

**Sermon Series: TRANSFORMATION**  
**Sermon: Blessed Are the Peacemakers**  
**Text: Matthew 5:9**

**Discussion Questions:**

- Think in very general terms about peace.
  - Break into groups of 4-8, and develop a definition of peace.
  - Come back together to report - and out of this, create a large-group definition of peace that incorporates the key themes and elements shared by each of the small groups.
- People in our world talk a good bit about “world peace.” Is world peace even possible? What would it take to accomplish it? What are the obstacles to world peace? Are there any hopeful signs that we’re headed in the right direction?

**Examination:**

**Read Isaiah 9:1-7.**

- These are familiar verses - that often are read in the season of Advent. It says in verse 1 that God will “*honor Galilee of the nations, by the way of the sea, beyond the nations.*” What do you think this means?
- When you read about “*people walking in darkness*” and “*those living in the land of deep darkness*” (v. 2) - what do you think about? Does this apply to us...to our time...to our world? Does this describe an absence of peace?
- Is there a specific event or time that you think verse 3 is describing?
- Verse 4 mentions “*the day of Midian’s defeat.*” This is a reference to the events described back in **Judges 7** - in the days of a Judge named Gideon (you might want to look it over if you’re not sure what happened). This defeat involves victory over enemies - complete with shattering yokes and dealing with garments rolled in blood. The question as it applies to peace is: How does victory in battle - and total conquest over enemies - relate to the question of peace? Is there any true peace without winners and losers?
- This child that is born (clearly Jesus!) is described as the “Prince of Peace!” The peace that He brings is tied to the “increase of His government.” Has this happened already? Is this yet to happen in the future? What will this peace look and be like?

**Read John 14:23-31.**

- Do you see the Trinity in verse 23?
- These nine verses seem to be centered on the peace that Jesus describes in verse 27. How is obedience (see verses 23-24) an essential element of the peace that we experience in Christ?
- When Jesus says that he is “leaving” peace with us - he says this in light of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. Have you ever thought about peace as a person - the person of the Holy Spirit? Does this mean that the only way to truly “have” the peace of God in our lives is to

- have the Holy Spirit living in us?
- How is our experience of peace connected to what the Holy Spirit teaches us (v. 26)? How is our experience of peace connected to what the Holy Spirit “reminds us”?
  - What’s the difference between the peace that Jesus gives us - and the peace that the world gives?
  - How is peace a gift? Does this mean that peace can’t be earned or learned?
  - How is peace the opposite of a troubled heart? A fearful heart?
  - Can you cite an experience in your own life when you’ve experienced the peace of God in a supernatural way - a way that overcame trouble and fear?
  - How can we use these truths and verses as a way of sharing the Gospel with others? Don’t we live in a world desperately seeking peace? And here we see that Jesus is the Prince of Peace - and the Holy Spirit is the embodiment of Peace? Don’t we have this to offer a world looking for peace in all the wrong places?

Read **Matthew 5:1-12**.

- Create a list of the nine actions that Jesus calls “blessed.” Study these nine side-by-side. What stands out to you about these things? What ties these things together? How are they similar?
- How optional are these things for the person who hopes to be called a child of God and inherit eternal life?
- If you’re NOT a peacemaker - are you a child of God? If you’re NOT pure in heart - will you see God? If you’re NOT poor in spirit, will you inherit the kingdom of God?
- Verse 6 talks about being filled. Filled with what? How does this filling relate to the previous question (of all the things we’re NOT)?
- How is verse 9 a reflection of the character of God? Is God a peace-loving God - and a peacemaking God? How is the whole history of redemption, climaxing in the death and resurrection of Jesus, God's strategy to bring about a just and lasting peace between rebel man and Himself...and between man and man? How does being a peacemaker reflect the character of God our Father...loving what He loves and pursuing what He pursues?
- Is “peace-making” a willingness to make sacrifices for peace the way God did? How does the extending of forgiveness apply to this (*“Father forgive them...”*)?

**Application:**

What can you do in a very specific way this week to act on God’s call for you to be a peacemaker? How can you allow the Holy Spirit to do HIS work of peacemaking THROUGH you? Is there anyone you need God’s help in forgiving?