

Happy Are the Peacemakers

Sitting at the Feet of Yeshua

In my last post, we began looking at how happy are those who are pure in heart. In this post, we will explore the seventh Beatitude regarding the peacemakers.

"How blessed are those who make peace! for they will be called sons of God."

~ Matthew 5:9

Verse 9 teaches us about becoming bridge builders. It also implies that, *"we have to make peace with ourselves before we become peace makers with others."* Once again, Yeshua takes this lesson from the Tanakh. Isaiah 54:13 says, *"All your children will be taught by Adonai; your children will have great peace."*

In Romans 12:18, Rabbi Sha'ul exhorts us to *"live in peace with all people."* He goes on to say to the Ephesians, *"always be humble, gentle and patient, bearing with one another in love, and making every effort to preserve the unity the Spirit gives through the binding power of shalom"* ~ Ephesians 4:1-3.

The Jewish people were looking for a peacemaker. They were longing for the Messiah to lead them in war, to conquer all the Gentiles, and to rule the world in peace. Peace is more than a passive existence; it's a very positive state of good. A peacemaker is more than one who stops quarrels; he brings good into other people's lives.

A peacemaker might become involved in great conflicts. As long as the forces of evil prevail, there is no way to have peace except by destroying evil. Real peace can never be found in a compromise with evil. There can never be a peaceful coexistence with sin (1 Corinthians 5:7; Isaiah 57:20, 48:22). [I'm so tempted to make a political statement at this point, but that is not the purpose of this blog.] Peacemakers bring others to God. Man's basic problem is that he has to be reconciled unto God.

Helping bring peace where there is tension, conflict and strife brings about a healthy sense of satisfaction, self-esteem and self-worth.

Let's take a closer look at the meaning of this verse.

As we already know, in Hebrew, peace is *"shalom."* Shalom never means only the absence of trouble. Shalom always means everything that makes for mankind's highest good. When one person greets another with **"Shalom"** they do not mean that they wish for the other person only the absence of evil things; they wish for them the presence of all good things. In the Bible, **shalom** means not only freedom from all trouble; it means enjoyment of all good.

We must carefully consider what this beatitude is actually saying. The blessing is on the makers of peace, not on the peace lovers or the peacekeepers. Frequently, we make peace in the wrong way. Instead of peace, we succeed in making only trouble. For example, we may allow a loved one to fall prey to the wiles of ole smutty face and our defense is that for *"peace's sake"* we do not want to take any action or ruffle any feathers. This is peace through appeasement and it rarely works in the long run.

Many a person has thought that they were making peace, when in fact they were piling up trouble for the future, because they refuse to face the situation and to take the action that the situation demands. They fail to establish *"boundaries"* or exercise *"tough love."*

The peace, which the Bible calls blessed, does not come from evading issues; it comes from facing them, dealing with them, and conquering them. What this beatitude demands is not the passive acceptance of things as they are because we are afraid of the possible consequences. This beatitude requires active confrontation of things in love and the making of peace, even when the way to peace is through trials and tribulations.

Sometimes, to make peace, you have to wage war! Let's face it folks, we are in a spiritual battle for the very souls of our unsaved friends and loved ones.

Traditionally, there have been three primary interpretations of this beatitude.

1. It has been suggested that, since shalom means everything that makes for a person's highest good, this beatitude means: **"Blessed are those who make this world a better place for everybody to live in."** Abraham Lincoln once said: *"Die when I may, I would like it to be said of me, that I always pulled up a weed and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow."* This then is the beatitude of those who have advanced the world a little further on its journey to true civilization.
2. Many of the early scholars took this beatitude in a purely spiritual sense and taught that it meant: **"Blessed is the man who makes peace in his own heart and in his own soul."** In every one of us there is an inner conflict between good and evil. We are frequently tugged in two directions at once. Every person is, at least to some extent, a walking civil war. Happy indeed is the man who has fought through to inner peace, in which the inner conflict is over and his whole heart is given over to God.
3. But there is another meaning for this word shalom. It is a meaning on which the Jewish Rabbis loved to dwell, and it is almost certainly the meaning that Yeshua had in mind. The Jewish Rabbis held that the highest task, which a man can perform, is to establish right relationships between each other. That is what Yeshua means. We are called to be bridge builders. We each have a ministry of reconciliation. We are called to forgive and forget. Sometimes, it is humanly impossible to forgive. When that happens, we need to call for divine intervention. We have to ask God to forgive those who hurt us and to work on our hearts so that we can eventually see our hurt from their perspective.

There are people who are always storm centers of trouble, bitterness and strife. Wherever they are, they are either involved in quarrels themselves or the cause of quarrels between others. They are troublemakers. There are people like that in almost every society and every kehilah. Such people are doing the devil's own work. On the other hand, there are people in whose presence bitterness cannot live, people who bridge the gulfs, and heal the breaches and sweeten the bitterness. Such people are the true makers of peace for they are doing God's work.

An old Jewish saying goes, *"Peace is not an absence of war; it is a virtue, a state of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, and justice."* ~ Baruch Spinoza

So, then, this seventh beatitude might read: **"O how blessed are those who produce right relationships, for they are doing God's work!"**

In my next post, we will look at the last of the Beatitudes, how happy are those are persecuted.