

Blessed Are The Peacemakers

by Hendrik Joubert

The opinion others have of us often is more important to us than we like to admit. We warn young people against the manipulative power of peer pressure; however this phenomenon will continue to form even the mature – if we will let it. I can either be what others want me to be, or I can be who I want to be. A mixture of the two is what we end up with as we seek for inner peace and peace with others. Consider the words of the following proverb as it reads in the NKJV of the Bible: ***The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, And a man is valued by what others say of him. (Proverbs 27:21)***

Those who believe in God quickly realize that Jehovah's is the only opinion which really matters as we should seek to live in peace with our Creator. ***"Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*** (Matthew 10:28) The wise, as a result of the inspiration of God, Solomon said: ***The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. ¹⁴ For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)***

Unfortunately many will remain enemies of God because they manipulate the image they have of Him in order to feel accepted without changing into the *image* He draws of a true believer. Through His Son, and specifically in the sermon on the mount, we have a clear description of the most basic qualities that will lead us to become what we ought to in order to be accepted by God – to be at peace with ***the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth. (Genesis 14:22)*** It is the duty of every believer to make peace with God and to assist others in doing so.

The first quality – *humility* – will help us recognize the evil of sin and what we have become as a result of its contamination. We will realize that we have become enemies of God. As we are *overtaken by grief* as we realize our pitiful condition we will indeed be comforted by the encouragement confirmed through Paul: ***For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. (Romans 5:10)***

Hungering and thirsting after righteousness will help us maintain this peaceful relationship with God. These words given through John demonstrate the principle: ***Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. (2John 1:9)*** We may be tempted to give recognition to the words of men; however that would be elevating a man's opinion above that of God. Often our own opinions and feelings are the most difficult to overcome.

The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel of peace. (**Romans 1:16-17; Ephesians 6:15**) It is the latter passage which reveals the responsibility of the true believer to be ready to make peace between God and his fellow man as he takes up the armor of God: **...having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;...**What we believe must be what God revealed to us through the gospel as **...faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.** (**Romans 10:17**)

Learning of our guilt and God's willingness to forgive will assist us in being meek, but also merciful towards others, which in turn will help us live in peace with men – even those who do not seek peace with us. **If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.** (**Romans 12:18**) We learn that those who seek after God with a pure heart, unstained by impure motives or hidden agendas, will see Him. Through the Hebrew writer the Lord gently warns: **Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.** (**Hebrews 12:14**)

Speaking the truth may be one of the ways by which one may make enemies without desiring to do so, as is suggested by the question Paul poses: **So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?** (**Galatians 4:16**) We may become the friend of men by telling them what they want to hear (**2Timothy 4:3**); however **...friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.** (**James 4:4**)

The servant of God must be a peacemaker. (**Matthew 5:9**) The emphasis should be on peace with God, while pursuing peace with all men without digressing so as to once again become an enemy of God.