

The FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT ..... CALLED TO BE MORE  
**PEACEFUL**



*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

***GALATIANS 5:22***

***Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.***

***Matthew 5:9***

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**Tuesday, February 7, 2023  
Online Bible Study, 6:30 p.m.**

**Zoom Meeting ID 973 678 1217, Passcode 6781293**

## Agenda

[LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH YOUTUBE ricky dillard - - Video Search Results \(yahoo.com\)](#)



### Prayer

**Introduction – Called to be more peaceful**

**Patterns of Peace – Eleven Steps w/**Pauses for Peace****

### The Beatitudes

1. Blessed are the Peacemakers
2. It's Active Not Accidental
3. Divided by Disagreements
4. The Pattern
5. Get your hands Dirty
6. Take a Set
7. Big Enough for Both
8. Between two Extremes
9. Made for the Middle
10. Bridging the Gap
11. Standing in the Gap

### Let There Be Peace on Earth

**Matthew 5:1-12**

*Blessed are the Peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God. Matt 5:9*

#### **1. Blessed Are The Peacemakers**

In Matthew 5 Jesus gives one of His most famous sermons called the Sermon on the Mount. You've probably heard of it before. It's filled with some of Jesus' best-known teachings like the Lord's Prayer.

At this point in time, it's early on in Jesus's ministry and just prior to this He's been preaching all over Galilee and great crowds have started to follow Him. So when Jesus sees the multitudes of people gathering around Him, He goes up onto a mountain with His disciples and begins to speak to them.

It's within this sermon that Jesus issues both a challenge and a promise in one powerful phrase. He said, "Blessed are the peacemakers because they will be called the children of God." Think about the audacity of this statement for a moment. In a world that is often filled with strife, conflict, and hostility; Jesus sends us out as peacemakers.

Now, what does this mean? Jesus doesn't go into any details, but He does tell us what will happen when we live this out. That this is when we discover who we really are and our place in God's family.

When we think about people who have embodied this ideal of a peacemaker, one of the people that might come to mind is Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. Many know Dr. King as one of the most visible spokespersons of the civil rights movement, but he was also a Baptist minister whose Christian beliefs stirred him to speak up for the disadvantaged, the oppressed and other victims of injustice. Even though his words were often strong, they were always marked by peace. During this Black History Month period, on this Tuesday, we will use excerpts from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. speeches as we cut out a design utilizing his "patterns for peace".

To learn how to be a peacemaker involves more than just an explanation, it requires exposure. This Bible Study will include video footage from the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to give you a glimpse into some of his practical ways to live out peacemaking.

### **A PAUSE FOR PEACE:**

What do you think it means to be a peacemaker?

Who do you think of when you hear the word peacemaker?

<https://youtu.be/0y6HplWYMiU?t=7> <https://youtu.be/0y6HplWYMiU>

## **2. It's Active, Not Accidental**

"Peacemakers" is a significant word in scripture. It might surprise you to know that the only time this word is ever used is when Jesus mentions it in the beatitudes.

It is a word bursting with energy. It mandates action and initiative. Notice Jesus did not say "Blessed are the peacewishers" or the "peacehoppers." He didn't say "peacedreamers" or "peacetalkers." Peace must be made. Peace never happens by chance. A peacemaker is never passive. They always take the initiative. They are up and doing.

So let's first understand what peacemaking is not.

Peacemaking is not the absence of conflict. Peace in the Bible is never to be confused with pacifism or the avoidance of strife. We're never instructed to run from conflict or put our head in the sand, hoping that the conflict will end. Anytime we do that it only delays the inevitable.

Remember this, peace in the Bible (the kind of peace that Jesus talks about) is always based on justice and righteousness

**Romans 14:19:** Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

### **A Pause for Peace**

What wrong ideas have you had about peacemaking?

What do you think it means to seek justice and righteousness?

<https://youtu.be/IU45do6E9TM>

### **3. Divided By Disagreement**

Nearly all of us have encountered fallout from misunderstandings, wrong perceptions, and differing viewpoints that we wish we could have avoided. Often it's not just with people who see the world differently than us. Sometimes it's within our own families and people we've been the closest to that bring the greatest hurts.

When we look at scripture we find out that we're not alone. One time Paul and his longtime friend and ministry partner Barnabas had such a strong disagreement that they parted ways. It's found in Acts 15. Paul wanted to go back and visit the believers in all the towns where they had preached before to see how they were doing. However, when Barnabas expressed his desire to take Mark along with them they got into an argument.

The whole disruption started because Mark had deserted them earlier in their work so Paul didn't want to risk bringing him along again. It's funny to think that a man who had been forgiven of so much in his past was now holding the past actions of someone else against him. So it says,

*They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left... Acts 15:39-40*

How could this happen? Paul and Barnabas were not new believers. Both men had walked with God for years. They were teammates. They had served God together, labored together and suffered together. They were both fully committed to doing the will of God, no matter what the cost. They had risked their lives for the sake of Christ and yet they clashed. These two men shared the same passion and the same zeal to help people. They had the same theology, but they disagreed over a practical matter of ministry.

The truth is you don't have to serve God very long to discover that serving God doesn't prevent you from clashing with someone whose personality is different from yours. What's ironic about this encounter is that Paul is the guy who wrote, "If it is possible, as much as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." He is the same person who began all of his letters to the churches with the phrase, "Grace and Peace to you" and yet we see He has this disagreement. **What we need to realize is that living at peace is not the same thing as never disagreeing.**

## **Pause for Peace**

Have you ever had such a sharp disagreement with someone that it caused a rift in a relationship?

How can you live at peace with those with whom you disagree?

[https://youtu.be/V2NTv\\_sWTvg](https://youtu.be/V2NTv_sWTvg)

## **4. The Pattern**

### **Colossians 1:15-22**

It's amazing just how much of the life of Jesus was saturated with His mission to bring the peace of God into every situation.

Jesus came to establish peace; His message explained peace; His death purchased peace and His resurrection enabled peace. His name is called the "Prince of Peace." The angels announced His birth with a proclamation of "Peace on Earth."

Jesus' persistent word of absolution to sinners was, "Go in peace!" Just before He was crucified, in His final words to His disciples He told them, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you." When He returned after the resurrection, His first word to the disciples was "Shalom." "Peace to you!"

The point is, He paid an enormous price for us to experience peace. In fact, the closest picture we have to what Jesus talked about in the Beatitudes is mentioned by the Apostle Paul when he describes what God has done for us through Christ—how He reconciled us to Himself by making peace through His blood on the cross. Jesus saw the gravity of our problem, and He refused to sweep it under the rug or stick His head in the sand. Only a drastic solution would suffice, so He "made peace" by shedding His blood on the cross. And in His action, He shows us the supreme pattern in bringing peace...in our hearts, our relationships, our church, in our city, our nation, and our world. Sacrifice.

### **A Pause for Peace**

In what ways do you think sacrifice is a pattern for peacemaking?

<https://youtu.be/m3oCjRxkhBw>

## 5. Get Your Hands Dirty

Because division and strife happen whenever we find ourselves on opposite sides of an issue, we can often become divided on topics ranging from the simple to the severe. Maybe it's over a political issue. Maybe it's over a theological issue. Maybe it's over a moral issue. Maybe you lean more towards grace or maybe you lean more towards truth. The opportunities abound for us to become divided in where we stand.

Even though we're not always going to agree, Jesus gives us a pattern for how we all can respond. In John 8 there is a great example of how Jesus responded in a tough situation. **John 8:1-11**

Early one morning Jesus came from the Mount of Olives, just east of Jerusalem. He went into the temple courts and began to teach the people who had gathered. But suddenly while He was teaching, there was a rude interruption. The Scribes and the Pharisees broke into the assembly bringing a captive woman whom they had just caught in the middle of the act of adultery and dragged her right into the midst of the group.

The Scribes and Pharisees were the religious experts of the day. The Scribes were the ones who would copy down the written law on scrolls and the Pharisees were known as the strictest of Jewish sects.

Having positioned her prominently, for everyone to see, they began to fire questions at Jesus in an effort to get Him to pick a side, to stand with the scriptures or to stand with the sinners.

In this moment Jesus is faced with a choice. Is He going to uphold what's sacred or is He going to support the sinner? Is His loyalty to the law or to the lost? But Jesus did something no-one expected. Instead of standing, the 6th verse says, "*Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger.*"

He didn't make a comment. He didn't argue His point. We don't know what He wrote, but we do know what He did. He stooped down and wrote in the dirt. In other words, Jesus got His hands dirty. He got involved.

It's worth pointing out that the Scribes and the Pharisees weren't wrong. According to the law, she was deserving of death. But Jesus wasn't going to condemn her. Instead, He got involved. That's a good principle for us to remember. **A lot of people want to make comments before they've ever made a commitment to get involved.** They want to take a stance before they've ever stooped. As Christ-followers we have to do better.

### **A Pause for Peace**

Have you ever taken a stand on an issue without ever getting involved in the issue? What does it look like to get involved before giving input?

[https://youtu.be/BbD5bze\\_pfM?t=5](https://youtu.be/BbD5bze_pfM?t=5)

## 6. Take A Seat

The accusations hurled at Jesus weren't unique to Him. We live in a day where lines are drawn and people are picking sides all the time. It seems like everyone has an opinion on right and wrong. It's so easy to get swept up in the comments and the noise that we never engage in a conversation. To be a Christ-follower is to model our life after the life of Jesus. One example of how Jesus engaged with a conflict is recorded in John chapter 4. **John 4:1-26**

The scripture begins in John 4:4 by saying that "*Jesus had to go through Samaria.*" He didn't have to go because there wasn't another route; He had to go that because He had a mission. He could have easily gone around Samaria, and every other Jew would have because Samaria was a place of great cultural conflict. Jews didn't like Samaritans. In fact, they hated Samaritans and the Samaritans hated them.

They didn't believe the same. The Samaritans had once desecrated the Jewish people's place of worship. The Samaritans considered themselves the true people of God. On the other side, the Jews considered the Samaritans a sort of religious half-breed. There was constant argument, hostility and hatred on both sides. That's Samaria; all this conflict and Jesus walks straight into it.

If you're familiar with the story, once Jesus gets there He sits down by a well and sends His disciples to go get some food. Just as He sits down a Samaritan woman makes her way to the well. Verse 7 says, "*When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?'*"

Jesus doesn't ask her this question because He's thirsty. Instead, He is doing something intentional. He's engaging her in conversation.

This isn't just an ordinary question either. Jesus is a rabbi and He's asking a question of a woman. That might not seem like a big deal, but in this culture Rabbi's were not supposed to speak to women. Not only that, but she was a woman of questionable conduct with a completely different belief system than Jesus. A different theology, a different moral code. And a different ethnicity.

So why would Jesus sit down and start a conversation with her? Perhaps it's because something that is not natural for us, is something that Jesus came to do. To start conversations with people who are different.

**We can't make peace if we don't first make conversation.** But a lot of us don't do that. Instead, we make comments.

The funny thing about this encounter is that when she realizes what's going on, she immediately turns this into a theological debate (John 4:20). She wants to know where Jesus stands on a certain issue and Jesus does answer her, but they could have never gotten to this point if He wouldn't have first sat down and had a conversation.

**Peacemaking involves a conversation.**

As Christians, we do need to take a stand. There are standards. We need to stand for truth. We need to stand for justice. We need to stand for righteousness, integrity, and morals. But Nelson Mandela once said, "Where you stand depends on where you sit."

Our beliefs are shaped by our background. Sometimes we try to take a stance before we've ever sat down and had a conversation. We speak before we sit.

It's always easier to focus on what we want to say rather than listening to the world view of someone who is different. **But try this challenge: before you take a stand and pick a side, take a seat and pick up a conversation with someone who has a different view than you.**

### [A Pause for Peace](#)

Do you find it difficult to listen to someone who has a different viewpoint than you? What can we learn from Jesus' conversation with this woman that would be helpful for us?

<https://youtu.be/BG43OwZoyGI>

## **7. Big Enough For Both**

Jesus recognized the need for standing in the gap of two extremes. That's why He made it a point to model for us the attitude we should take when we find ourselves pulled in opposite directions. We see an example of this in some instructions He gave to His disciples. He knew His disciples would face a difficult and hostile world. He knew that they would encounter resistance and that people would always want to pull them away from their purpose. So He said to them, "*Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*" **Matthew 10:16** *"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.*

Admittedly, it's pretty difficult to imagine a single person simultaneously having the characteristics of a serpent and a dove, but essentially what Jesus is saying is that they needed to have a tough mind and tender heart.

He was laying down a foundational principle about the method necessary for kingdom work. **And as we strive to bring peace in a hostile world, we need to be wise but blameless. We need thick skin but a soft touch.**

Dr. King said it this way, "The greatness of our God lies in the fact that He is both tough-minded and tenderhearted. He has qualities both of austerity and of gentleness. He is tough in His justice and tender in His love and grace. He has two outstretched arms. One is strong enough to surround us with justice and one is gentle enough to embrace us with grace."

### [A Pause for Peace](#)

What do you think it looks like to be wise but blameless in our approach to peace?

[https://youtu.be/wpxkX-7\\_Z5c](https://youtu.be/wpxkX-7_Z5c)

## 8. Between Two Extremes

The pattern that Jesus modeled for us was dangerous. He willingly traveled hazardous roads in a cause He knew was right. As we set out on this pathway toward peacemaking we find a parallel in the way God brought the Israelites out of a land of injustice and into a land of abundance.

In Exodus, we learn how God used Moses to bring Israel out of the land Egypt and later we see He used Joshua to bring them into the land of promise. But on the border between the wilderness where they wandered for 40 years and God's promised land of something better, there was the Jordan river that separated the two places.

But in Joshua 3 God makes a very interesting command to His people before the nation crosses over.

*"Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.'" Joshua 3:8*

What's crazy about this command is that the priests are the ones who are supposed to lead the way. You'd think God would want them to cross over to the other side and show the rest of the people how it's done. It doesn't make sense that God would instruct them to stand in the gap between two extremes: the wilderness they were leaving and the Promised Land God was calling them into.

But in verse 17 it says..

*"Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan." Joshua 3:17*

The people who helped the nation cross over didn't shout from the other side. They got in the middle. That's where God's presence was. In the same way the priests carried the Ark of the Covenant, our job as Christ-followers is to carry God's presence into every place we go.

**The truth is, many times when we think we're leading people, we're actually leaving people.** We leave people behind, and we leave people stuck because we're not willing to stand in a place that's uncomfortable until they can cross over. **But to be a peacemaker is to walk a path that is made for the middle.**

### **A Pause for Peace**

Do you think it's easier to pick a side or to stand in the middle?  
How can we carry God's presence into the places we go?

<https://youtu.be/AVXTuFyXSuw>

## 9. Made For The Middle

Standing in the middle is hard. But what if God wants us to stand in the middle so that everyone can cross over into His best? Yes, it's awkward and yes, it's uncomfortable. Sometimes it's even painful, but isn't that what Jesus did for us? It was in the middle of two criminals that Jesus hung on a cross for all to see. It wasn't pleasant. But it was necessary so that we might be able to enter into the life Jesus was so graciously drawing us.

What we often miss when we are trying to prove our point is that we can never help anyone when we're shouting from the sidelines. That's why we need to move past the walls we've put up and move into a space where we can help. Are there standards we should hold to? Yes, absolutely. However, where we stand is in the middle, because the middle is the space where God can move.

**When we look at scripture, what we see is that God is more concerned about providing a place than proving a point.** We see this when Jesus was hanging on the cross in the middle of two criminals. One of the criminals hurled insults at Jesus, but the other silenced him. **Luke 23:26-43**

It was to this criminal, someone who was in the wrong, that Jesus said, *"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."*

It's a picture of the penalty of our sin and the grace that God offers. God didn't look down from Heaven at our sin and tell us to come up to His level. No, He sent His Son, to meet us where we were at.

Are you able to stand in the middle between those that believe and those that don't? Between those who are right and who are wrong? Between those you agree with and those who disagree with you? Can you stand in the middle like Jesus and not lose your character and not lose your purpose?

### **A Pause for Peace**

What does standing in the middle allow you to do that you can't do when you've chosen a side

<https://youtu.be/dzm542AqFwx>



## 10. Bridging The Divide.....

We have a God-given, scripturally-directed responsibility to pursue peace. That doesn't mean we have to always agree with everything others say or do. Sometimes we will disagree, but in the midst of opposing viewpoints, God calls us to be bridge-builders and make a way for people to cross over. How can we do that? One of the best pictures of this is found in an Old Testament prophecy given by Zechariah. **Zechariah 8:14-17**

In ancient times the cities were well guarded and around the cities were two gates, an outer gate and an inner gate. The outer gate is what everyone sees. It was the wall around the city with a gate for an entrance. The inner gate served as a second line of defense. However, between these two gates was the market place of the day.

Between the gates is where transactions would be made. Between these gates negotiations would happen. It was also between these two gates where justice was supposed to be served.

Between the gates is where prophets like Amos prophesied to maintain justice. When Ruth was claimed by Boaz, he established the agreement in the presence of ten witnesses in the gate. When Abraham purchased a burial site for Sarah, he completed the transaction in front of witnesses in the gate. Between the gates is where the witnesses were. It's where the judges would sit. Between the gates is where we're supposed to be.

Unfortunately, we try to live our lives inside the gates. We watch events unfold but never take responsibility for outcomes. We set up walls to insulate us from places where we'd have to make difficult decisions, and we stay in the places that are most convenient for our ego.

When we stay inside the gates, it's not that we don't see the problems, but we're disengaged. So when Zechariah calls them to give judgment in the gates, he's calling them to action. It's a place of responsibility. He's reminding them to take their place, to stand in the middle and speak for truth. To speak for justice and to speak for peace.

### **A Pause for Peace**

How can you be a "bridge builder" for people who believe differently than you? Why do you think business, trading, and justice all took place between the gates in ancient times?

<https://youtu.be/12An4M7Niq4>



### **11. Standing In The Gap**

As Christians, we need to recognize where our strength comes from. If the source of our strength is how people treat us or think about us, we'll quickly discover that we're always susceptible to outside opinions.

The good news is that when we embrace God's standards we receive God's strength. We can't expect God to give us unity if we don't embrace His standard of equality. Whenever we allow inequality, prejudice, stereotypes, and oppression to go unchecked and then we ask God to make us one, we are violating the very principle that creates unity.

However, when we stand in the place God has called us to be, the middle space, the space between the gates and at the center, He promises to be our source of strength. That's why what Paul said in his letter to the church at Rome is helpful. It shows us it's not about us living up to a standard, it's about us living out of a standard. **That's the pattern that Jesus models for us, to stand in the middle. That's not standing on the fence.**

One translation says it this way, "*Jesus... is at the right hand of God interceding for us.*"

The word intercede literally means to go between. It's someone who stands in the middle to make way for someone else. So taking a stand on an issue isn't wrong as long as we are standing in the right place. If we want to be like Jesus, then where we are to stand is in the center of justice and the center of truth. Even though standing at the center is uncomfortable it's precisely where we are supposed to be. We are supposed to stand in the gap. **Isaiah 28:6**

### **A Pause for Peace**

What do you think it means to stand in the gap for others?

<https://youtu.be/WYTW56MzmkM>

## **It's a Pattern: LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH AND LET IT BEGIN WITH ME!!!!**

<https://youtu.be/GldhPfk1P9s>

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### **Scriptures**

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John 8:1-11

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John 4: 1-26

John 8:1-11

Matt 10:16

John 1:14

Joshua 3

Zechariah 8:14-17

Eph 2:14-15