

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Beatitudes

Week 35

Blessed are the Peacemakers, they shall be recognized as children of God

This weekly material is offered to support our Discipleship Journey as we walk in the foot prints of Jesus.

We encourage you to use this material as a part of your daily prayer practice as follows:

- ❖ Begin with the Opening Prayer.
- ❖ Reflect on: ***Blessed are the Peacemakers.***
- ❖ Close with the Closing Prayer.

Let us pray for each other that we are transformed, as individuals and as community, by this Discipleship Journey.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, we praise You. You are all-powerful, yet still humble and compassionate. Just as You did for Your disciples at the Last Supper, You bend low in humble service to wash our feet, and invite us to follow Your example of sacrificial love. Forgive us for the times we've failed to see that the poor are created in Your image. In Your Scripture You tell us, "Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of Mine, you did for Me." (Matthew 25:40) Thank You for coming to us in the distressing disguise of the poor and showing us such a concrete way to give You our love. Help us to know that You long to love the poor through us. Help us to love You by loving the lonely, the suffering, and the outcast. Give us the desire to serve You in the least of our sisters and brothers. Jesus, we trust in You. We make this prayer in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
AMEN

Reflection:

Blessed are the Peacemakers, they shall be recognized as children of God

So often the world defines peace as the avoidance or absence of conflict. We go to great lengths to protect our power, prestige, and property, creating lots of rules or laws about who has access and who does not, who belongs and who does not, who deserves and who does not. If everyone is getting along, isn't that a form of peace? Not really - peace keeping is not peace making. Being a peacemaker means *pursuing* peace - resolving conflict and reconciling relationships.

To be a peacemaker, though, we must first be at peace with ourselves. We must be firmly rooted in who we are as children of God. Do we believe that we are beloved children of God? Have we let go of regrets, forgave ourselves for our transgressions, resolved our inner conflicts? Are we merciful with ourselves as God is merciful? Do we love ourselves as God loves us? Jesus tells us, "*Peace I leave you, my peace I give you.*" Jesus wants to give us the kind of peace that only He provides, but we must first be able to receive and embrace His peace before we can hope to bring that peace into the world.

What does that look like? Embracing the peace of Christ means we no longer live out of fear. We no longer need to grasp for power, prestige, control, and possessions because we trust that God will provide for all we need. We are free to live and love authentically, risk being vulnerable, and speak our truth even when it does not align with others.

But still this is not enough to fulfill the demands of this Beatitude. "There is not true peace," as Paul VI said, "without justice." Being freed from the burden of fear, we are then called to offer this peace to others through acts of justice and self-sacrifice. Peacemaking begins with the realization of the dignity of each member in the community; *each and every person* is precious in the eyes of God. Peacemakers exclude no one, but embrace even those who are a bit odd, troublesome or difficult, demanding, different, beaten down by life, or simply uninterested. January's Discipleship materials defined this kind of justice and self-sacrifice as God's way made present in the world through genuine care for the community.

Peacemaking is hard work; it calls for great openness of mind and heart. This kind of peace is not about creating consensus or satisfying the majority; it does not attempt to ignore or avoid conflict. Rather, peacemakers face conflict head on, resolve it, restore relationships, and reconcile community.

Peacemakers truly "make" peace, foster peace; they weave peace and friendship into the very fabric of their lives. To those who sow peace Jesus makes this magnificent promise: "They will be called children of God."

How does Jesus invite you to make peace this week?

Closing Prayer

Make Me a Channel of Your Peace
Prayer of St. Francis

Make me a channel of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me bring Your love.
Where there is injury, Your pardon, Lord.
And where there's doubt, true faith in You.

Make me a channel of Your peace.
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope.
Where there is darkness, only light.
And where there's sadness, ever You.

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek
so much to be consoled as to console.
To be understood as to understand.
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of Your peace.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
in giving of ourselves that we receive,
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.