

Jesus said:

**"HAPPY ARE
THE
PEACE -
MAKERS"**

"THE BEATITUDES"

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"HAPPY ARE THE PEACEMAKERS"

Matthew 5:9

Jesus said, "Happy are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

I was introduced to one of God's great peacemakers on Friday. His biography, written by Dr. Keith Cole of Ridley College, arrived in the mail.

This peacemaker is a C.M.S. missionary to North Australia, Rev. Hubert Warren, and the book about him is called "Groote Eylandt Pioneer".

The climax of his life was a dangerous Peace Expedition, which gripped the attention of the whole nation in the 1930s - just a few months before he died.

Hubert Warren served as a C.M.S. missionary in the North for nearly 20 years. It was he who began the work on Groote Eylandt, where Bill and Jenny Green and Margarete Park are at present. The story of this courageous pioneer is fascinating and inspiring.

Some of you senior citizens may well remember the Peace Expedition of 1933-34. It was after Warren had retired from the North to a country parish in Tasmania, that events occurred in the North which led to his expedition as a peacemaker.

"During the first quarter of the twentieth century Japanese fishermen employed by whites, took over the trepang industry in the Gulf waters from the Macassans. At first the Arnhemlanders were prepared to welcome them as successors to their Indonesian friends of the past. They soon realised, however, that the Japanese did not come with the same friendliness and co-operation as their predecessors. They often did not employ them in their procuring and curing of trepang. Moreover they tended to interfere too much with their women. In times past the sexual relations with the Macassans had been more or less controlled, but with the Japanese it was different, and from time to time the Aborigines retaliated against the violation

of their rights with spears.

The sporadic killing of Japanese trepangers culminated in the massacre of Caledon Bay on the eastern coast of Arnhem Land on 17 September 1932. On that day five Japanese were killed and their ship looted by the Aborigines. In the middle of 1933 a police party reached Groote Eylandt and on July 18 left for Blue Mud Bay in the mission launch the HOPE to enquire into the massacre. During their investigations at Woodah Island, Constable A. S. McColl was killed. About this time two beachcombers, F. Traynor and W. Fagan, were also killed on Woodah Island.

When news of these killings reached the South, there was an immediate uproar in the public press, with a demand that the killers be brought to trial. Without a full understanding of the facts and the reasons lying behind the massacres, rumour spread that there was a general rising among the Aborigines against the whites. Action was demanded and the Government contemplated sending a punitive expedition to the Caledon Bay area to teach the Aborigines a lesson.

The possibility of such punitive action by the police aroused strong protests among the church people in Victoria. The C.M.S. Victorian Committee, as well as voicing its protest, made a concrete proposal that a small group of experienced missionaries should get in touch with the Arnhemlanders with a view to establishing better relations with them. They stated:

Because it is recognised that, apart from our specific missionary aims, we as a Society have the following social aims in our work:

1. To serve the ends of justice, law and order in the community.
2. To cultivate in the aboriginal mind a sense of security, fair treatment, and of our recognition of their right (within just bounds) to live out their own lives in their own way.

3. To establish mutual understanding, respect and goodwill between the black and white races: the Church Missionary Society desires to approach the Government with the following proposal:

That with a view to showing to the aborigines the purpose and aims of the Government, and with the further view to the proper execution of justice in connection with the recent happenings a small party of experienced missionaries, unarmed, should be invited to approach the natives, thus to seek a better mutual understanding between the parties concerned; and that the Government be requested to take no action pending the result of the embassy."

("Groote Eylandt Pioneer", pp 30-31)

The Commonwealth Government accepted the proposal for a Peace Expedition. Hubert Warren was asked to lead it, and in November, 1933, he and two others set off.

For about six months these peacemakers moved among the aborigines who had been involved in the killings. They managed to persuade the aborigines to go along with them to Darwin to get the whole matter cleared up, and so avert a government punitive expedition.

Some complications followed, but it is true to say that Hubert Warren and his companions were indeed peacemakers.

"Happy are the peacemakers", said Jesus, "for they shall be called children of God."

We have seen a peacemaker at work. Now let us look closely at Jesus' words to see what a peacemaker is, and wherein lies his blessedness.

Do you know what a "hapax" is?

No, it's not a little animal like a rabbit - that's a hyrax.

"Hapax" can describe either a word in the Bible or a worshipper at church. It means "once". When a word occurs only once in the Bible, it is called a "hapax legomenon", or sometimes just a "hapax". Well, the Greek word for 'peacemakers' is a hapax in the Bible. It is only used here, in Matthew 5:9.

But we have no difficulty in working out its meaning - it is made up of two very common words - "peace" and "make". What is this peace that the peacemakers make? The Today's English Version of this verse interprets 'peacemakers' as 'those who work for peace among men'.

This appears to be the consensus of scholarly opinion. The peace made is between people. The rabbis of Jesus' day used the phrase 'to make peace' meaning 'to establish peace and concord among men.

It does not mean making peace between people and God. "God chose to reconcile the whole universe to Himself through Jesus, making peace through the shedding of His blood upon the cross." (Col. 1:20, N.E.B.)

"All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them ..." (II Cor. 5:18,19).

Jesus died on the cross to make peace between God and people. That glorious event is the central point and focus of this Communion Service. That peace is His work. All we can do is to urge people to participate in it.

The peace that we are to make is between people. And as we do that, God will call us His children, for we will be acting like Him. God is a peacemaker. If we want to be like Him, to be called His children, then peacemaking will be our business too.

What destroys peace between people?

The works of the flesh.

Enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, and so on. These are attitudes that our lower nature naturally produces, and Satan so frequently tempts us to adopt them.

Are these in your life? Then come to God tonight in this service, confess to Him your wrong attitudes, and pray that He will cleanse you and equip you to be a peacemaker, not a peacebreaker.

How can we be peacemakers? What attitudes will help?

If you guessed that I was going to contrast the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit, you are exactly right. For here in Galatians 5:22,23 we find some magnificent equipment for the peacemaker. Let me mention some of it.

LOVE - the love of God in your heart towards everyone you encounter;

JOY - a cheery smile and a touch of humour at the right time go a long way to making peace;

PATIENCE - staying unruffled under pressure;

KINDNESS and GENTLENESS - one of the great contributions to peace is the ability to make allowances, to be merciful, instead of being critical.

Next time the sales girl gives you a sour look and a curt reply, say to yourself, "Maybe she has just stubbed her toe, snagged her pantyhose, been jilted by her boyfriend, and lost her hanky." It makes quite a difference.

If Jesus Christ is your Lord, then peacemaking must be part of your life.

We are commended not only to live at peace with people as far as possible, but also to actively pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

Now, how can you remember to be a peacemaker?

Let me suggest this: every time you see an afternoon or evening time, let that "p.m." remind you that you are to be a peacemaker - "3.30 peacemaker".

Every time you are in a position to stop some strife, think, "I'm a P.M." When some nasty gossip crosses your path, think, "Now for some P.M."

And when you are tempted to break up the peace - think "Hold it - I'm a P.M."

God is a peacemaker.

He requires that His people be like Him in this respect. We praise God for the magnificent example of His servant Hubert Warren, the Groote Eylandt Pioneer.

Do you want God to call you one of His children?

Then you be a P.M. too.

Let us pray:

Let us think of all the different worlds we live and move in - our home, our work, our family and friends; a sporting club, perhaps.

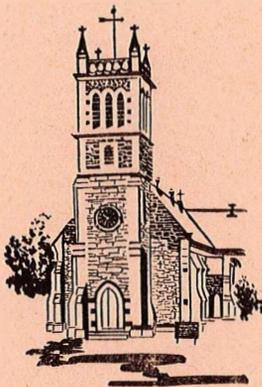
Let us pray that in each of them God will help us to be peacemakers.

LORD JESUS CHRIST, please fill us with Your Spirit, that we may have all the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, and so bring love where there is hate, joy where there is sadness, and peace where there is strife.

AMEN.

"THE BEATITUDES"

1. "Happy are the Poor" The Reverend Lance Shilton
2. "Happy are the Mourners" The Reverend Hugh Prentice
3. "Happy are the Meek" The Reverend Lance Shilton
4. "Happy are the Hungry and Thirsty" The Reverend Lance Shilton
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6. "Happy are the Pure" The Reverend Tony Tress
7. "Happy are the Peacemakers" The Reverend Hugh Prentice
8. "Happy are the Persecuted" The Reverend Graham Knight



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