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Blessed are the Peacemakers

Matthew 5:9

Prayer: *Father God, we do again thank you for your grace, we thank you for your wisdom, we thank you for the light that you represent. Father, this morning again, we just -- we're talking about peacemakers. Father, I want to pray that you would give us the grace, your Holy Spirit's unction, the ability to see in your word the role that you have for peacemakers. I pray that you would give us your grace, that you would accompany us as we open up your book and look into it; and again, would you give us the ability to make this a permanent part of our lives. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well, I've said this many times, the Sermon on the Mount is perhaps one of the most misunderstood sermons of all time, and it's the darling of politicians and people really have no interest in Christianity other than seeing it as a philosophy or some source of inspiration, and because of that, the sermon basically reaches two very separate, two very distinct audiences. There are those who understand it vertically, and there are those who understand it

horizontally. And those who understand it vertically understood what Jesus meant when he said: "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" You see, they understand Jesus as describing a state of spiritual poverty in which kingdom citizens understand that they stand before God with absolutely nothing. The world translates those same words horizontally. They translate them to mean blessed are the poor, period. Blessed are those who have no money, who have no resources. Similarly when Jesus says: "*Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth,*" the world understands those same words horizontally to mean blessed are the politically oppressed. Well, kingdom citizens understand Jesus to be describing those who understand that their power is always under God's control because they know that God is in charge and that he doesn't make mistakes. The same is true for the beatitude that says: "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.*" See, believers understand that vertically, and that what God is saying there is blessed are those who have an appetite for God, who've been given that appetite for God. Well, the world understands it horizontally as saying blessed are those who have an appetite for social justice. And we find out that this is true for the entire sermon right down the line including today's verse which is *Matthew 5:9*: "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*" See, the world understands this verse horizontally. We understand it vertically as well as

horizontally. You see, the world understands peacemakers as men like Anwar Sadat or the Dalai Lama or Mikhail Gorbachev or even Barack Obama. All of these men were Nobel Peace Prize winners, and in the world's eyes, these are the peacemakers. Political peace is a good thing, it's a wonderful thing, but this is not at all what Jesus was talking about. Once again, the world interprets peace horizontally; Jesus, vertically. You might say, says who? Well, says Jesus. In *John 14:27*, Jesus says this, he says: "*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.*" But then he immediately makes this distinction: "*Not as the world gives do I give to you.*" You see, Jesus is talking about a peace that is altogether different from the peace that the world thinks of. He goes on to be more specific in *Matthew 10:34*, he says: "*Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.*" In *Luke 12:51* he goes on to say: "*Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.*" I don't think the Nobel commission would appreciate those words. You see, the peace that Jesus offers us is very, very different than the political peace that the world understands. Our text tells us that peacemakers will be blessed. It says: "*They will be called sons of God.*" Well, almost all of the Nobel Peace Prize winners that I mentioned would reject the very God who makes that claim. I mean, Anwar Sadat, Gorbachev and the Dalai Lama and our president, they seek peace in a very

different way than what Jesus spoke of in Matthew 5:9. Once again, they seek peace horizontally, man to man, nation to nation and that's a good thing, I mean, that's a noble thing, to be sure. But that peacemaking doesn't make you a son of God. It is the indwelling living Spirit of God alone inside you that makes you a son of God. *Romans 8:14* says: *For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.* *Galatians 3:26* says: *For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.* Matthew 5:9 defines peacemakers as sons of God because only sons or daughters of God know where the real war actually is. And the real war is not man versus man. The real war is man versus God. It is man versus his Creator. And God's peace is not at all the same as the world's peace. Again, Jesus made that clear when he said: *"I do not give you peace as the world gives you peace."* The peace that Jesus is speaking of is peace between the Creator and the crown of his creation, man himself. You see, there is a war but it's between God and mankind.

Let me give you the evidence. First we just look out at the world around us and we notice that every living creature and many, many non living things on this planet in this -- in this solar system, the birds, the bees, the sun, the moon, the stars, they all obey God implicitly. I mean, they follow the cycles, the orders, the laws, the seasons, all of these things that God has declared, and

whether it's birds flying south or trees turning colors or planets spinning through space, everything has an order that it obeys, with one exception. There is one creature whose stature before God is not the bent knee; it is the raised fist. That creature is man. I mean, it is jarring to say and even more jarring to hear but mankind's biggest problem is that he is at war with his Creator and he doesn't even know it. The peacemakers whom Jesus calls sons of God are those whose passion is to make peace not between man and man but between man and God, because they realize that Christ alone is capable of breaking down that wall of hostility that exists between God and his children. You see, God says the natural state of man without God is not neutral. In fact, God says it is aggressively anti God. God describes the natural state of virtually everyone as dead men walking. I mean, he says this in *Ephesians 2*, he says: *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience -- among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

This is an incredibly important verse. What it's saying here in *Ephesians* is that there are only two categories that cover every

single person on this planet, everyone with no exception. And what God is saying is you are either a child of God or you are the object of his wrath. I mean, this is stunning news to most people who think there are three categories and not just two. You know, most people think, well, there's the extremely wicked people like Hitler, the ones who go to hell, and there's the extremely good people like Mother Teresa who kind of marches on into heaven, but then there's this vast ocean of folks who are just neutral about God. These are folks that hope their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds so that they can earn their right to heaven. They don't realize they are the ones who are at war with God. You see, many people think that we're just products of billions of years of evolution instead of some unique creation of God. We tend to think of ourselves as independent and autonomous, answering to nobody but our friends and our family. Well, God thinks of us as creatures that he created, and he created them to give worship, honor, and glory to their Creator but now they are in absolute rebellion against that Creator.

Like I say, we are at war with God and we don't even know it. I think the evidence is more than ample. Number one, we hate and we fear our Creator. And the proof for that is Jesus' own words in *John 15*. There he said to his disciples: *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you."* We could ask now,

okay, was Jesus paranoid? I mean, he's telling the disciples that the reason why the world hates them is because they are identified with him. And he goes on to say in verse 19: "*If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*" Understand what Jesus is saying. What he's saying is there is a gut level hatred for him and for those that he has chosen, and he knows that and he instructs his disciples to understand it, and he says this hatred is normative. It's to be expected. And so what he's saying is peacemakers have a monumental task. Here's what their job is. We have to understand, illustrate, and demonstrate a question probably nobody has ever asked. Why do we instinctively and unconsciously hate God? I mean, it's because we are a class of creatures who intensely resent anyone or anything claiming authority over us.

I mean, have you ever wondered why anti-Semitism is almost universal? I mean, everywhere you go you find people who have a gut-level resentment of the Jewish people. I believe it goes all the way back to the role that God gave to these people. God chose a people to tell the world that there was an authority over them, that he was a holy God and that he had certain demands on them. And man's response has always been: We will not have this God to rule over us. The response to God from the very start has been one

of the shaken fist and a deep, deep resentment of the very people who have the gall to tell them about this God and his demands. I mean, how else could you explain anti-Semitism? How can you explain this innate hatred for God? I mean, so much of it is unconscious, so much of it is on a gut level, it's a disdain that mankind has not just for God but for anything to do with God. But because this disdain is on a barely conscious level, people have a hard time admitting to it. So part of our job as peacemakers is to gently and thoughtfully educate them about the facts.

These are the facts: Jesus was God in the flesh. Jesus gave up his omniscience, his omnipresence, his omnipotence and he became flesh and he dwelt among his own creatures, and then I point out to them what we creatures did. You know, we arrested Jesus on no charge whatsoever and then we beat him to a pulp. We mocked him to his face, we mocked his claim to power by giving him a crown of thorns and a purple robe and then we scourged him and then we presented him as a bloodied, beaten victim whose chief accuser Pontius Pilate, a pagan said this, he said: *"What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"* They all said, *"Let him be crucified!"* And he said, *"Why, what evil has he done?"* But they shouted all the more, *"Let him be crucified!"* So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, *"I am*

innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." And all the people answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" See, now at this point I generally ask the people I'm speaking to, I said, if you were God and you saw your son being treated this way, would you not also conclude that they hated you and that they hated you without a cause? So was Jesus being paranoid when he said if the world hates you, keep in mind it hated me first? There's only been one spotless man who has ever lived among us and he was God in the flesh, and he did nothing but heal the sick, feed the hungry, raise the dead, and for that, we executed him.

You know, it's painful to see over the years how people have tried to accuse the Jews on one hand or the Roman government on the other hand for the death of Christ. The fact is the ones who are responsible are you and me. Again, as peacemakers, we have to gently instruct folks about the idea of corporate responsibility. This is something that Americans in particular have a really hard time with. One aspect of corporate responsibility that we don't really grasp is that you don't actually have to participate in a crime or a misdeed to be -- in order to be guilty of it. You know, if I'm a getaway driver in a bank robbery and somebody's two blocks away inside the bank and he shoots somebody in the bank, I'm automatically guilty even though I was two blocks away and I shot no one. See, we Americans have a lousy grasp of corporate

responsibility. It just doesn't sit well with us. We were founded on this idea of rugged individualism and personal autonomy and we think, you know, okay, I'm responsible but I'm responsible for my own stuff. I'm not responsible for anybody else. The rest of the world sees it very differently. I mean, they understand that sometimes who you are carries a lot more weight than what you do. I'm an American citizen. I've said this many times, today if I walked down the streets of Fallujah, Mosul, or Baghdad and people knew who I was, there's quite a few of them that would consider it an honor running up to me and killing me. I mean, my crime would not be one of doing, it would be one of being. I'd be summarily executed for being an American. You know, America is at war with ISIS and it doesn't matter what kind of American we are, I mean, I could be a Muslim American, it wouldn't be any difference. I'm still an American, therefore I'm guilty by association. After World War II we held the Germans and the Japanese corporately responsible for the action of their leaders regardless those who did nothing. Peacemakers have the task of informing folks that God holds us corporately responsible for the action of one person, that one person who was chosen to represent us. In fact, Adam was the only other person who was born absolutely flawless. He was our federal corporate head. He was our representative. And in spite of the flawless nature that he arrived with, he still sold us out by rebelling against his Creator. Understand, he was the bank

robber and we're all in the getaway car. So all of us collectively are guilty. And because he was our federal corporate representative, all human beings bear the same responsibility. All of us rebelled, all of us chose to go our own way, all of us ate that forbidden fruit, and the result is all of us are at war with our Creator.

We say how did all of this get started? Well, to find out, we have to go back to the very beginning, and there we find the greatest crime in the history of mankind was committed. It was an active deliberate act of treason that forever altered the relationship of God and his creation. You know, today we have these grave concerns over things like gene splicing and bio terrorism and we know that we're capable of biologically altering something and we don't fully know the consequences. We know that one foolish decision, one evil decision in a laboratory could produce a life form that's not only unstoppable but one that reproduces itself with every subsequent generation. And we know that one bad act could have devastating consequences. But we also know that's just what happened in the Garden of Eden. Spiritually that's what took place. I mean, Adam was the crown of God's creation, the only creature made in the very image of God, the only creature given the very freedom to do right. The rest of creation simply obeyed; they were under orders. God placed one and only one restriction on Adam and Eve, and yes, it

was a test. God placed him in a garden full of everything they could have ever wanted, and that garden had in it but one tree that was forbidden. God said in *Genesis 2:16*: *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree in the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

We all know what happened, I mean, the serpent approached Eve to tell her that if they would only eat this forbidden fruit, they would be like God. Well, what they forget or chose to ignore and it's been pointed out is that they were already like God. They were lied to by the serpent. And so eating that forbidden fruit forever broke that relationship. You know, Eve saw the fruit, she saw that it was good for food and that it was pleasing to the eye and desirable for gaining wisdom and she ate and she gave it to Adam and he ate. But the moment that fruit touched their mouths, they fundamentally altered their very nature. Adam and Eve, the perfect creation of a perfect God who had shared a flawless perfection with their Creator in one moment, in one treasonous act of disobedience, it was all gone. The war between God and man had begun. Adam and Eve had disobeyed. They had been promised by the serpent that if they would only eat this fruit, their eyes would be opened, they would begin to know good and evil. And on one level the serpent was accurate, they now knew evil, they knew it personally. I mean, they suddenly realized that they were forever

different. And the first thing that happened is they became self-conscious. They realized for the very first time that they were naked and they ran to get fig leaves to cover themselves. Secondly, they began to hide from God. They now feared their Creator. Thirdly, God said they would die if they would eat the fruit, and so now the process of death had begun. It is a process that curses every son or daughter of Adam to the very same fate. And we all know it, I mean, all of us are born under a death sentence. I mean, we know it, we are born, we live, we die, we're used to it but that's not the way it's supposed to be. I mean, you may not think it fair that you're held guilty for the sins of your representative but make no mistake about it, this representative, he was the best humanity could ever, ever offer. I mean, Adam as our federal corporate head represented all of mankind, and as the first human, he was absolutely flawless. C.S. Lewis commented once, if you saw Adam walking down the street, you might be tempted to worship him as God thinking he was God. He was perfectly actualized humanity. He was everything a human being was intended to be as the crown of God's creation. I mean, think about it, all of Einstein, all of Beethoven, all of Rembrandt, every single thing of genius of all of humanity found its fullest flower in Adam. He had no original sin. He had no predilection to evil, no tendency toward evil whatsoever. And we have a nature that rebels. It was not in Adam's nature. The amazing thing to consider is that Adam

freely, freely by every single meaning of that word, chose to disobey, and when he did, he ceased to be like God. He ceased to be perfect. He drove a wedge between a still perfect God and the now fallen, imperfect creation of that God, and every subsequent child of Adam shares in that imperfection. You know, we all say this isn't a perfect world. Well, that's not what it was. It was originally perfect. That's not what it is, it's not what it's become. Whatever everyone fears biologically has already happened to us spiritually. One act, devastating consequences. *Romans 5* was written by the apostle Paul thousands of years later and God says in *Romans 5:12*: *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.*

So once again we see a perfect God and an imperfect man are now at war, and only the peacemakers really understand that and they have the task of translating that into your human experience. I mean, we all know the story of Adam and Eve. In fact, our culture is steeped in it. But the version that we get has nothing to do with perfection lost, with altered natures, with permanent consequences. I mean, it's been reduced to a funny fairy tale used to sell everything from lingerie to breath mints. I mean, go to the grocery store, you can get Apples and Eve apple juice; you can go to the diner, you can order Adam and Eve on a raft -- that's

poached eggs on toast in case you don't know. You can even go shopping at the Adam and Eve Clothing Company in Seattle, Washington. You see, our culture has swallowed up the whole story and spit it back to us as a fairy tale. The fact is if you don't understand the significance of Adam and Eve and the fall of man and original sin, you will have no idea why it is we are at war with God. None of the gospel will make any real sense. You see, most people still think Christianity is about good people going to heaven and bad people going to hell. And they have no idea that goodness in God's economy is nothing less than flawless perfection and that the Bible says in Romans 3:10, there's none good. Because there's none flawless, there's none perfect. There is none good, no, not one, God says. They don't understand that God is not actually weighing out good deeds versus bad deeds. God says no deed is good enough, because no deed can restore the perfection that Adam and Eve once had or change the imperfection that you and I were born with.

You know, if you or I were to enter into God's perfect heaven in the state we're in right now, our very presence would make it less than perfect. Its perfection would collapse. So in a sense, God and man are permanently divided. Adam traded away his perfection -- and mine and yours -- for a piece of fruit, and there's nothing you and I can do about it. But that's not the end

of the story. There may be no good deed that a man or a woman can do to restore our perfection, but there's a good deed that God himself could do. He could leave heaven and come to earth. He could live the very same life as we live except living it perfectly, then could offer that life as a substitute for mine and yours. He could take all of the punishment that our sin deserved, have it all poured out on his head as he hangs on a cross, and then rise from a grave three days later knowing that his sacrifice had paid the price for your sin and mine. See, God knew that the only way for the lost perfection of Adam to be restored was to have the price of that imperfection paid for in full. You know, Jesus's last words on the cross were: "*It is finished.*" You know, it was a technical term the Roman government also used for released prisoners which meant their debt was now paid in full. So in Christ, the perfection that Adam lost for us has now been restored, and I can now enter heaven not because I am flawless but because my flaws -- which are many -- have been paid for. I mean, Jesus Christ exchanged his perfection for my sin, and when I place my faith in him, his perfection becomes my perfection, and now I can stand before a perfect and holy God. There's no longer a wall between me and God. *Ephesians 2:14* says: *For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in*

himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

God is saying is the war is over, and peacemakers have the privilege of declaring that. I mean, when Jesus said: "*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God,*" do you think he was talking horizontally? Was he talking about wars and that kind of stuff, or was he talking vertically? Is he talking about wars between nations or the long war between God and his people? Clearly Jesus was talking about making peace with God. And the greatest task Christians face as peacemakers is telling people they are at war with their Creator, 'cause folks don't believe that. We don't sense our own hostility toward God so we don't believe we are at war. We don't recognize that God sees one form of hostility as greater than all others. It's the one form that almost every single one of us is guilty of, and it's not active hatred, it's something far worse. It's indifference. It's not shouting, "Crucify him!" It's shouting, "Whatever." I mean, Jesus said to the church of Laodicea: "*I know your works: You are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.*" Now frankly for myself, I have a much easier time dealing with somebody who's passionate whether pro or con

about the gospel because at least there's something there, something to go on. The problem is is most of the folks in our culture see indifference as a virtue. I mean, hey, if that works for you, man, that's cool. God says that is not cool. In Acts 17:30 God says: *The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.* And you know, most folks' reaction to a statement is: Repent of what? By and large they're completely ignorant of this war between God and his creation. I mean, most folks don't even know that the wall of hostility between God and man even exists. They think I'll leave God alone and hopefully he'll leave me alone at least until I die, and maybe when I die I'll have enough good deeds piled up to outweigh the bad deeds and I'll get in by the skin of my teeth. Truth be told, that's what most people believe. That's what they think about God and his kingdom.

Like I say, we're at war with God and we don't even know it. We try to cover ourselves with the fig leaves of good deeds and then we hide from God just like Adam and Eve did, and the consequences are deadly. Like I said, every single person on this planet is either a child of God or an object of his wrath, someone who stands, as God says, "*condemned already.*" It's the peacemaker's task to let people know about the spiritual cliff that they are headed towards. Jesus said it is the sons of God who recognize the

consequences and seek to make peace between God and his creation. I mean, all of us have heard *John 3:16*: "*For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.*" But two verses later in *John 3:18*, God says: "*Whoever believes in him is not condemned.*" Wonderful. But "*Whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*" Again, God is saying there is no neutral ground. *Ephesians* says there's only two categories of people: Children of God and objects of God's wrath. *John 3:18* describes the very same thing in different terms. It says there are those who are in Christ and there are those who are condemned already. You know, folks think you have to do something especially bad to be in that category. I mean, only a Hitler or a Stalin or ISIS is wicked enough to be condemned already. But God says: "*Whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*" The fact is you don't have to do anything to stand before God condemned. Thanks to Adam's fall, that is our starting point. This is the quicksand all of us were born into because thanks to Adam, we are at war with God.

So what do we call someone consumed with the knowledge of man's desperate condition? What do we call someone determined to bridge the gap between a holy God and his fallen creatures, someone

committed to spending the time, energy, and resources necessary to get that message communicated. We call that person what Jesus called him, we call them peacemakers, ones who bring warring factions together. Now I've said this over and over and over again, the Sermon on the Mount is not about what you do; it's about who you are. Matthew 5:9 says kingdom citizens have a heart for peace but it's a peace that comes only when God and man reconcile. James describes the wisdom that peacemakers have, he says this in *James 3*, he says: *But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.*

A peacemaker, first of all, aches for the lost. I mean, his desire is pure. He's not looking for a notch, a spiritual notch to put on his belt. He or she is peace loving. He doesn't see his job as arguing folks into the kingdom. I mean, he knows that the scripture itself has its own power to persuade those whom God has chosen. *Romans 1:16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* A peacemaker is meek, I mean, he understands it is God who is the power behind the message and that his task is only to deliver it accurately and compassionately. Peacemakers according to James are quick to hear, slow to speak,

slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce a righteousness -- the righteousness of God. He or she is full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. And we just look at the Sermon on the Mount, we can see peacemakers are poor in spirit, they mourn, they're meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness, they're merciful and pure in heart. Peacemakers model the Lord Jesus. They sow peace and harvest righteousness 'cause that's what kingdom citizens do.

And so my question this morning is the obvious one: Are you a peacemaker? Are you willing to grapple with the hard realities of scripture? Do you see those outside the kingdom as they really are? Do you care? I mean some folks just don't care. Some believers don't care at all. They think I'm in and the rest of you guys can go to hell, literally. I mean, if that's your attitude, you're not a peacemaker. See, the more we realize the dire straits the world is in, the less we're able to say and do nothing. You know, many folks think they can't be peacemakers because I can't argue well and I get all tongue tied. They lack competence because they feel they can't bring others to Christ, and they're a hundred percent correct. No man or no woman can. No man or no woman ever has. God brings others to Christ through us. *1 Corinthians 3:5: What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos*

watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

And finally, peacemakers are ambassadors. Again 2 Corinthians 5:20: *Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.* You know, an ambassador's job is simply to accurately and honestly set forth his kingdom's case. And these are the people who are seeking to break down the barrier, this dividing wall of hostility between God and man. *We implore you on behalf of Christ.* Would that be an accurate description of you? Do you implore people on behalf of Christ? It's a supernatural endeavor but it's one that you can get started on right here and right now.

I mean, right now I would like you to just close your eyes and think, just take a second and think of somebody that you know who is not at peace at all with God. Everybody in this room knows somebody. Think of somebody who desperately needs the kingdom of God. You can't bring them but God can. And what we can do is this, first we can pray, and that is petition God on their behalf. Secondly, we can anticipate. That is anticipate God's answer to that prayer by providing an opportunity. It may be a dinner, a lunch, a phone call, a conversation, could be anything. Whatever

God has you do. Thirdly, is act. When you sense God's timing, open your eyes, open your heart, open please your mouth. God is not going to use your silence or your apathy or your fear if you let it rule you, but he can and he often does use even badly botched attempts at presenting the gospel. The key is not how slick and clever you are, the key is the state of your heart. Do you ache for peace between God and man? I mean, *2 Corinthians 5* says God has committed to us the message of reconciliation. That's our job. That is everyone in this room's life calling. That's what sons and daughters of God do. "*Blessed are the peacemakers. They shall be called sons of God.*" Let's pray.

Father, we want to be peacemakers. This is a world that is collapsing in front of us. And as bad as that is, the opportunities are abundant, because as I said last week, even people who are not part of the kingdom recognize something is drastically wrong. Father, I pray that you would give us the courage to use these opportunities, that you would give us the ability to pray, to anticipate and to act when you give us this opportunity to be a peacemaker. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.