

Matthew 5:9

Todd Fletcher [00:00:04] Matthew writes, "Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And He opened his mouth and taught them, saying, blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Thus with the words the Lord, you may be seated.

Todd Fletcher [00:01:02] So I've titled this sermon "The Family of Peace," because that's exactly what the Trinity is. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit comprise the Family of peace. They are peace. And the only peace that we can find is to be a part of that family. Outside of God, outside of God's peace, there is no peace. Today our world says peace, peace, but the Bible says there is no peace. The reality is, is for those who are lost, for those who have not received the peace of God, they do not have peace. We may just think of peace as a time where you're not struggling at certain levels like you usually do, but the reality is this peace is a cessation of conflict. And ultimately the conflict that is our problem is the conflict we have with God.

Todd Fletcher [00:01:49] That's why Romans 1 says that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and wickedness. See we need salvation from God. God's wrath hangs over us and we need His peace. But stepping back a little bit and looking at our world, it's interesting I was going through a hard week this week, my my dog passed away. We had him for 14 years, and I have another dog was 15 years old. And as I was wrestling with that, we had to put him down. One morning he woke up and he only had one eye, so his name was Spurgeon, and we called him the one eyed theologian. And he wasn't much of a theologian, but he was a dog. But anyways, he woke up and his eye has one remaining eye that he had for seven years after he had two eyes his first seven years, we had to take one out, he had one left in the next seven years. He woke up in his eye, was blue, and he was in a lot of pain. And so I told Glory we needed to put him down. And if you've ever lost a loved one or a pet, death is a very hard thing to see. And as we called the vet over and they injected him and they euthanized him. Watching his life go out of him is always hard. And that's just that's a pet. Some of us have had loved ones, family members, spouses, children, parents, friends die. Death is a very hard thing. But it's interesting because the day before Spurgeon died I was watching a documentary on J.R.R. Tolkien and his Middle-Earth. It's interesting because Tolkien spent a lot of time world building, he spent around 20 years developing languages, developing Middle-Earth.

Todd Fletcher [00:03:27] And his wife was like, You have to write a book. Like, we have to see some money coming eventually from all this effort you've put in. But then something happened is World War I happened before he was able to write. It's interesting because Tolkien's entire story changed based on what he experienced in World War I. The Dead Marshes, perhaps you remember them in the story of the Lord of the Rings is actually believed to be his understanding, his picture of the Battle of Somme, which he went through in 1916. It's interesting because that battle had a profound effect on Tolkien he had never seen so much death in his entire life. Here's just one description of this battle,

"when it rained blast craters and no man's land would become a series of pools of, or lakes with bodies of dead soldiers, from both sides floating in them." He said it was such that when you were at battle and you were crawling from trench to trench, in fact, you would use bodies of your friends for protection. He said it was as if you saw ghosts all around you because you would see bodies that had been so buried by mud that all you could see was the imprints of their face beneath the mud. Again in our culture and our world, our generation, we haven't experienced, most of us in this room never experienced anything like the Battle of Somme. Death is a reality because we don't have peace with God. For the wages of sin is death. Death is the last enemy to be destroyed, as First Corinthians says. Jesus came to conquer sin and death. So death is a reality around us because we are in a world that is at war with God.

Todd Fletcher [00:05:07] Martyn Lloyd-Jones, somewhat of a contemporary of Tolkien, as he was preaching, its funny, one sermon he was preaching while bombs were going off in London and the church was shaking and he kept preaching. That's a preacher, isn't it? Doesn't matter if there's bombs going off, we're not canceling church. Come on it's the Lord's day, we gather together. So Martyn Lloyd-Jones had a lot to say about war. He says this this is a longer quote, but it's worth hearing. "Why is there so much trouble and difficulty in maintaining peace in this world? Think of all the endless international conferences that have been held in the present century to try to produce peace. Why have they all failed, and why are we now coming to the state when very few of us seem to have any confidence in any conference that men may choose to hold? What is the explanation of all this? Why did the League of Nations fail?" Remember he's reflecting on World War I and World War II. Why did the League of Nations fail? Why does the United Nations organization seem to be failing? What is the matter? Now I suggest to you that there is only one adequate answer to that question. It's not political, it's not economic, and it's not social. So when we think of wars, we often think that the reasons is power, money, all those types of things, he says. That's not at all the reason why we have war.

Todd Fletcher [00:06:28] "The answer once more is essentially and primarily theological and doctrinal. And it is because the world is in its folly and blindness. It will not recognize this fact that this is a theological issue. And this is why we have war continually. That is that it wastes so much time trying to bring peace. The trouble, according to the Scripture, is in the heart of man. And until the heart of man is changed, you will never solve this problem by trying to make manipulations on the surface. See the issue is, is humanity is broken. Humanity is selfish, humanity is prideful. Humanity is power hungry. If the source of the trouble is in the fountain and the origin from which the stream comes is it not obviously a waste of time and money and energy to pour chemicals into the stream and attempt to cure the condition?" You must go to the source, he says. "There is the essential trouble, none of these things can possibly work while man remains what he is." So when the world promises utopia, is that possible when a world is in the state it is? We are fallen, there is no utopia apart from peace with God. As long as we are not in peace with God, our worlds will be full of conflicts. "And alas, it is not only the failure which is found in the world. It is a failure to be found even in the church itself." Do we have war in the church? Yes, I've been in the church long enough. I'm old enough to remember conflict in church. It happens all the time. Many people have left churches because of how they were treated, how they felt. The reality is, is oftentimes the church is no different than the world because we are not selfless. We're not broken hearted. We're not meek. We don't mourn over sin. We're not pure in heart, as Jesus is saying. We as the church need to repent of the war within our own four walls.

Todd Fletcher [00:08:35] Lloyd-Jones goes on to say, "how often has the church been preaching nothing but these human efforts and endeavors, preaching the League of Nations and the United Nations? It is a contradiction of biblical doctrine, do not misunderstand me, I'm not saying you should not make all these efforts internationally, but I am saying that the man who pins his faith to these things is a man who is not regarding life and world from the standpoint of Scripture. According to the Scripture, the trouble is in the heart of man, a nothing but a new heart. Nothing but a new man can possibly deal with this problem. It is our heart that has evil thoughts, murders, adultery, fornication, jealousy, envy, malice, and all these other things proceed. And while men are like that there will be no peace." See if you want peace in your life it starts with peace with God. That's where peace originates. And then the peace with God then goes out into the peace with others. As Tolkien again reflected on death, he recognized, in this world there is no peace. Because the world is not at peace with God. So as we break, as we break this down into three points, again we're going to put this seventh Beatitude in relation to the other eight, because the seventh Beatitude, as we'll see, is the final Beatitude before we see the persecution, the outward persecution. Being a peacemaker brings persecution, isn't that interesting? Being a peacemaker brings persecution. Who is the Prince of peace? Jesus. What happened to the Prince of peace? He was crucified. See when you are a peacemaker, when you step into conflict to bring peace and resolution, people will hate you for it. This is the upside down nature of Jesus's kingdoms, everything is backwards.

Todd Fletcher [00:10:24] Everything that the world sees as valuable, Jesus sees as an affront to God. But everything that Jesus sees as valuable, the world sees as an affront to them because they are opposed to one another. There is no peace between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light. So when we break this down, the seventh Beatitude, then we'll look at what it is to be a peacemaker. Very interesting that you understand that we're called to be peacemakers, not just to be at peace, but to be peace makers. And then the third point is we are sons of God. And I may explain why not children of God specifically, but more sons of God in the Greek it uses that term. So I'm going to explain that out. And then we'll see overall, the main point of today, the main point of the seventh Beatitude is this, is that in Christ we are now a part of the family of peace, the Trinity. We become sons of God. We are adopted into His amazing family. And then, therefore, because we're sons of God, will be characterized by the peace of God because we are born again. So as we come to this first point, the seventh Beatitude, again we need to recognize that there is no peace in this world. This is a quote, a famous quote no one knows who wrote it, it's an anonymous quote says this, "peace is that glorious moment in history when everyone stops to reload." Peace is that glorious ministry in history when everyone stops to reload. Now, you may be saying, I don't know if that's true there's been a lot of times in history where there's been no war. Really? Since the time of Christ, just by our conservative estimates, there has been over 15,000 wars since the time of Christ.

Todd Fletcher [00:12:05] And what is at the heart of war? It's self-centeredness, strife, division, hatred, resentment, the desire for more. You see, it always starts with someone who wants something they don't have. Here's the reality of our world, is we are all very selfish. We're very prideful in our own nature, we need help, we need peace with God. So as we come to these Beatitudes, again as I've been studying these now for almost two months, Jesus is such an amazing Master Teacher, isn't He? As you study these eight Beatitudes, it's just fascinating to see this is the gospel. I've never even realized how gospel centric these eight Beatitudes are, and it's the entire process of justification, sanctification. And then we'll see as he goes on, glorification. This is the whole aspect of salvation is found in these eight Beatitudes. They will see God, notice, it's an amazing thing, look at verse 12 just before I go on. Says, "rejoice and be glad for your" what? "Your

reward is great in heaven." There's glorification. "For so they persecuted the prophets who are before you." So when we think about our reward, it's interesting, as I was contemplating my dog's death, my son Knox asked me, well where is Spurgeon today, Dad? Where's my dog? And I said, well there's a movie called "All Dogs Go to Heaven," No, I'm just kidding. But it's an interesting question. There's a book titled "Heaven" by Randy Alcorn, he has a section on "Where Are My Pets?" It's interesting because the Bible doesn't say where our pets are. God is a gracious God. He loves to give his children good gifts. Randy says it's likely possible that God will recreate our pets again, we don't know. But one of the things about heaven is heaven is a neglected subject in many churches.

Todd Fletcher [00:14:02] He says, "oftentimes when we think of heaven, we just think of playing harps on clouds all day." And most people say that doesn't sound very attractive to me, and that doesn't sound attractive to me either, just playing harps on clouds. But if Randy Alcorn says, who has sold over a million copies of his book Heaven, it's considered the preeminent work on heaven. He said, "Heaven is like this world, but perfect. Where there is no death, there is no sin, there's no conflict, there's no war. There's no crying. Your body doesn't hurt, your body is glorified." Imagine a world like this with no sin, no brokenness, that's what's promised to us, if we are a part of Jesus's kingdom. So how can you join His kingdom? He outlines in the Beatitudes, first is this, you must be poor in spirit. You must be bankrupt. Recognize you have nothing to offer God. Recognize that in your own righteousness you will never be justified. Paul says that twice in Galatians and in Romans that no one has ever been justified by works of the law. It's impossible to merit salvation because we're born into sin. That's the doctrine of total depravity, that we're born totally depraved. Doesn't mean we're as bad as we could be it means that every aspect of us is tainted by sin. So that's our problem. Now, the next step is to repent of that problem, to repent of our sin, to repent of the ways we've offended God. The fact that we've lived contrary to God, that we've lived in the kingdom of darkness rather than the kingdom of light, to come to the end of ourselves, to die to self is what Jesus calls us to. That's the meek. The meek person is completely dead to self and alive to God.

Todd Fletcher [00:15:46] They are selfless, they're living for others. They're broken in, meekness means power under divine control. Meaning your life is completely submitted to Christ. This is where I ask people, if they say, how do I know that I'm saved? How can I be assured of my salvation? I ask them two questions is Jesus your King, are you all in? Is Jesus your King, are you all in? You know the answer to that question, don't you? You can tell whether He's your King or not, whether you're all in. And do you believe He's risen from the dead? It's very simple. Romans 10:9, "if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and you believe in your heart that he's risen from the dead, you will be saved." But in the confession of Lordship means that I am totally under His control. That's power, my power, my abilities, my skill sets under divine control. Then, as Lloyd-Jones says, when you get to the fourth Beatitude, you reach the top of the summit. You start to hunger and thirst for righteousness. This is a life of, the key word is, holiness. You desire holiness because God is holy. You desire to kill sin before sin kills you and you desire to live holy as Jesus, as God is holy. So once you start to pursue holiness, then all these things that have happened internally begin to work themselves outward, which is the first thing is you're a merciful person, you're forgiving person because you've been forgiven. When you recognize your spiritual bankruptcy, your sin against God, you begin to not hold other things against others because you know they're sinful and they're broken. So you forgive. You forgive how many times? Seven times seventy-seven. That's a lot of times to forgive, isn't it? You forgive and you forgive and you forgive.

Todd Fletcher [00:17:26] Well what if someone were to slap you on the cheek, what would you do? You turn the other cheek. See, Jesus is calling us to a selfless life. A life where we have been crucified with Christ and it's no longer I who live, it's Christ who lives in me. The sixth beatitude, pure in heart. See, when you recognize all these things, you are single minded. This word pure means without distortion, without mixture. It's a pure substance. You have a single focus, and your focus is that you view everything through gospel lenses. Everything is viewed through this new reality that you find yourself in, in Christ. Your pure and heart, you pursue holiness. You hate your sin. Sin is an affront to God. You pray just like David. Lord, if there's any unclean way in me, remove it. I don't want it. And then we get to our Beatitude today, which seven and eight are fascinating as I've studied this and as I've meditated on it, Jesus's words continue to ring in my ear, and it's specifically the greatest commandment. When you're a peacemaker, you're other's focused. You love your neighbor. When you are persecuted for righteousness sake, you're willing to give your life for God, your loving God. All of this leads to, these Beatitudes lead us to, two very important points, love your neighbor and love God. Which Jesus says is the summation of the entire law and the prophets. Everything hangs on those two commands. Love your neighbor and love God. Before I go on, we'll see actually if you take a study through the entire Bible and if you go through the Old Testament, you'll find 613 commands. Those commands is what the law is. That is the law. When you're talking about no one is justified by works of the law, you're talking about keeping those 613 commands perfectly.

Todd Fletcher [00:19:30] And those are summarized in the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments can further be summarized into the two tables. The two tables are love God and love others, right. The first the first 4 to 5, depending on how you break it up, are the first table. The second table is how you love your neighbor. And then Jesus takes those two tables and when He's asked, what is the greatest commandment, let's turn there, turn to Matthew 22, verses 34 through 40. Matthew 22, starting in verse 34, "but when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together." So Jesus has been victorious in another battle of wits. Verse 35, "and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him." And he said to him, "teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your mind. This is the great and first commandment." There's the first table, love God. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself." That's the second table. "On these two commandments depend on all the Law and the Prophets." Meaning that if you fulfill these two commands, you'll fulfill everything. You'll be perfect as God is perfect. Now turn to John 13. Here in the upper room discourse, before Jesus was crucified, He gives a new commandment. Which is interesting because it doesn't really seem new, but I'll explain what he's talking about. John 13 starting in verse 34, "a new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

Todd Fletcher [00:21:42] Now, what's the standard of love? Jesus says, Just as...what? I have loved you. I've shown you what it looks like to be other centered. I've shown you what it looks like to lay your life down for the many. I've shown you what it means not to be served, but to serve and give your life as a ransom for many, I've shown you a better way. I've shown you what the Beatitudes look like in practice. Go forth and do likewise. Love as I have loved you. Give your life up as I have given My life up. I give, "a new command and I give you that you love one another just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." This new commandment is the summation of everything. You need to be characterized by one word, which is love. And at the heart of this love is a others centeredness. If you go

through first Corinthians 13 and you look at the definition of love, it's all others centered, were quick to forgive, we assume the best of one another. Our egos are being put to death daily. Now, before I go on, as we look at these seven, these Beatitudes and we put them together, it says those who are characterized by this. This is the portrait of the disciple, those who are characterized by the Beatitudes. Says, "theirs is the kingdom of heaven," and it quotes that twice, in the first Beatitude and in the eighth Beatitude. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." So if we put all this together and again, I'm hammering this in for you so that when we go about the rest of our lives, we think Beatitudes.

Todd Fletcher [00:23:21] When you take everything Jesus has said and you put it all together, this is the type of person he's talking about, a person who has forgiven and forgives. They're forgiven and they forgive. They repent of their sins and they're single minded in their pursuit of Christ. Their selfless, their dead to self, and they live for others. They love others. And they pursue holiness. They desire holiness out of their love for God. That is what a person, a child of God looks like. Now, none of us are perfect in that pursuit. But we recognize that that is the goal. Now we are no longer under the law in the sense of that's what Roman says, you're no longer under the law, you're under what? Grace. We're in the New Covenant, the old Covenant, as Hebrews 8 says, has been made obsolete. We are in the law of liberty. The Royal law, the law of the Spirit. These are all different phrases from different apostles writers. Let's turn to James chapter 1, verses 22 through 27. This is James, the half brother of Jesus, who's reflecting on the Sermon on the Mount as he's writing this. That's what most theologians believe, is that James is a reflection on the Sermon on the Mount. And as James says in chapter 1, looking at verses 19 through 27. James writes this, and this is key when it comes to being a peacemaker. James writes, "know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." Now, the reality of our world is it's the opposite of that, isn't it? We're slow to hear, were quick to speak and were quick to anger. So James is saying slow it down, turn it around.

Todd Fletcher [00:25:17] First in any situation, be quick to listen, :slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God." So your anger, your fire does not bring God's righteousness. Now, you may say that this is a holy anger. Be very careful when you throw that title behind your anger, this is a righteous anger, this is a holy anger. How dare you cut me off? Right. Do you know who I am? Verse 21, "therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls." James really hits it here, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves." You know, you can sit here this morning and listen to the sermon, if you don't do it, it doesn't matter. You could walk away as a better theologian. You may know Scripture a little bit better, but if you don't do it, what good does that do you? In fact, you're deceiving yourself, he says. Verse 23, "for if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like." Have you ever read the Scriptures like that, where you read it, it convicts you and then you don't do anything about it? You read it, you hear Jesus's words, you hear that we're called to be peacemakers. And you leave this room, you go outside and you immediately stir up the conflict that you came in with. 24, "he looks at himself and goes away at once forgets what he was like."

Todd Fletcher [00:26:49] 25, "but the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty." The Law of liberty, what is that? That's the law of Christ, that's the law of the Spirit. It's the royal law which is summed up in two commands, love God, love people. That's the law of liberty. And persevere, sorry, "the love of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer

who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless." See if you can't control your tongue, which he'll get into later, then your religion is worthless, he says. "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this; to visit the orphans and widows in their affliction," and to love others, to love the least of these, "and to keep oneself unstained from the world." That's what it looks like to be a child of God, a son of God, as we'll get into. So are you at war presently? I want you to take a survey of your life right now, thinking through every aspect of your life. And is there anyone that you are in conflict with that you could pursue peace with? Anyone in this church, anyone in this church that you don't like to look at, that you don't like to greet. We're commanded in almost every epistle, greet one another with a holy kiss. Now. I haven't seen any holy, no I'm just kidding. That's a that's a contextual cultural issue. I think in our culture it'd be a handshake, a hug, eye contact. Oftentimes we go to church and we try to avoid people that were in conflict with us. That's not appropriate in the church, is it? This should be a place of peace.

Todd Fletcher [00:28:44] So looking at your life, your family, your friends, your coworkers, your church, is there any conflict that needs to be resolved? God's children are to exemplify peace in every area of life. Is that a high calling? Yeah. Jesus was perfect and He calls us to live as He lived. So when we move to the second point, what is a peacemaker? Well, peacemaker is someone who makes peace. Alright, let's go to third point, no I'm just kidding. Second point is a peacemaker. What is that? So Romans 12:18, a very important verse for you to write down or to underline or to memorize, it's on my memory list. "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." Now, there's so much truth in this that you have to dissect it and realize what he's saying, "if possible, so much as it depends on you live at peace with all." Meaning you're not always going to have peace. But as far as it depends on you, you pursue peace if possible with everyone. So doing all that we can to bring peace to conflict. Now let's turn to Romans chapter 14, verses 1 through 7, because this specifically speaks to the church. Again I know, I've known many people that have left the church because there has been conflict that was not resolved. And as Monty always says, I love quoting this because he's dealt with it so many times in his life, "you're either going to deal with it here or there." You're either going to restore peace here, which you'll receive a reward for, or you'll deal with it before the throne of Christ, which you will suffer loss for. When you stand before the bema seat.

Todd Fletcher [00:30:29] So Romans 14 verses 1 through 7. There's so much importance here when it comes to a life of peace. "As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but do not quarrel over opinions." Now, can opinions cause conflict? Verse 2, "One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables." So that's one win for the meat eaters there, verse 3, I'm just kidding". Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. Who are you," verse 4 is so important. "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another?" Is that your servant? Do they belong to you? Will they stand before your throne and give an account? "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand." Skip down to verse 7 just for time sake, "for none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." What a life that is, isn't it? When people have conflict and we've done all that we can do to bring peace. If there is no peace, they stand before the Lord and give an account. That's okay. It's okay to leave it there in the Lord's hands and just trust that I've

done all I can and I'm giving them to the Lord. So a peacemaker, this is the only time in your New Testament that this word ever appears.

Todd Fletcher [00:32:06] This word means to endeavor to reconcile persons who have a disagreement. Now, notice this isn't blessed are those who have peace. This is blessed are the what? Peacemakers, those who see conflict that maybe they aren't even a part of and they enter into it. Have you ever entered into a conflict that wasn't your own and gotten hurt trying to bring peace? See, when you step into a mud fight, you're going to get what? Muddy. You're going to get mud on you when you step into a fight. But this is what we're called to, is we're will we're called to be so other centered that we're willing to step into conflict, even if that brings conflict to us. That we speak truth in love, even if it hurts us. So what a peacemaker is not and this is very, very clear, we have to see this, peacemaker does not mean peace at any price. Let's be very clear about that. And I'm going to give you a quote that we need to recognize what is being said. So, Matthew 10:34, write this down because it seems to be the opposite of what Jesus is calling to. It seems to be antithetical. Matthew 10:34 Jesus says, "do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace but a sword." Well, it seems kind of opposite of blessed are the peacemakers. This pastor says this, "this seems to be the antithesis of, or the antithesis of the seventh Beatitude. His meaning, however, was that the peace he came to bring is not a peace of any kind at any price. There will be opposition before there is harmony. There will be strife before there's peace. To be peacemakers on God's term requires being peacemakers, on the terms of truth and on righteousness to which the world is in fierce opposition. When believers bring truth to bear on the world that loves falsehood, there will be strife. When believers set God's standards of righteousness before a world that loves wickedness, there is an inevitable potential for conflict. Yet that is the only way."

Todd Fletcher [00:34:13] So a peacemaker is first and foremost concerned about peace with God. That people who are in conflict, people who have no peace ultimately before anything else, they need peace with God. And how is it that we can bring peace with God? How is it that we can be those who bring peace to situations as those whose shoes are shod with the gospel? The gospel of peace. And when you preach the gospel, when you tell people about the gospel, you may not have peace in the sense of that may actually stir up conflict. But your goal is peace. Your goal is to show them the God of peace, to bring them in right relationship to God. Because remember, as Martin Lloyd says at the beginning, is the reason there's conflict, the reason there's warfare is because the issue is not an economic or socioeconomic type of issue. The issue is a doctrinal issue, it's a heart issue. They need new hearts. So first and foremost, we always preach the gospel. We live the gospel. We see everything through the lens of the gospel. Lloyd-Jones gives us four characteristics of a peacemaker. He says, "First and foremost," you need to write these down. "A peacemaker is one who has a new view of self. They recognize their old man. Their old woman is dead, buried, crucified with Christ, and now they're a new creation. Second point is that we have a new view of the world, that the world is actually opposed to God. They're opposed to God's glory. Therefore, this world is full of darkness and this world is at odds. Therefore, there is no peace in this world. And if you're out of this world, you will never have peace. Because ultimately all that matters is peace with God."

Todd Fletcher [00:36:01] Remember blessedness by definition means blessedness receiving the favor, being in a state of favor with God. The truly blessed person has divine favor from God. There is no other blessedness that's available to us that has any kind of a mat that has any kind of value for all of eternity except for having the very favor of God. The third view is that you view everything through gospel lenses. That every conflict, every

situation, your life you're looking at through the lenses of the gospel. And finally you endeavor for peace wherever you are. You're a peacemaker. Wherever you are, wherever your feet are there, you're trying to bring peace. Listen to this quote, "as peacemakers, we should be endeavoring to diffuse peace wherever you are." Now, you know, essential oil diffusers, you walk in and you can tell there's essential oil diffusers in a room because it's literally everywhere. My mom is a massive essential oil enthusiast. She works Doterra on the side. Anyways, that's the type of thing that's the type of sense that we should put out is wherever we are, we diffuse peace. We do this by being selfless, by being lovable, by being approachable, and by not standing on our own dignity. If we do not think of self at all, people will feel I can approach that person. I know I shall get sympathy and understanding. I know I shall get an outlook which is based on the New Testament. Let us be such people that all will come to us that even those who have a bitter spirit within them will somehow feel condemned when they look at us. And perhaps may be led to speak to us about themselves and their problems. The Christian is to be a man like that. A woman like that.

Todd Fletcher [00:38:01] Do you diffuse peace? Everywhere you go, people sense the aroma of peace. We've all known people like this, haven't we? Those are very precious people. And it takes a lifetime oftentimes to be a person like that. So this is what the church should look like this is a peacemaker. Now we move to the final point, which is sonship. Now, when we think of sonship, we need to think of the Greek for a second. Why sons of God, why not children of God? Now about half the translations translate it children others translate it son. But in the Greek, there's a different word for children, which is tekna, that's not the word here it's huioi, which is son. Why is it that we're sons of God? It's simply an only because we take on Jesus's sonship. And to balance that out for you ladies. Husbands struggle with the fact that we're the bride of Christ. All right, so that's on both sides here. But we take on Jesus's sonship, He is the only begotten Son. Romans 8:28 says, or 29 says, that he is the firstborn among many brethren. That we are going to be conformed to His image. You see, we are those who take on His identity. We take on His sonship. And in Romans 8, it says He then therefore shares His glory with us, because we are now brought into the family of peace. Some have asked me and this is something that gets asked to me every single time I'm ever at a youth camp is why did God allow the fall? Why this whole plan of salvation? Was this by accident, did all this catch God unaware?

Todd Fletcher [00:39:51] Well Ephesians 1 says, that we were chosen in Christ before the foundations of the world, meaning that the gospel was established before the very foundations of the world. Why would God go through this whole process, allowing the fall, having us see sin and death? Well, did you notice we went from being simply creatures to now children, sons of God adopted into his family? Just kind of process that for a little while. Maybe God did all of this, one to glorify Himself, but two, to bring us into His family. Really interesting study. So we talked about the great commandment, love others. If you are a son of God, that means that you are, you've crucified sin. That is no longer you who lives, it's Christ who lives in you. And at the end of the day, the very big issue when it comes to peace or lack of peace is sin. Sin is what brings about warfare, sin is what brings about conflict. So let's get our enemy correct. That sin is what brings a lack of peace. That the reason there's no peace in this world is because this world is in rebellion to God, in its sin. Isaiah 48:22 says this, there is no peace for the wicked. There's no peace for the wicked. And if you today have not received the peace that's only available in Jesus Christ, there will never be peace for you. For all eternity, you'll be under His wrath. The only peace that matters is the peace that Christ delivers. He is the Prince of peace. So this is

what we need, the peace that can only be found in the gospel. As a son of God, as a child of God, you only find that sonship in the gospel of peace.

Todd Fletcher [00:41:32] Peace is purchased by Christ, write these 2 verses down, we don't have time to read them, but Ephesians 2:13 through 14, Ephesians 2:13 through 14 says, He is our peace, that there is no peace apart from Christ because He is our peace. The second verse you need to write down, Chris has actually already read it, Colossians 1:19 through 20, that we only get peace through His blood. That He had to die, His blood had to be shed so that we could have peace with God. Therefore, this is at the heart of the matter, being a peacemaker is the result of a holy life. See holiness is what brings peace to you. And one who calls others to embrace the gospel of holiness, that's how you're a peacemaker, your gospel centered. Everything you see is through the lens of the gospel. Wherever you are, you're diffusing Christ the Prince of peace. Isn't that the goal? As a child of God, as a follower of Jesus Christ, is to diffuse Christ everywhere. Then notice this the promise, turn back to Matthew 5 verse 9, "blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." This word called means owned. My son is called by my name. He's a part of my inheritance, my family, my line. He is a Fletcher because I'm a Fletcher. When we come into God's family, we are owned by God. We are part of His family, He is the head of our household. So when He calls us His son, we are now directly in line with God the Father, and we will receive the inheritance that belongs to Jesus Christ. It's an amazing thing to be called a son of someone, to be called a child of someone because you receive their inheritance in an ideal world, right? When I adopted Owen into our family, he is now called by my name and he has as much right to the name Fletcher as my other children do because he was adopted into our family. It's an amazing thing.

Todd Fletcher [00:43:48] So to be a part of the family of God means you're characterized by peace. Now I just want to do a quick character study of one of the disciples of Jesus Christ. His name was Simon, and his last name was the Zealot. Do you think this was hard for Simon? You know, a zealot was someone who was a murderer. They would keep a knife oftentimes in their coat pocket, and they would walk up to Roman soldiers and they would stab them, put it back and walk away, and the Roman soldier would fall down in a crowd. That's how zealots were known for trying to bring peace to Israel. We've seen this kind of in the church today, don't we? People who want to bring warfare, they want to take up arms in the church. Does that at all align with what Jesus is saying here? Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God, not the war mongers, not those ones who, when they're hit on the cheek, they pull out a gun. They turn the other cheek. They're dead to self, they're alive to God to live as Christ, to die as gain. If it's my day to die, it's my day to die. It's amazing when you see what Jesus is saying and you compare that to what Christians on Twitter are saying. Or X, it's now called X. So as we wrestle with this, are you a part of the family of peace? And if you are part of the family of peace, do you live like it? If you read first, John, it's funny when you read for first John, because he says if you hate your brother, then you cannot be saved because God is love.

Todd Fletcher [00:45:28] See at the end of day, when Jesus says in John 6 verses 14 and 15, if you do not forgive your brother, then he God will not forgive you. So the one who is forgiven much, they will love much. When you think of that wicked servant who was forgiven lifetimes of debt and then turns around and demands his debt be paid for one of his servants, he has the guy cast into prison. That guy is brought before his master again and that man is judged because he is not a man of forgiveness. He's not a man of love. So as we consider what Tolkien said again, what's the issue? What's the real battle between good and evil? The issue is sin, and the issue is pride. This is not a economic problem. This is not a sociological problem. This is a theological problem. The only way to bring

peace into this world is through the gospel of peace. How do you change the world? One person at a time. Go into all the world, make disciples. That's the method that is the marching orders from our King. He says, if you want to change the world, go into all the world and make disciples one person at a time, one heart at a time. So now what do we do with all this? We need to first be a part of the family of peace in order to have peace. So if you've not been saved, if you've not accepted Christ, today is the day of salvation. He's our Lord and He's our King. And secondly, if you are part of Jesus Christ family, if you are in Christ, then live like it. So Tolkien says this, I'll end with him. He says, "Fear nothing. Have peace until the morning. Heed no nightly noises, fear nothing. Have peace until the morning. He'd know nightly noises," Philippians 4:7 says, "and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." So may we be a people that represents that peace and that tells others about that peace.

Todd Fletcher [00:47:28] Let's pray. Father God, we just thank You again for Your gospel. Lord we recognize that in this world there is sin and death. That this world stands opposed to You. And that even in our own flesh, we can seek vengeance. Lord I pray that we would discipline the body and put it under control as Paul says in First Corinthians. Lord, that we would live in such a way that we are dead to self and alive to Christ. May this church exude peace. May we diffuse peace, may we be those who everywhere we go people sense the aroma of Christ. I pray this in His name. Amen.