

ST. SIMEON ANGLICAN CHURCH, OFF FUTA ROAD, AKURE

BIBLE STUDY, 14/05/2008

STUDY 7

THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND MEDIATION

Matthew 5:9

The *peacemakers* are happy. The wisdom that is from above is first *pure*, and then *peaceable*; the blessed ones are *pure* toward God, and *peaceable* toward men; for conscience must be kept *void of offence*. The *peacemakers* are those who have: (i) a *peaceable disposition*: to *make peace*, is to have a strong and hearty affection to peace. *I am for peace*, Ps. 120:7. It is to love, and desire, and delight in peace; (ii). a *peaceable conversation*; as far as we can, to preserve the peace that it be not broken, and to recover it when it is broken; to hearken to proposals of peace ourselves, and to be ready to make them to others; where distance is among brethren and neighbours, to do all we can to accommodate it, and to be *repairers of the breaches*. *The making of peace* is sometimes a *thankless office*, having *blows on both sides*; yet it is a good office, and we must be forward to it.

1. Peace with God and with men

Matthew 5:9; I Thessalonians 5:23; Titus 3:3; Romans 5:1; Isaiah 9:6; 52:7; Ephesians 2:14; John 16:33; 14:27; Hebrews 12:14; Ephesians 4:3; Proverbs 13:10

"Blessed are the peacemakers". They are the ones who are themselves at peace with God and live in peace with all men (compare with Romans 5:1). They are peacemakers because they themselves are at peace with God. They have entered into the peace of Christ and thus are able ambassadors of God's message of peace to a troubled world. Jesus is the promised "Prince of Peace" who "brings good news and announces peace". He is Himself our peace, and in Him we have peace. He gives His peace to us that we might "pursue peace with all men". To be "peacemakers" in the kingdom is not to be appeasers who always capitulate, but it does mean that we seek to settle differences of opinion and difficulties with the peace and love of Jesus Christ.

To be a lover of and worker after peace is one of the distinguishing marks of those who are followers of the Prince of peace. That miracle of grace which has made them at peace with God causes them to regard their fellows with sincere benevolence, desiring to promote their best interests, both here and hereafter. It is their care, so much as in them lies, to live peaceably with all men, and therefore do they abstain from deliberate injury of others. In each relationship they occupy (domestic, social, ecclesiastical), it is their desire and endeavour to prevent and allay strife. They are lovers of concord, promoters of unity, healers of breaches. They delight to pour oil on troubled waters, to reconcile those who are estranged, to right wrongs, to strengthen the kindly ties of friendship.

For the development of a peaceful disposition, we must first cultivate the grace of "lowliness," which is the opposite of pride, for "only by pride cometh contention". Second, there must be the cultivation of "meekness," which is the opposite of self-assertiveness, the determination to press my will at all costs: remember "a soft answer turneth away wrath." Third, the grace of "long sufferance," which is the opposite of

impatience. Finally, "forbearing one another in love," for the queen of the graces "endureth all things."

2. Ministry of reconciliation

Matthew 5:9; II Corinthians 5:20; John 15:17–27; Job 22:21; Colossians 1:19–20; Ephesians 6:15; Romans 10:15; Exodus 32:10; Numbers 16:47–48; II Samuel 24:14; Jeremiah 12:11; Ezekiel 22:30–31

The blessedness of work to which the ministers of God are called to is not merely to effect peace between man and man, but to reconcile men to God. What a contrast is this from the task allotted to Joshua and his officers under the Mosaic law, of taking up the sword to slay the enemies of the Lord! In this dispensation the servants of Christ are commissioned to seek the reconciliation of those who are at enmity with God. The heralds of the Cross are the ambassadors of peace, bidding sinners throw down the weapons of their warfare and enter into amnesty with God. The believer in Christ knows that there is no peace for the wicked. Therefore, he earnestly desires that they should acquaint themselves with God and be at peace. Believers know that peace with God is only *through our Lord Jesus Christ*. For this reason we speak of Him to our fellow men as the Holy Spirit leads us to do so. Our feet are "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace"; thus we are equipped to testify to others concerning the grace of God. Of us it is said, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of *peace*, and bring glad tidings of good things." Next to the enjoyment of peace in our own souls must be our delight in bringing others also (by God's grace) to enter into this peace. But, those who fancy themselves to be Christians, yet have no interest in the salvation of fellow sinners, are self-deceived. They possess a defective Christianity, and have no right to expect to share in the blessed inheritance of the children of God.

Apart from testifying to others concerning the grace of God is the peacemakers' *prayers* to avert the wrath of God from a guilty nation. In the day when the Lord's anger is kindled against a sin-laden people and the dark clouds of providence threaten an impending storm of judgment, it is both our duty and privilege to stand in the breach and by our earnest supplication stay His hand, so making peace. Moses, Aaron and David did so. When a fearful plague visits our country, or another nation threatens it with war, we are to behold God raising His rod, and entreat Him to be merciful. This is indeed a blessed work of peace: to stay the Lord from the work of destruction, as Abraham's intercession had done for Sodom if there were but ten righteous persons in it.

3. The blessedness in peacemaking

Matthew 5:9, I Peter 1:14; Hebrews 13:20; 2:11; 11:16; Ephesians 1:10; Romans 8:19; Matthew 13:43; I Thessalonians 5:23

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." The word *called* here seems to mean "acknowledged as." God shall *own* them as His own children. He is "the God of peace". His great object, in the wonderful scheme of redemption, is to "gather together in one all things in Christ," whether they be things "in heaven," or things "on earth". Furthermore, holy peacemakers are recognised as children of God by their spiritual brethren. Have you received this grace of the Spirit, so that you sincerely desire and endeavour to live at peace with all men? Labour to

maintain it. Ultimately, God will make it manifest to all the universe that we are His children.

The world may despise them as fanatics, professors of religion may regard them as narrow-minded sectarians, and their relatives may look upon them as fools. But the great God owns them as His children even now, distinguishing them by tokens of His peculiar regard and causing His Spirit within them to witness to them that they are sons of God. But in the Day to come, He will publicly avow His relationship to them in the presence of an assembled universe. However, humble their present situation in life may be, however despised and misrepresented by their fellow men, they shall yet "shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father". Then shall transpire the glorious and long-awaited "*manifestation* of the sons of God".