

STIRRING UP PEACE

Couple attacked man after he tried to break fight between man and a woman

ENGLEWOOD, Fla. James Whiteaker must have thought he was doing the right thing when he tried to break up a fight early Friday morning. Detectives arrived to the 200 block of West Cowles Street for a report of a stabbing. After their investigation, Sarasota Sheriff's deputies arrested Shawn Richardson and Carleen Tom for aggravated battery. They say Whiteaker tried to help Tom as she was fighting with Richardson. Instead of accepting the act of chivalry, Tom turned on Whiteaker and cut him. Richardson then hit him with a baseball bat. Whiteaker was treated at Englewood Hospital. Richardson and Tom are being held in the Sarasota County Jail without bond.

Text: Matthew 5:9

Where we've been in our series: "The Golden Chain" (John Chrysostom)

- Each begins with "Blessed"
 - When we please God through our surrender and obedience to Him, then we ourselves are pleased by His provision...we are blessed
- Week 1: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
 - Realize we bring nothing to our relationship with God.
- Week 2: Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
 - When we look at our sin and see it as God does, we should be grieved.
- Week 3: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth
 - Knowing our own spiritual poverty and sinfulness, we submit our life and will to the Lord's control
- Week 4: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.
 - Understanding your spiritual bankruptcy, realizing that you've been forgiven for your sin, grasping that only God controlling your life will bring true joy, you seek to have as much of His righteousness in your life as you can
- Week 5: Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.
 - God expects us to model the same mercy He's given us, through compassion to those who are hurting, forgiveness when we're wronged, and showing kindness and favor because of our love for others.
- Week 6: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God
 - The true follower of Christ has inner moral purity, as opposed to just giving that impression
 - They seek to have total-life consistency and a single-minded devotion for serving God
- Our mercy and desire for purity should be an outgrowth of our realization of how God saved us in spite of our spiritual bankruptcy.
- The same goes for this week's beatitude...blessed are the peacemakers

Making the Peace, Not Keeping It

- "Blessed are the peacemakers"
- "That brief, glorious moment in history when everyone stops to reload"

- Peace is a spiritual fruit
 - Hebrew: shalom – wholeness and harmony
- There's a direct connection with being pure in heart, because so much of the conflict in our world is caused by intrigue and people not being what they appear
- Bringing peace and reconciliation requires sincerity and transparency
- Two categories of peace: peace with God, peace among men
 - The second is really dependent upon the first
 - Peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of God
 - Bumper sticker: No Jesus, no peace/Know Jesus, know peace
 - James 4:4: Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.
 - Romans 5:1: we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ
 - EVANGELISTIC
 - Jesus is called the Prince of peace (Isaiah 9:6-7)...a prophecy of His ministry
 - He focused on men making peace with God and each other
 - God is called the God of peace in Romans 16:20: And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.
- You can't have peace through appeasement...things rarely get better if you just look the other way
 - Nazi Germany in the late 1930's (Neville Chamberlain, Joseph Kennedy)
 - Peace at any cost isn't the answer
 - Churches that compromise on their beliefs in the name of peace
 - Standing by while a friend's marriage is basically a "cold war"
 - Not confronting a lost relative's spiritual state for fear of an argument
- Peace often comes through conflict and personal sacrifice
 - Jesus on relationships in Matthew 5:23-24: "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."
 - Jesus in following Him Matthew 10:34-36: "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to *'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'*; and *'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'*"
 - Robert Mounce: "The peace that Jesus enjoins is not a passive acceptance of whatever comes along, but an active involvement that confronts the problem and works through to a satisfactory reconciliation."
 - The immense cost God the Father paid to reconcile man to Himself...the cross
 - No conflict or pain we experience will ever approach that
 - When it comes to the work of evangelism, of leading others to have peace with God, you may experience rejection, ridicule, criticism, perhaps even the loss of a friendship.
 - When making yourself the peacemaker in a conflict John Stott notes, "There will be the pain of listening, or ridding ourselves of prejudice, of striving

- sympathetically to understand both the opposing points of view, and of risking misunderstanding, ingratitude or failure.”
- Saint Telemachus (from Theodoret’s *Ecclesiastical History*):
Honorius, who inherited the empire of Europe, put a stop to the gladiatorial combats which had long been held at Rome. The occasion of his doing so arose from the following circumstance. A certain man of the name of Telemachus had embraced the ascetic life. He had set out from the East and for this reason had repaired to Rome. There, when the abominable spectacle was being exhibited, he went himself into the stadium, and, stepping down into the arena, endeavoured to stop the men who were wielding their weapons against one another. The spectators of the slaughter were indignant, and inspired by the mad fury of the demon who delights in those bloody deeds, stoned the peacemaker to death.
When the admirable emperor was informed of this he numbered Telemachus in the array of victorious martyrs, and put an end to that impious spectacle.

Like Father, Like Sons (and Daughters)

- “For they shall be called sons of God”
 - We don’t call ourselves this...we are called
 - First God does the recognizing
 - Others will notice...God’s children reflect God’s character
 - God is the ultimate peacemaker (our salvation through Christ)
- We’re ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20), and have been given the ministry of reconciliation...saw this in Sunday School
- D. A. Carson on the title “sons of God”: Now it belongs to the heirs of the kingdom who, meek and poor in spirit, loving righteousness yet merciful, are especially equipped for peacemaking and so reflect something of their heavenly Father’s character.”
- Those who call themselves Christian should never be seen as a faction or a combatant or an aggressor (as in Christian vs. Muslim)
- Ours is the same message as God’s: “Peace on earth, goodwill toward men”

Invitation

- John MacArthur: “The person who is not willing to disrupt or disturb in God’s name cannot be a peacemaker.”
- Where do you need to stir up some peace?
- Who in your life needs peace?
 - It could be in a marriage, or a friendship, or among people in church
 - You may need to make peace in one of your personal relationships, but you’ve been holding back
 - You probably know a number of people who need first to have peace with God
- I invite you to stir up peace and in so doing to reflect God’s love in your life

Let’s pray