Lighthouse Bible Church

Peacemaker: Class #2

2/20/2011

Peacemaker: Glorify God

Live at Peace

# Introduction

Review

Last week:

Slippery Slope

The 4 Gs of Peacemaking

* Glorify God
* Get the log out of your own eye
* Gently restore
* Go and be reconciled

The first 3 chapters of the book deal with the first G of Peacemaking: Glorify God

Last week we dealt mainly with the idea that Conflict Provides Opportunities: To trust God, To obey God, To imitate God, To acknowledge God

Today we will focus on the goal of all conflicts: Peace.

Rom. 12:18

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

Peace is our ultimate goal. Peace is what we’ll enjoy in heaven.

But peace on Earth can only be attained one way. God’s way.

Fireproof

Caleb: “I just want peace.”

Michael: “It’s got to be the right kind of peace.”

Peace for non-Christians is a temporary solution.

Peace for Christians is experienced in one of two ways:

1) absence of tension. This can only happen in heaven.

2) trusting in God in the midst of tensions.

# The Three Dimensions of Peace

## Peace with God

We gave up peace with God

Isa. 59:1-2

Behold, the Lord’s hand is not so short That it cannot save; Nor is His ear so dull That it cannot hear.  
**But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God**, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

Adam first gave up peace that has affected everyone.

But not only Adam is at fault:

Rom. 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

But now we can have peace with God, through Christ:

Rom 5:1-2

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

## Peace with Others

All people, not just Christians

Rom 12:18

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

God recognizes that peace is not always possible: i.e. if the other person refuses to pursue peace.

But we are to do all we can to make peace with others.

Matt 22:39

“The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

When we have peace among believers: Unity – The world sees us as a good example

When we have peace with non-Christians: Evangelistic opportunities

Example: Jews and Gentiles Together

Eph. 2:14-16

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall,  
by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace,  
and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

The rest of this book is about how to pursue peace with others when conflict has disrupted your relationships.

## Peace with Yourself

When you try to picture “peace with yourself” in your mind, what do you think of?

Some sort of Buddhist/Yoga meditation?

It shouldn’t be!

We should try to picture a person who has so consistently obeys God’s Word that nothing can bring him down.

Psalm 119:165

Those who love Your law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble.

Only possible by having peace with God and with others

1 John 3:21-24

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;  
and whatever we ask we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.**  
This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.  
The one who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. We know by this that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Isa 32:16-17

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness And righteousness will abide in the fertile field.

And the work of righteousness will be peace, And the service of righteousness, quietness and confidence forever.

“No Justice, No Peace”

“Know Justice, Know Peace”

LA Riots

# Jesus’ Reputation Depends on Unity

Unity is an essential element of our Christian witness.

When peace and unity characterize our releationships with other people, we show that we are God’s child and He is working in our life.

When our lives are filled with unresolved conflicts and broken relationships, we will have little success in sharing the good news about Jesus’ saving work on the cross.

Our own internal peace is not the goal.

God’s ultimate glory is our goal.

He is glorified by us

unity = love

John 13:34-35

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.  
“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Hymn #284 They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord,

And we pray that all unity may one day be restored:

And they’ll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,

Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.

Example:

When Ken Sande was in Law School, he was bringing his friend Cindy to church:

Cindy was struggling in her spiritual life and disillusioned with her church. Thinking she might benefit from my church, I had invited her to worship with me one Sunday.

Moments after we took our seats, Pastor Erbele surprised everyone. He called for the attention of the congregation and asked one of the elders to come forward. Suddenly I remembered that these two men had had a heated discussion during the previous week’s Sunday school class. “On no!” I thought. “Pastor is going to rebuke him in front of the whole church!” I was already embarrassed as my pastor continued.

“As most of you know,” he said, “Kent and I had an argument during Sunday school last week. Our emotions got out of hand, and we said some things that should have been discussed in private.”

As I thought of the first impression Cindy must be getting, my stomach sank, “Of all the days to bring someone to church,” I thought, “why did I pick this one?” I was sure this incident would discourage Cindy and destroy her respect for my pastor.

Pastor Erbele put his arm around Kent’s shoulders and went on. “We want you to know that we met later that afternoon to resolve our differences. By God’s grace, we came to understand each other better, and we were fully reconciled. But we need to tell you how sorry we are for disrupting the unity of this fellowship, and we ask for your forgiveness for the poor example we gave last week.”

Many eyes were filled with tears as Kent made a similar statement. Unfortunately, I was so worried about what Cindy was thinking that I missed the significance of what was happening. Making a nervous comment to Cindy, I opened the hymnal to our first song and hoped she would forget about the whole incident. The rest of the service was a blur, and before long I was driving her home. We made light conversation for a few minutes, but eventually Cindy referred to what had happened: “I still can’t believe what your pastor did this morning. I’ve never seen a minister do something like that. Could I come back next week?”

During subsequent visits, Cindy listened intently when my pastor spoke. Having seen the power of the gospel in his life, she was eager to hear about the salvation and freedom she could experience by trusting in Jesus. Within a month, she committed her life to Christ and made our church her spiritual home.

# The Enemy of Peace

Satan hates peace.

Satan = Adversary

Satanic statements:

“Look out for Number One”

“Surely God doesn’t expect me to stay in an unhappy situation.”

“I’ll forgive you, but I won’t forget.”

“Don’t get mad, get even”

“I deserve better than this.”

What weapons do we need to fight Satan?

Eph. 6:13-

truth, righteousness, the gospel, faith, Scripture, prayer

It’s not all Satan’s fault of course. We have plenty of sin on our own without giving Satan all the credit/blame.

# Strive like a Gladiator

Eph. 4:1-3

Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called,  
with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love,  
being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The word “diligent” here is the same Greek word, spoudadzo, which would’ve been used by a trainer of gladiators when he sent men to fight to the death in the Coliseum. “Make every effort to stay alive today!”

So too must the Christian do ALL he can to make peace and unity.

This means that we must be willing to work hard and go out of our way to make peace.

It’s not like, trying once and then concluding, “oh well, I tried.”

# Lawsuits among Believers

1 Cor. 6:1-8

Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?  
Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?  
Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?  
So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church?  
I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren,  
but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?  
Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?  
On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.

Christians are not to take other Christians to court.

Warren Burger Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court: (1982)

One reason our courts have become overburdened is that Americans are increasingly turning to the courts for relief from a range of personal distresses and anxieties. Remedies for personal wrongs that once were considered the responsibility of institutions other than the courts are now boldly asserted as legal “entitlements.” The courts have been expected to fill the void created by the decline of church, family and neighborhood unity.”

Antonin Scalia, associate Supreme Court Justice

I think this passage [1 Cor. 6:1-8] has something to say about the proper Christian attitude toward civil litigation. Paul is making two points: first, he says that the mediation of a mutual friend, such as the parish priest, should be sought before parties run off to the law courts… I think we are too ready today to seek vindication or vengeance through adversary proceedings rather than peace through mediation… Good Christians, just as they are slow to anger, should be slow to sue.

Benefits of resolving conflicts in the church rather than the courts:

Litigation increases tensions and destroys relationships

The church relieves tensions and restores relationships.

Litigation fails to deal with the underlying causes of conflict

The church deals primarily with the sin issues of the heart.

Litigation only settles the question of money or enforcement of a contract.

The church can get more creative to develop relational remedies

Example

When a church helped several brothers resolve a dispute regarding their farming operations, it encouraged the men to get their families together for dinner once a month and talk about anything but farming. That advice proved to be sound. As the bonds between various family members were strengthened through more regular personal contact, there were fewer disagreements regarding the operation of the family farm. No civil judge could’ve ordered these gatherings or produced this result.

This is also why during our Elders Retreats and meetings, we make it a major point to share our lives together with prayer requests and even having fun together and not just business.

**The primary benefit of resolving disputes through the church is that it preserves our witness for Christ.**

# Summary and Application

Jesus makes it clear that peacemaking is not an optional activity for a believer. It is a command.

Token efforts will not satisfy this command.

Do you imagine peace on a deserted island with no people around?

That’s selfish.

You would have no impact on reaching the lost.

Reflection questions:

* Is there anyone with whom you have no peace over right now?
* If so, is there anything you can do about it?
* What effect might this conflict be having on the reputation of Christ?
* Is there someone who might have something against you? What have you done to be reconciled? Do you believe that you are free to worship God, or do you need to make another effort to restore unity with that person?
* Have you been striving earnestly to resolve this dispute or giving only partial efforts to make peace?