**Beatitudes 7  
Peacemakers and blessed**

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Matthew 5:1-12, Luke 6:20-26

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

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We are trying to learn these sayings together:

(Three ‘states’, one ‘desire’, three ‘actions’: a good, Biblical Seven)

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are they that mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God

“*Jesus* is the center of our faith. *Community* is the center of our lives. *Reconciliation* is the center of our work.”

These three statements are from Palmer Becker’s booklet, *What is an Anabaptist Christian?[[1]](#endnote-1)* and are his simple summary of what it means to be an Anabaptist, to be a Mennonite.

So, when we Anabaptists come to today’s beatitude, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God,” we are tempted, I think, to say, “We’ve got this.” That “purity of heart” beatitude was hard to understand, but if there’s anything we do understand, it’s peacemaking.

And maybe that’s even a little bit true.

Last week we did struggle to understand purity of heart, but in that struggle, I think I’ve come to understand the *shape* of the beatitudes better. Or, at least, one way to understand their shape.

The first three beatitudes offer a welcome.

Are you poor or poor in spirit? Humbled by life? Maybe a little bit broken? Maybe broken a lot? Good news: there is a blessing for you; the very kingdom of God belongs to you and people just like you; not those who trust in their wealth, and who have things figured out.

Are you sad? Are you depressed by yourself, or the state of the world? Have you had that universal experience of seeing people you love sick or dead? Good news: there is a blessing for you. In the kingdom of God, you will be comforted.

Do you feel left out? Are you not as successful as you’d like? Are you like Dorothy, the “meek and lowly,” instead of Oz, the Great and Terrible? Good news: In the kingdom of God, you will enjoy all the best that the earth has to provide, a return to Eden.

Then a beatitude that is a bit of a pivot a hinge: it offers a welcome:

Deep in your heart do you desire to be good? Do you have a hunger and a thirst to be good and do good in the world? Do you have a hunger and thirst to see justice prevail? Good news: In the kingdom of God, you will feel the satisfaction of fullness of justice and right.

But it also suggests that *we* have a part to play in this kingdom. We will called citizens, yes; we will be comforted, yes; we will enjoy the fruits of the world, yes. But we are called to complete act justly and rightly. We are moving from a state of being, to a way of acting in the world. We are empowered; we are empowered to do the right thing.

And the next three beatitudes are beatitudes of action.

Do you see the great chasm between the good person you want to be and the person you are? Do you cry out for mercy? Good news: mercy is yours, if you extend mercy to others.

Is your life changing so that being present with God, seeing God is what you are beginning to desire? Good news: perceiving God and God’s work in the world is yours, as you purify your heart, seeking the one good thing, focusing on the internal changes rather than outward show.

And now, this beatitude, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” Gregory of Nyssa truly says we are entering the Holy of Holies, the Sancto Santorum, the center of all things. Are you desires changing so that you want to be a child of God, not in some fatuous sense (“everyone is a child of God”), but a daughter of God, a son of God? As Hugh of St. Victor writes, “fully and perfectly reformed in the image of God”?

What is the way to achieve that? And maybe Jesus’s words are a bit surprising, when he sounds like an Anabaptist here: Reconciliation is the center of your work. Be peacemakers.

Be at peace with God. Be reconciled to God. Jesus doesn’t say it here, but we know that the death and the resurrection of Jesus himself famously and victoriously leads to a reconciliation with God: God dying for us, so that we can dwell with God. This is the foundation of our hope, the central act which gives the Kingdom of God its start, and opens the way for our membership in it.

Be at peace with others. “If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” Paul says (Romans 12:18). Be at peace with your spouse, your children, your family, your friends, your workmates, even your enemies. To be at peace with others is to love them.

Be at peace with yourself. Accept the blessings of comfort, and belonging, and the joy of the kingdom and this world’s delights. Believe that God’s mercy is for you, too, and that God will continually and infinitely change your longings for goodness into goodness deeply nestled inside you. Believe that God is purifying you, preparing you for the full vision of God in all of God’s Godness, but also giving you glimpse of God’s work in the world even now. Believe that you are becoming a daughter or son of God.

Help people be reconciled to God, to one another, to themselves. Gregory says a wonderful thing about being a peacemaker is that peace is so much better than its opposite. He imagines a man in full-on anger: eyes bulging and blood-shot, veins swelling, even your guts tightening, and spittle flying as you shout. Contrast that to the person at peace with themself and others. Isn’t that a good goal?

Modern Anabaptists have rightly put more emphasis on the work of reconciliation in the wider world, working for justice, what the Jews call Tikkum Olam, the Repair of the World. It’s not enough to just refuse to kill (although that is important). To be truly children of God, we need to be peace*makers*, and so we celebrate and support, in our congregation, ministries of reconciliation like the work of the Colossian Forum, the work of Community Homeworks, sewing comforters and other ministries of the Mennonite Central Committee, the work of repairing the brokenness in our own denomination over sexual minorities. Like enjoying the calm after calming down a raging man, the making of peace is its own reward.

But, oh, the blessing: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

1. Becker, Palmer. *What is an Anabaptist Christian?* Missio Dei, Volume 18, October 2008. Revised edition, 2010. Mennonite Mission Network, Elkhart, Indiana. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)