

THE TRUTH HERALD

We Are "The Peacemakers"

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

Recently, as we waited on the LORD for a message, we believe we heard the following: "My children are yearning for peace. They are looking for peace. I have given them the peace that surpasses all understanding. I have placed peace in the heart of my children. Out of this well of peace will peace fill the world." We set out to study God's Word on "Peacemakers". God has called and equipped His children to be peacemakers on earth.

God is not a God of disorder but of peace ... (1 Cor 14:33, NLT) | His name will be called ... Prince of Peace (Isa 8:6b, NKJV) | Of His government and peace, there will be no end. (Isa 8:7a, NKJV) | But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (Gal 5:22-23a, NLT)

The Word tells us that peace is a fundamental part of God's nature. Paul, writing to the followers of Jesus in Corinth, about 50 years after His death and resurrection, emphasized that God is the God of Peace. Over 700 years before, Isaiah had prophesied that Jesus would be called the Prince of Peace (that is, the Son of the King of Peace). God being the God of Peace, His Spirit, the Holy Spirit, produces peace in His children, as Paul reminds followers of Christ in his writings to the church in Galatia (Gal. 5:22,23a). God's children, the Body of Christ, now the representatives of Christ Jesus on earth, are the ones to execute this endless increase of His government and peace.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem ... (Psalm 122:6a, NKJV) | Make every effort to keep yourself united in the Spirit, building yourselves together with peace. (Eph 4:3, NLT) | Do all you can to live at peace with everyone. (Romans 12:18, NLT) | Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. (Matt 5:9, NKJV)

Indeed, God's children across generations are called to be peacemakers. There are still many things in our lives that we can be anxious about ... our provision, our health, our relationships, difficult situations such as racial tensions, terrorist attacks, bullying, peer perceptions, trouble with supervisors, peers and subordinates ... the list goes on. Nonetheless, as the children of God, the Body of Christ, (that is, the Body of the Prince of Peace), we are called to be peacemakers. How do we go about answering this call in our daily lives?

First, we must recognize that the peace of God is a gift: it must be received.

The peace of God is a gift. During His last days on earth, Jesus told His disciples: "I am leaving you with a gift - peace of heart and mind. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don't be troubled or afraid (John 14:27, NLT). Like the gift of salvation, the gift of peace must be received and walked in. Our Heavenly Father God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whoever* believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16, NKJV). This gift has been given to '*whoever*': that is, everyone. Only a fraction of God's creation, however, has received this gift of salvation. Once we have received the gift of salvation, the Spirit of God comes to dwell in our hearts. Galatians 4:6 says "because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts ..." (NKJV). This is the same Spirit talked about in Galatians 5:22-23 that produces peace in our lives.

Second, the peace of God must not only be received, it must be exercised.

It is not enough to receive the gift of salvation; we must also walk in it: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ..." (Phil. 2:12, NKJV); For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13, NKJV). For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the Sons of God (Romans 8:14, NKJV). The way we walk in peace is to *follow the leading* of the Spirit of Peace. We must exercise the gift of peace. This can be likened to a having wedding and walking fruitfully in a marriage. It is not enough to have a wedding; after two people exchange their vows to God and to each other and enter into the covenant of marriage (that is, after they receive the gift of marriage), they must then begin to walk in their vows. The children of God are the "Bride of Christ". In order to have a fruitful spiritual marriage, after they enter into covenant with the Bridegroom (that is, after they receive the gift of salvation), they must begin to walk in this covenant with their Bridegroom (that is, they must begin to follow the leading of His Spirit), on a day-by-day, moment-to-moment basis. Thus, immediately after telling His disciples that He was giving them the gift of peace, Jesus followed it by exhorting them to apply this gift: *Be anxious for nothing!* (John 14:27b, NKJV)

What is the peace of God?

The Bible tells us that the peace of God surpasses all understanding (Phil. 4:7). The beauty of God's peace is that, even though it surpasses our understanding, and we are not able to fully define it, we are still able to experience it. The Hebrew word *shalom* tries to describe this kind of peace with the following words: harmony, wholeness, completeness, prosperity, welfare, tranquility ... complete peace. The peace of God is contrasted with worldly peace, which is defined as "freedom from

disturbance; quiet and tranquility" (Oxford Dictionaries). Jesus told His disciples: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you" (John 14:27, NKJV).

How do we practice the peace of God?

The short answer to this question is that we bring the peace of God wherever we go, by following the leading of His Holy Spirit. Then, we will see the fruit of His Spirit, including but not limited to peace. There are several things we can do to bring the presence of God wherever we go. Below, we remind ourselves of five of them:

1. *Live by faith in God.* To begin to live by faith, you must first accept the gift of salvation (if you haven't done so already), after which the Holy Spirit will come and dwell in your heart. Then you must walk in faith in God; faith in God to take care of you and your needs not only on this earth but throughout eternity. Walk in faith. This brings peace of mind and heart. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebr 11:1, NKJV). Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17, NKJV). To develop our faith in God, we must get to know Him better, spend time with Him (in His Word, in fellowship with His Spirit). The more we know Him, the more we will have faith in Him; the more we know Him, the more we will trust Him.
2. *Engage with the Holy Spirit.* Trust in the LORD your God with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths (Prov. 3:5,6, NKJV). King Solomon is believed to have written most of the Proverbs between 1,000 and 900 years before the birth of Christ. Even so, the writer of the Proverbs emphasizes the importance of closely engaging with the LORD for His direction. Today, we the children of God have His Spirit in our hearts. This same Holy Spirit is our Helper (John 14:26, John 15:26, John 16:7, NKJV); the One who tells us things to come (John 16:13b); the One who teaches us all things (John 14:26, NKJV); the One who leads us into all truth (John 16:13, NKJV); and the One who produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in our lives (Gal. 5:22,23, NKJV). However, because God is love (1 John 4:8b), and love does not demand its own way (1 Cor 13:5), His Spirit does not demand His own way: *we* must engage with Him; *we* must follow His leading.
3. *Do not be anxious. Pray.* Convert your anxieties to prayers. Do not be anxious about anything but in every situation by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4: 6,7, NKJV). Pray for the peace of Jerusalem ... (Psalms 122:6a, NKJV). Pray for peace, that is, pray for God's creation to receive the gift of salvation, because when they do, the Spirit of Peace will come and dwell in their hearts. And as they follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, this same spirit will produce peace in their lives.
4. *Keep your mind stayed on Him.* You will keep Him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because He trusts in you (Isaiah 26:3, NKJV).
5. *Love.* " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind', and 'your neighbor as yourself' "(Luke 10:27, NKJV). 1 Corinthians 13 describes God's love as patient, kind, not jealous, not boastful, not proud, not rude. Love does not demand its own way, it is not irritable, it keeps no record of being wronged, it does not rejoice at injustice but rejoices whenever truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Peacemaking is for God's glory.

Search for peace, and work to maintain it (Psalm 34:14; 1 Peter 3:11). I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth (Psalm 46:10). God intends to fill the entire universe with Himself (Eph 4:10). Thus, of Jesus Christ's government and peace, there will be no end (Isaiah 8:7a). Peace on earth brings God glory. How many times haven't you heard someone ask: "If there is a God, why is there so much chaos on this earth?" As children of God, the Body of Christ - the Prince of Peace, we are called to be peacemakers. We are called to bring God's peace wherever we go. And as His peace fills the earth, God will get the glory.