

PEACEMAKERS

Week 1: *The Gospel of Peace*

APPETIZER: The Context of the Kingdom

Between the Testaments...

- The Persians invade and rule
- The Greeks invade and rule
- The Seleucids/Syrians invade and rule (enforcing Greek culture)
- Judas the Maccabee (the hammer) leads a revolt and rule returns to Jews (166-63)
These are glory days for Israel
- The Romans invade and rule (63 BC)
- Herod the Great rules through slaughter and assassination
- The Zealots lead ongoing raids and skirmishes against Rome. Often losing terribly, resulting in mass crucifixions. They are emboldened by the Maccabean era and are preparing for all-out war
- The Sicarii (Dagger Men) destabilize Roman rule through terrorism
- Jesus arrives on the scene. Seems to have the power of God. Never takes a wife – like he's ready for battle. Gathers twelve disciples (symbolic of reconstituting the twelve tribes of Israel). And starts teaching – about the closeness of the kingdom
- But then, Jesus starts teaching about the nature of the kingdom – a kingdom founded upon enemy love, self-sacrifice, radical reconciliation, and the end of religion as they knew it

**Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
~ Jesus (Matthew 5:9)**

- **Matthew 5:38-48** – nonviolence and enemy love make us like God
- **Luke 6:27-38** – nonviolence, enemy love, and no judging
- **John 18:36** – Christ-followers do not fight
- **Romans 5:8-10** – God loves his enemies
- **Romans 12:14-13:8** – while the State bears the sword, the Church must not
- **Ephesians 6:10-13** – our battle is spiritual, not physical
- **Philippians 2:5-11** – our mind should be like Jesus, self-sacrificing
- **1 Peter 2:21-25** – we should follow the nonviolent example of Jesus

DINE IN: Learning, Living, & Giving the Gospel

Ephesians 2:11-22

The Multi-layered Irony of Christ's Non-Violent Victory

1. Jesus comes at a time of political violence and religious separation.
2. Jesus preaches peace through enemy love and unity through the end of religion.
3. Jesus is killed by religious and political powers who want to silence his threatening message and get on with religious war.
4. Through his “defeat” in death, Jesus ends religion, establishes his kingdom (robe, scepter, crown, throne), and unites all people (if they accept the invitation).
5. Mission accomplished.

TAKE OUT: Changing the Question

From “But what about...?”
To “Do I love Jesus?”
“Do I trust Jesus?”
“Do I want to become more like Jesus?”

If so, you've got all the resources of Heaven ready to help you...

**But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you.
~ Jesus (John 14:26-27)**

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

- Watch/Listen to our teaching series, *Inglorious Pastors*.
- Read Brian Zahnd's *Farewell to Mars*, Preston Sprinkle's *Fight*, or Shane Claiborne's *Jesus for President*.

NEXT WEEK: Peacemakers Part 2!

We launch our all new Peacemakers Compassion Campaign!

Home Church Questions

HANGOUT [Warming Up to the Topic – in one Large Group]

1. After reviewing Sunday's message talk about what stood out to you.
2. Have you heard (and do you remember) our series "Inglorious Pastors"? What do you remember most about that series? What was your reaction to it?
3. What are you most/least looking forward to in this series?

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture – in Discussion Groups]

4. Read **Ephesians 2:11-22**.
 - a. What verse or idea stands out to you? Why?
 - b. In order to create union between Jews and Gentiles, Jesus nullified the Jewish religious law through his death on the cross. The Mosaic Law was designed to create separation between Jews and everybody else, so it had to go. Why, then, don't we just throw out the Old Testament part of our Bibles? Why still study a Law that is now nullified by the New Covenant?
 - c. What does the death of Jesus have to do with nullifying the Old Covenant? Why not just make a pronouncement – "Hear ye, hear ye. God says no more need to keep the law!"
 - d. Today in the west, we can tend to preach the gospel as though it is primarily a message about how each of us as individuals can be personally reconciled with God. According to this passage, how is that true? How is that incomplete?
 - e. If we are actually "citizens" in God's kingdom, what are some possible implications for how we live in Canada today?
 - f. We are being "joined together" and "built together" into a dwelling place for God. Why do you think God prefers to live within a unified people rather than just individuals?

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together – in Huddles]

5. Use your regular huddle questions to talk about your lives and to prepare you to pray for each other.

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Quotes

Welcome to our new series about peace and reconciliation. As followers of Jesus, peace and reconciliation are not meant to be optional accessories to our faith, but fundamental and central qualities of our lives.

Today's Message –
Part 1: The Gospel of Peace

The end never justifies the means.
The means are simply the end in the process of becoming.
~ Brian Zahnd

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred let me sow love;
and where there is injury, pardon.
~ Francis of Assisi

Disciples of Christ, note well, have no weapons except patience, hope, silence,
and God's Word.
~ Menno Simons

You'd think those of us who follow the Prince of Peace would be the hardest
people in the world to convince that violence is necessary – but that hasn't
always been the case. Often Christians have been the ones leading the charge
to war rather than the ones standing in front of the tanks.
~ Shane Claiborne

Jesus preaches a demilitarized kingdom.
~ Preston Sprinkle

Blessed are the peacemakers.
~ Jesus