based Small Groups – February 13, 2011

Adult Education – Woodbury Community Church
Woodbury, Minnesota

Sermon Title: Waging Peace

Sermon Series: The Sermon on the Mount: Living as Citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven

Pray: Each week, we want to take time to lift up one another's prayer concerns. True Christians pray for one another. Take some time at the beginning of your small group time to pray for each other. Be real with each other. If you are hurting, take the risk and share how you are feeling with the group. If you have something that God has blessed you with this week, share it. Give Him the glory for what He is doing in your life. Record the prayer requests in the "Notes" section on the right of this page, and make a commitment to pray for the needs of the people in your group throughout the week.

Ice Breaker: Pastor Brian began his sermon by talking about superheroes this week. Think back to when you were a kid. Did you have a favorite superhero? How about a favorite superhero movie or television show? Why did you like that hero? If you could have one superpower what one superpower would you like to possess?

Read: Matthew 5:9

Discuss: This is the seventh of eight Beatitudes. This is the last of the Beatitudes that has to do with our character. Why do you think that Jesus chose to make this the final Beatitude? How do you see it building upon the Beatitudes that precede it?

Pastor Brian said that peacemakers are honest about the true status of peace, they are willing to risk pain in order to pursue peace, and they are even willing to fight for peace. Read the following passages and talk about how they relate to being a peacemaker.

Scripture Reference	What This Passage Says About Being a Peacemaker
Ezekiel 13:10-12	
Jeremiah 6:14	
Ephesians 4:3	
Romans 14:19	
Romans 12:18	
James 3:17-18	

Notes:

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Discuss: Jesus is the Ultimate Peacemaker. In what ways has Christ brought peace to you? What are some of the ways that He has brought peace to the world?

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How do you reconcile the fact that Christ is called the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6) and that the angels announced His “peace on earth” (Luke 2:14) with the fact that our world has seen so little peace in 5,000 years of recorded history?

Read: Read the following passages about Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace. What do these passages teach us about the peace that Christ brings?

Scripture Reference	What This Passage Says Jesus, the Peacemaker
Colossians 1:19-20	
Ephesians 2:13-17	
John 14:27	
Philippians 2:3-8	

Read: Kent Hughes writes the following about being called sons of God: “Now let us consider the sublime benefit: ‘They will be called sons of God.’ They have divine paternity, an inheritance from above. The meaning here is breathtaking. Again, as in the six previous Beatitudes, the pronoun is emphatic. The Greek word order is, ‘for they sons of God shall be called.’ The idea is that they, and no others, shall be called God’s sons. Moreover, the passive voice indicates that it is God, not man, who assigns the title ‘sons.’”

The sublimity of this promise comes from the fact that the title ‘sons of God’ refers to character (cf. Luke 6:35). The peacemaker partakes of the character of God. He is like God in the way he lives. No wonder God says, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers.’ The proper question to ask next is, ‘what title does God assign to *us*?’”¹

Discuss: What does it mean to partake in the character of God? How can we be like God when it comes to being a peacemaker?

¹ Kent Hughes, *The Sermon on the Mount: The Message of the Kingdom*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001), p. 66.

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Read: Colossians 1:19-20; Romans 5:1, 10

How should the truth of these passages impact how we share our faith with others?

Read and Reflect: Read Luke 16:19-31.

Now read this poem, which Pastor Brian read in his sermon.

You lived next door to me for years
We shared our dreams, our joys, and tears.
A friend to me you were indeed...
A friend who helped me when in need.
My faith in you was strong and sure
We had such trust as should endure.
No spats between us ever rose;
Our friends were like...and so our foes.
What sadness then, my friend, to find
That after all you weren't so kind.
The day my life on earth did end
I found you weren't a faithful friend.
For all those years we spent on earth
You never talked of second birth.
You never spoke of my lost soul
And of the Messiah Who'd make me whole.
I plead today from Hell's cruel fire
And tell you now my last desire.
You cannot do a thing for me...
No words today my bonds will free.
But do not err, my friend, again;
Do all you can for souls of men.
Plead with them now quite earnestly,
Lest they be cast in Hell with me.

(Author Unknown)

Discuss: How does understanding the peacemaking component of sharing Christ with others change your understanding of “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God?”

A.W. Pink wrote, “Thus we may be certain that the *peacemaking* of our text refers primarily to our being instruments in God’s hand for the purpose of reconciling to Him those who are actively engaged in warfare against Him (c.f. John 15:17-27). . . The world may regard them as fanatics, professors of religion may regard them as narrow-minded sectarians, and their relatives may look upon them as fools. But the great God owns them as His children even now, distinguishing them by tokens of His peculiar regard and causing His Spirit within them to witness to them that they are sons of God. But in the

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Day to come, He will publicly avow His relationship to them in the presence of an assembled universe. However humble their present situation in life may be, however despised and misrepresented by their fellow men, they shall yet, 'shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father' (Matthew 13:43). Then shall transpire the glorious and long-awaited 'manifestation of the sons of God' (Romans 8:19)."²

Discuss: How does Pink's statement encourage you when it comes to living for Christ in this generation?

One Last Thought: Kent Hughes wrote, "Peacemakers are those whom the entire Beatitudes course again and again – sometimes in order, sometimes out of order, sometimes singly, sometimes all together. They have the character of the King – they are peacemakers."³

Jesus Christ came to bring peace between man and God. May we be people who reflect His character! May we be people who bring peace between brothers and sisters! May we never be people who bring strife to others! May we always seek to bring the Prince of Peace into our world of strife!

Pray: As you close in prayer, ask God to help see others with His eyes. Ask Him to produce in you the character qualities spelled out in the Beatitudes. Ask God to give you an opportunity to share His grace with someone this week. And, if you have been a source of strife rather than peace, go make things right. Ask for God's help. He will give you the strength to do so.

² Arthur Pink, The Beatitudes, Kindle Edition, (Public Domain), positions. 424-449.

³ Hughes, p. 68.