

Blessed Are The Peacemakers

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[0 : 00] So, once again, we return to our study of what makes born-again, redeemed citizens of God's heavenly kingdom distinct from everyone else.

We've begun this study by examining the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5, so I'd like to go there again this morning. Go with me to Matthew chapter 5. Jesus says, Now this morning we'll focus on verse 9.

Back in, I think it was 2008, I joined Twitter for the first time. Elon Musk now refers to the site as a public town square where everyone gathers to talk.

And that's really what it's always felt like to me. It reminds me of these small-town breakfast places where all of the old men gather every single morning, and they shoot the breeze, they talk about the weather, they complain about one politician or another.

Now, in the beginning, I loved the Twitter environment, if you will. I connected with fellow Christians all over the world. We would share scripture.

[1 : 52] We would share quotes from our favorite theologians. We'd encourage one another. But as time passed, I noticed that things kind of changed. It seemed that most conversations had become about politics.

And while I don't object to discussing politics, it's not something I want to talk about endlessly. And over the years, I've developed an on-again, off-again relationship with the site.

You know, I might join, maintain an account for a couple of months, and then I leave the site, delete my account, and maybe a few months later, I'll rejoin again just to see what's going on, what people are talking about.

Well, the last time I joined was back in January of this year, and I really don't spend a lot of time on it because it seems the conversations in the public square have devolved into a very discouraging, sometimes nasty form of tribalism.

And I want you to keep in mind that I'm not connected with just anyone on there. For the most part, all of my connections are with fellow Christians. To be even more specific, most of my connections are with fellow Reformed Christians.

[3 : 06] Sadly, these days, I find myself doing the same thing any time I actually open Twitter. I have to spend just a few minutes to acclimate myself and try to figure out what the latest controversy is because that's what, inevitably, everyone's talking about.

Every week, sometimes every day, there's some new controversy, and everyone is not only talking about it but taking sides. Is, insert the name of a well-known preacher here, is he now a heretic because he said this or he did that?

Should women be excluded in the church for wearing yoga pants in public? Are you amillennial? Postmillennial? Are you a dispensationalist?

Which camp do you belong to? Because I'd really like to know. Which famous pastor do you align yourself with? Give the wrong answer and I'll block you.

This is not me saying this. This is what I see a lot of, by the way. And this is troubling because it's awfully hard to tell the difference between the behavior of believers on a site like Twitter and the behavior of unbelievers.

[4 : 27] In fact, I've noticed a seriously alarming trend among Christians on social media. I'm seeing more and more people openly advocating and defending a kind of fight-fire-with-fire approach to the world's growing animosity against the church.

They are essentially saying, let's do what the unbelieving world is doing. But maybe put a Christian twist on it. Meanwhile, if other Christians aren't willing to take the same approach and think with this fight-fire-with-fire mentality, they're quick to dismiss them as fools, if not worse.

And the tribalism just gets deeper and deeper and worse and worse. Jesus, on the other hand, says, blessed are the peacemakers.

Peacemakers. What's a peacemaker? Well, obviously, it's someone who strives for peace. Literally, it's someone who makes peace. But at the very least, they strive for peace.

And that's precisely the calling we have as Christians, to be peacemakers. That's our calling as citizens of God's kingdom. At the start of Ephesians 4, Paul says, That's the Christian calling.

[5 : 46] That's the Christian calling.

I've become increasingly persuaded that maybe this is just an impossible task on Twitter. But I've seen little evidence that people are even trying.

Everyone seems to want to justify their contentious behavior by claiming, I'm merely contending for the faith. I'm merely defending the truth. Well, I'm sorry, but first of all, the truth should always be spoken in love.

Always spoken in love. Second, our goal is unity. Right? When divisions exist, our goal should be reconciliation, not further division. And lastly, I don't think yoga pants are the hill to die on.

I don't think it's a hill worth splitting the church over. Lord, forgive me if I'm wrong. And by the way, that was a very real and very heated debate for a few days on Twitter. Spurgeon once said, Satan always hates Christian fellowship.

[7 : 06] It is his policy to keep Christians apart. Anything which can divide saints from one another, he delights in. He probably loves Twitter. He attaches far more importance to godly intercourse than we do.

Since union is strength, he does his best to promote separation. I don't know whether you've ever noticed this before, but think back to the day of Pentecost, or just after the Lord's ascension into heaven.

There was this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Acts chapter 2. Everyone was filled with the Spirit, and they were speaking in other tongues. Okay?

Now, the outpouring of the Spirit, when we read the text, is very obvious. The miraculous gift of speaking and understanding languages they didn't previously know, that's obvious in the text. But look closer at something else that was happening.

In this first great event in the life of the church following the death and resurrection of Christ, God is visibly, albeit supernaturally, bringing people into unity.

[8 : 18] Bringing them into unity by giving them the ability to communicate and understand one another. These are people who previously spoke different languages. There was, you know, a real barrier between them.

Their unity was always hindered and would always be hindered, but God removes the obstacle. He removes that barrier. He gives them the ability to communicate with one another, thereby fostering a unity in the body.

It's basically an undoing of the curse of Babel, right? When the people in Genesis 11, they wanted to band together in their sin, God put a stop to it by confusing their language.

We're told the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth and they left off building the city. Therefore, its name was called Babel because the Lord confused the language of all the earth.

They couldn't continue working together in their sin because God created this language barrier. When Dene and I were in Mexico, we spent two and a half hours one day on a bus listening to a tour guide switch back and forth between very fast, very fluent Spanish, and then a few words of English thrown in.

[9 : 41] And I thought, well, I wanted to hear what he had to say, but I thought he might also say something important to us because eventually we're getting off the bus, we're leaving the tour guide behind, and we've got to figure out what to do ourselves.

So I was listening very carefully. And by the time we got off the bus, two and a half hours later, listening to this guy, I filled the name. My brain was exhausted.

She gave up half hour in. But my brain was tired. And if you had told me and that tour guide to go off together and build a city, work together, build a city, I would have said, no thank you.

Our inability to communicate fluently anyhow would have been a very serious problem. So when we compare the stories of Genesis 11 and Acts 2, we learn that sin creates confusion.

It creates disunity. God's grace and His salvation, on the other hand, bring peace. And that's a significant theme of the gospel, which is pretty easy to overlook.

[10:54] In the late 80s, one of my favorite secular songwriters released a track that really sums up the state of the world in which we live. The song goes like this. Broken lines, broken strings, broken threads, broken springs, broken idols, broken heads, people sleeping in broken beds.

Ain't no use jiving, ain't no use joking, everything is broken. Broken bottles, broken plates, broken switches, broken gates, broken dishes, broken parts, streets are filled with broken hearts, broken words, never meant to be spoken, everything is broken.

And it goes on like that for a while. It's not Shakespeare, I'll give you that. But I think Bob Dylan makes his point quite clear. The world is broken.

And how did we get here? Fractured relationships, endless conflict between people, that's not what God created in the beginning. He designed a world where both people and even animals lived in perfect harmony.

Better yet, we were at peace with God Himself. There was no separation, there was no animosity, there was no division of any kind.

[12:10] So what happened? Did you ever make a volcano for science class in school? All right, you'd begin by forming your volcano out of clay and then you'd hide a container of vinegar, I believe it was, inside of it.

And then when you were ready for it to erupt, you'd pour in some baking soda. And the combination of the vinegar and the baking soda would cause, well, not so much of an eruption as a slow ooze, but it's supposed to represent an eruption.

Sin is the world's baking soda. Sin is the world's baking soda. When Adam disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, he disrupted every semblance of peace.

Adam and Eve, they ran away to hide from God. For the first time ever, there was separation between the Creator and His creation. And sadly, the consequences didn't end there.

From that day forward, God said there would be perpetual conflict, namely between men and women. Even the earth would turn against us. God said, cursed is the ground because of you.

[13:17] On the same day that Adam sinned, the first animal was slaughtered to give them clothing. But the very next generation, man began killing man.

Adam and Eve's son was the first murderer. And of course, the world's been broken ever since. We are divided by geographic borders, by nationalities.

We're further divided by regions and subcultures. There is often hostility between political affiliations and social classes and races and genders.

Even families are torn apart by one meaningless distinction or another. People get in fistfights over their favorite sports teams. Glance over at Ephesians chapter 2.

Ephesians 2, in verse 13, Paul says, but now. But now. You see, something's changed.

[14:18] Things aren't what they used to be. Namely, jumping back to verse 12, the Gentiles are no longer separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Now briefly, let me back up and provide some historical context to this passage because I think it's important. I doubt we can underestimate the divide between the Jews and the Gentiles prior to the first century and even into the first century.

there was a wide and deep gulf between them. They viewed each other with utter contempt. They shared a long history of disdain for one another, reaching back really to the very beginning of Israel's history.

The Gentiles in particular were completely separated from God. Right? Paul said in Romans 1, they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator.

They were blatant idolaters and as a result, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. They abandoned God so God essentially abandoned them. As for the Jews, they knew God because God gave them special revelation through His law and through His prophets.

[15:37] even so, Romans tells us they too were under sin. They were alienated from God as well. Paul reminded the Romans, whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law so that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

Jews included. So everyone, Jews, Gentiles, they're all guilty before God. The Jews, however, did have a little advantage over the Gentiles in that Paul said, what advantage has the Jew or what is the value of circumcision?

Much in every way, to begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God. God gave them His logion, His words, His utterances. Their advantage was having the truth about God and salvation revealed to them.

So despite Israel's many failures throughout the Old Testament, they did serve God, they were God's chosen people, while the Gentiles remained without God and alienated from Israel itself. So just put yourself in their shoes. Put yourself in the context of the first century church. You can probably imagine just how challenging it was to bring the Jews and the Gentiles together into one body.

[16:59] Right? You remember how Jonah reacted when God told him to go to the Gentile city of Nineveh to preach? He ran in the opposite direction. Do you remember how he reacted when he did finally preach in Nineveh and the people repented?

He threw a temper tantrum because God didn't destroy them for their former wickedness as He expected. Jonah seems to represent what was once the prevailing attitude among the Jews toward the Gentiles.

They don't deserve grace, in other words. The Gentiles, of course, didn't feel any better about Israel. As soon as God would drop His hedge of protection around the nation, you had Gentile nations lining up, ready and willing to conquer them.

They had no love for Israel. Suffice it to say, a certain amount of tension was created when the Jews and the Gentiles finally came together in the church. They both carried in a certain amount of cultural baggage.

So animosity continued in the church, maybe to a lesser degree, but it was there, always bubbling under the surface. But the gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news of reconciliation.

[18:24] You find that word a lot in the New Testament. Reconciliation. First and foremost, sinners are reconciled to God. And second, we're reconciled to God's people.

We're reconciled to one another in a similar way to the people being reconciled through one language on the day of Pentecost.

There's only one faith, one body, right? Paul says in verse 13, but now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Notice that contrast Paul makes. Far off versus brought near. In Acts 2, Peter used similar language. He said, for the promise is for you and for your children, that is, the Jews, and for all who are far off, the Gentiles, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.

Because the Jews had a covenant relationship with God, they spoke of themselves as being near God. The Gentiles, on the other hand, were far off because they didn't have that relationship, plus they were physically distant from God's presence in the temple.

[19:42] You had people near to God and people who were far off. But, here in Ephesians 2, that's past tense. That's past tense. Anyone who is in Christ Jesus, Jew or Gentile, is brought near by the blood of Christ.

Brought near. We're all near. Just as sin leads to division, holiness leads to harmony. Because Christ was perfectly holy, He could make atonement for our sins through His death, and because He made that atonement, the penalty of sin is washed away.

And, therefore, the separation is removed. There's no longer any distinction between the Jew and the Gentile. Whether they like it or not, Paul told the Corinthians, he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him.

Of course, if one becomes joined to the Lord, he inevitably becomes joined to everyone else who's joined to the Lord. so there are not one, but two reconciliations taking place through salvation. Well, continuing here in Ephesians 2, Paul 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.

[21:18] And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. Now notice the emphatic position of Christ for He Himself is our peace.

Jesus alone is our peace. He must be because we could not create peace for ourselves. We just create further division. We create further problems, further brokenness.

We're the ones that cause sin and division in the first place. By nature, we are selfish, selfish creatures, and we are inherently divisive.

In James 4, James rhetorically asked, what causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?

You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly to spend it on your passions.

[22 : 26] In a word, selfishness. That's human nature. Selfish. So if there's to be peace between us, we must die to self.

and where does one, where does self go to die? It dies on the cross of Christ.

In Galatians 2.20, Paul confessed, I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. In the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

self dies on the cross. So without the cross, there is no dying to self. And without dying to self, there's not ever going to be peace between us.

Jesus stepped right into the thick of our disunity and the confusion of this world and he created peace. peace.

[23 : 37] Within the church we can see it. Though we may struggle at times, male and female, Jew and Gentile, slave and free, we all live together in unity.

Whatever divided us in the past no longer matters. I've said this before, look around this room. I mean, we don't even have to necessarily examine our past. I suspect we all have very different jobs and hobbies and interests and passions and whatever else.

Most places, this group doesn't work. There's something supernatural happening here. I feel closer to you than I do many people I've known for even longer because there's something here that's different.

There's something here that's almost unexplainable and to the world it is unexplainable. It doesn't make sense. Paul says, Christ has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.

I believe he's alluding here to the physical separation between the Jews and the Gentiles in the Jerusalem temple. Gentile proselytes had a special court in the temple and they were not allowed to go any further.

[24 : 57] In fact, there was a sign at one time that read, no Gentile may enter within the barricade which surrounds the sanctuary and enclosure. Anyone caught doing so will have himself to blame for his ensuing death.

even a Jew could die if he was caught bringing a Gentile further into the temple than permitted. You may remember Paul was accused of that.

Some of the Jews grabbed him and shouted, men of Israel, help! This is the man who is teaching everyone everywhere against the people and against the law and against this place.

Moreover, he has even brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place. It never happened but that's what they claimed happened.

Now imagine how that felt. Imagine what it was like to be treated as inferior in the church or in the temple I should say when you desire to be near the same God as everyone else.

[26 : 03] It wasn't that long ago in this country that an entire race of people were not permitted to drink from the same water fountains or eat at the same tables or use the same restrooms.

Thankfully today we would call that injustice.

Christ destroyed the dividing wall. Specifically, he removed the obstacles that stood in the Gentiles' way. Paul says that he abolished the law and commandments expressed in ordinances that by fulfilling the ceremonial law Christ effectively broke down all of the superficial barriers between the Gentiles and the Jews.

Paul says 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.

And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

Christ has created one new man. One *kainos* and by *kainos* or by new.

Paul doesn't merely refer to a newly manufactured thing. For instance, you may purchase something that's brand new. It's still original. It's still in the box. But Paul is talking about creating something that's never existed before.

[27 : 23] Everything about it is new. It's completely new. It's completely unique. It's remarkable. No one's ever seen it. In other words, Christ has not merely converted Jews and Gentiles into Christians.

No, he's created Christians. The former identity ceased to exist. That's why Paul could say to the Romans in Romans 10-12, there is no distinction between Jew and Greek.

For the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call on Him. On the cross, Jesus brought all of God's people together.

Not only to God and Himself, but also into one body together. The alienation was nullified. The hostility was turned to peace.

Dylan says everything is broken and Paul concurs, but he also says there's a solution. The solution is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[28 : 33] He says, Jesus came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. In short, Christ has preached peace to everyone indiscriminately.

Indiscriminately. Preached is translated from the Greek word from which we get evangelized, so to put another way, Christ evangelized peace.

You remember what the angels shouted at His birth? Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth among those whom He is pleased. With whom He is pleased, I should say.

Jesus not only proclaims peace, but He brings it. He brings it. He accomplishes it. He procures it.

He secures it. Jesus is the very embodiment of peace. Once again, He is our only source of peace.

That is peace with God and peace with fellow believers of every background, every culture.

[29 : 33] On the night before His arrest, Jesus told His disciples, Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. He also said, In me, in me, you may have peace.

For through Him, we both, Gentiles and Jews, have access in one Spirit to the Father. The entire Trinity is involved in what is much more than a judicial experience.

It's a very personal, it's a very intimate one. The Spirit in particular serves as the King's, I can't remember what the name of the position is.

He's the one who grants us access to the King, if you will. He summons us into the King's chambers. According to Romans 8, the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

The book of Hebrews says, Let us then, with confidence, draw near to the throne of grace. For through Him, we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

[30 : 40] Verse 18. That word access is a word that's used three times, only three times in the New Testament as far as I know, and in each case, Paul is referring to a believer's access to God the Father.

For instance, in Ephesians 3, he says, This was according to the eternal purpose that He has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in Him.

You see, there's a reason Paul refers to the gospel as the gospel of peace in Ephesians 6. Through the gospel, sinners can have peace with a holy and triune God.

Not only that, but we can also have peace with one another in the church. The gospel is certainly, certainly good news, but to be even more specific, it is the good news of peace because it is the good news of reconciliation.

With that in mind, let's return to Matthew chapter 5. In verse 9, you'll notice that Jesus doesn't say, Blessed are those who are at peace.

[32 : 00] Instead, he says, Blessed are the peacemakers. Happy are those who make peace. Happy are those who strive for peace.

But let's also notice the latter part of this statement. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Now, as we've seen in each of the Beatitudes, Jesus isn't talking about just anyone.

He's not prescribing a way of life for everyone to follow. He's not saying, Do this and you'll be happy. Instead, he is really effectively describing the regenerated and redeemed.

He's describing the new nature of citizens of God's kingdom. He's talking about the sons or the children of God. In other words, he is talking about those who are at peace.

He's talking about those whom Paul describes at the start of Romans 5 when he says, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[33 : 11] Through Him, we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Jesus is talking about those whom Paul describes in the book of Ephesians as we were just reading about.

They have peace with God. They have peace with one another because Christ Himself is their peace who has made two into one and has broken down in His flesh that dividing wall of hostility. Citizens of the kingdom are most certainly at peace. But that's not quite the whole story. While the Bible is clear that Jesus is the embodiment of peace, He's the Prince of Peace.

Let's not forget something else He told His disciples. In Matthew 10:34, He said, Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth.

I have not come to bring peace but a sword. He continues, For I have come to set a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law and a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

[34 : 25] Now we've talked about the paradox of God's kingdom. To the world, the ethics of the kingdom are completely upside down. Well, we see something paradoxical in Christ Himself.

On the one hand, He came to deliver peace. He's the Prince of Peace. On the other hand, He says, Do not think that I have come to bring peace. I have not come to bring peace but a sword.

How do we make sense of this? The Prince of Peace is supposed to make peace even among people, right? What we just read in Ephesians.

How can that be if He's evidently slicing families apart with a sword? Well, let me ask another question. To whom does Jesus give peace?

Whom is He reconciling to God? Whom is He reconciling to His people? It's not everyone.

According to Romans 5, it's those who have been justified by faith.

[35 : 35] According to Ephesians 2, it's those who have been made alive together with Christ and are saved by grace through faith. In short, it's believers.

It's those who trust in Christ alone for salvation. They're given peace. Peace with God and peace with one another. A supernatural peace.

An unexplainable peace. But that still leaves a lot of people, doesn't it? A lot of people who are still dead in their trespasses and sins.

Who are still walking according to the course of this world. Paul calls them the children of wrath.

The Apostle John refers to them as the children of the devil.

They are people with a fundamentally different nature. They have a contrary worldview and a way of life. They are still at enmity with God. On the final night Jesus spent with his disciples, he told them, if you were of the world, the world would love you as its own.

[36 : 42] But because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. He also said, if the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you.

Now for those of us living in the western world, we've enjoyed a semblance of peace with unbelievers for quite a while now, haven't we? We've been very blessed in that regard, but that may be changing.

I can't say for sure. I mean, spend enough time on Twitter or some other social media site and you'll see it. Turn on the news, read the headlines. Increasingly, Christians are portrayed as the bad guys in society.

It's our fault. We're to blame for all of society's problems. I know after the Supreme Court decision last year that overturned Roe v. Wade, one prominent journalist publicly tweeted, I now understand why the Romans killed Christians.

Now what was perhaps the most shocking part of that tweet is that no one seemed shocked by it at all. I read through the replies, most everyone agreed. No one said, oh, that's terrible.

[37 : 53] No one said, well, I understand your frustration, but I think maybe you're taking things a little too far. Nobody said that. No, it was resounding agreement from hundreds, if not thousands of people.

Why does the world hate the citizens of God's kingdom? They hate us because they hate Christ.

They hate God. They hate His person. They hate His law.

They hate His ethics. And in turn, they hate us because we represent Him. We are the people conforming to the image of Christ, which leads us back to Matthew 5, 9.

Blessed are the peacemakers. Christ is the ultimate peacemaker, right? The ultimate peacemaker. But until He returns and makes all things new, He hasn't brought peace to everyone.

This is not a peaceful place to live, this world, I mean. There's no longer a dividing wall of hostility within the church, but the larger world is a much different story.

[38 : 57] There are believers and there are unbelievers and that dividing wall remains in place between us. That's the sword that is cutting right down the middle. Until Christ returns, absolute peace will remain impossible for us, which is why there needs to be peacemakers.

There needs to be people who aren't making the matters worse. If everyone were at peace, obviously, we wouldn't need anyone to make peace, to strive for peace. But we're not at peace. So God calls His people, citizens of His kingdom, those who are conforming to the image of the Prince of Peace, to be like Christ and to strive for peace.

Strive for reconciliation. Hebrews 12, 14 says, strive for peace with everyone. Everyone. Practically speaking, I realize that peace with the unbelieving antagonistic world, it may be impossible, but we strive for peace nonetheless.

We do everything possible to minimize the contention without, of course, compromising the truth or failing to keep God's commandments. I think those are givens, right?

[40 : 19] And if nothing else, surely we can maintain peace among our brothers and sisters in Christ, can't we? In a blog post titled, The Ministry of Reconciliation, Ray Ortlund wrote, The Gospel being what it is and always will be the message of reconciliation, our churches should be the most reconciling, peaceable, relaxed, happy places in town.

We are so open to enemies, so meek in the face of insults and injuries, so forgiving toward the undeserving. If we do make people angry, let this be the reason.

We refuse to join in their selfish battles. We're following a higher call. We are the peacemakers, the true sons of God.

Let's praise Christ for the peace He has given us and strive, then, to maintain that peace and even extend it beyond the walls of the church to take it everywhere we go, to be a peaceable people who influence people to be peaceable people.

This is our calling. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God. Let's pray once more. Heavenly Father, we thank You for the peace that You have brought through Christ Your Son.

[41 : 52] His atoning work on the cross has brought reconciliation between us sinners and You, a holy God, and we can shout our praises to You and our thanksgiving endlessly for all eternity.

We will not have exhausted how thankful we ought to be. Lord, we thank You for the peace that You bring among believers, but we also confess to You that we do not always do what we should. We do not always say what we should to maintain that peace. we ask for Your help. Will You teach us to be peaceful people, people who spread peace, not only in the church, but even outside of the church, everywhere we go.

How can we possibly be effective at ambassadors for peace, ambassadors for Christ, and share the gospel, the gospel of peace, if we don't even believe in peace ourselves?

Lord, teach us to be peaceful. In Christ's name I pray. Amen. We're dismissed.