

Bay City Wesleyan Church
July 17, 2016

Sunday Morning 07-17-2106

Life is full of new challenges. Where will you find the courage to face your new challenge? God's promises become reality as the Holy Spirit leads and you follow in obedient faith.

Jesus calls us to join him as PEACEMAKERS.

<http://bible.com/events/66318>

COMING IN AUGUST

Have you wondered what you can do to help your family and friends who haven't started following Jesus yet? Don't miss a single message in Pastor Mark's series, Love Them Like Jesus. You'll discover the five habits of highly missional people. The best news is that every one of the habits is enjoyable for both your loved ones and for you.

New challenges fill the lives of those of us who follow Jesus. The courage to face yesterday's challenges is gone.

Jesus summarized one of his biggest challenges for his followers in a simple, one sentence promise. Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God."

In families, homes, churches and communities, saturated by conflict how will we experience peace in our lives? How can we join Jesus as peacemakers when conflict saturates our world?

Joshua 22:10-34 NIV

When they came to Geliloth near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an imposing altar there by the Jordan. And when the Israelites heard that they had built the altar on the border of Canaan at Geliloth near the Jordan on the Israelite side, the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them. So the Israelites sent Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, to the land of Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. With him they sent ten of the chief men, one from each of the tribes of Israel, each the head of a family division among the Israelite clans. When they went to Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh—they said to them: "The whole assembly of the Lord says: 'How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from the Lord and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now? Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day we have not cleansed ourselves from that sin, even though a plague fell on the community of the Lord ! And are you now turning away from the Lord ? ' 'If you rebel against the Lord today, tomorrow he will be angry with the whole community of Israel. If the land you possess is defiled, come over to the Lord 's land, where the Lord 's tabernacle stands, and share the land with us. But do not rebel against the Lord or against us by building an altar for yourselves, other than the altar of the Lord our God. When Achan son of Zerah was unfaithful in regard to the devoted things, did not wrath come on the whole community of Israel? He was not the only one who died for his sin.' " Then Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh replied to the heads of the clans of Israel: "The Mighty One, God, the Lord ! The Mighty One, God, the Lord ! He knows! And let Israel know! If this has been in rebellion or disobedience to the Lord , do not spare us this day. If we have built our own altar to turn away from the Lord and to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, or to sacrifice fellowship offerings on it, may the Lord himself call us to account. "No! We did it for fear that some day your descendants might say to

ours, 'What do you have to do with the Lord, the God of Israel? The Lord has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you—you Reubenites and Gadites! You have no share in the Lord.' So your descendants might cause ours to stop fearing the Lord. "That is why we said, 'Let us get ready and build an altar—but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices.' On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the Lord at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, 'You have no share in the Lord.'" "And we said, 'If they ever say this to us, or to our descendants, we will answer: Look at the replica of the Lord's altar, which our ancestors built, not for burnt offerings and sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you.'" "Far be it from us to rebel against the Lord and turn away from him today by building an altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings and sacrifices, other than the altar of the Lord our God that stands before his tabernacle." When Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the community—the heads of the clans of the Israelites—heard what Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had to say, they were pleased. And Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, said to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, "Today we know that the Lord is with us, because you have not been unfaithful to the Lord in this matter. Now you have rescued the Israelites from the Lord's hand." Then Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, and the leaders returned to Canaan from their meeting with the Reubenites and Gadites in Gilead and reported to the Israelites. They were glad to hear the report and praised God. And they talked no more about going to war against them to devastate the country where the Reubenites and the Gadites lived. And the Reubenites and the Gadites gave the altar this name: A Witness Between Us—that the Lord is God.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PEACEMAKERS:

- [1] More conflict arises from misunderstanding than from corrupt intentions.
- [2] Don't assume and accuse — get the facts first!
- [3] Get all sides of the story.
- [4] Be willing to change your opinion.
- [5] Keep the vision a central priority, not personalities.
- [6] Healthy conflict resolution usually brings stronger relationships.

Sermon in a Sentence:

Nobody likes to deal with conflict but everybody needs to deal with it.
Flip side: anybody who likes to deal with conflict isn't fit to deal with it.

A NEW WAY OF THINKING:

As broken people, we tend to either avoid conflict at all costs or stir it up at all times. These responses to conflict make problems worse. It's as though we either stand back to watch the house burn or we throw gasoline on the fire. Our sin saturated culture tries to squeeze us into one of those two molds. But Jesus calls us to join him as peacemakers. He wants us to throw water on the fires of conflict.

How will we become peacemakers like Jesus?

1. Start in your heart by throwing water on sparks of conflict before a fire breaks out.

Colossians 3:13 NIV

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

2. Throw water on the sparks you create as soon as you know it happened.

Matthew 5:23-24 NIV

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

3. Throw water on the sparks others create by talking to them as soon as possible.

Matthew 18:15-17 NIV

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

4. Throw water on the fires burning between fellow followers of Jesus.

Philippians 4:2-3 NIV

I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

5. As you celebrate Communion, allow the Holy Spirit to soak your heart with his water preventing the fires of conflict from ever starting.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17 NIV

Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

Dare a great thing and follow Jesus as a peacemaker in your world.

Ask him for the courage to deal with conflict in healthy ways.