

Matt.5:9-12 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

<sup>10</sup>Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to them. <sup>11</sup>Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely on account of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because your reward is great in heaven, for they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way.

Note: The position of this beatitude—after purity of heart and before persecution.

Matt. 5:10-12 underscores that genuine peace-making flows from inner holiness and may provoke opposition from a world at odds with divine righteousness.

### Peacemaker Versus Peacekeeper

Peacekeeper: Avoids confrontation at all costs to maintain peace, even at the risk of compromising truth. But the peace he maintains is not true peace. It is a touchy, superficial peace that will not last.

Peacemaker: He will go in LOVE and confront, bringing truth so that the resulting reconciliation will endure. He will not maintain an artificial, superficial relationship.

He desires openness, truth and love. He refuses to hide offense with a political smile.

He makes peace with a bold love that cannot fail.

The Bible reveals Jesus as our ultimate example of a peacemaker. Humans rebelled against God. Jesus, with His blood, paid the price to restore peace between a rebellious creation and their loving creator.

Abraham avoided conflict with his nephew Lot over land and resources by selflessly offering him the first choice of where to settle, prioritizing peace and family relationships over personal gain [Gen. 13:8-9].

Joseph: Despite the immense wrong done to him by his brothers, who sold him into slavery, Joseph forgave them and used his position in Egypt to save their lives and restore their family relationship, showing mercy instead of vengeance [Gen. 50:19-21].

Jonathan: As the son of King Saul, Jonathan worked to make peace between his jealous father and his friend David, risking his own life and royal position to prevent a conflict.

Abigail: She bravely intervened to stop David from taking vengeance on her foolish husband Nabal. She brought provisions and reasoned with David to prevent bloodshed and a future burden of guilt. [I Samuel 25]

Paul: After his conversion from a persecutor of Christians to an Apostle, Paul became a powerful example of a peacemaker. He worked tirelessly to reconcile people to God and to one another, specifically bridging the gap between Jewish and Gentile believers.

One of the most profound and rare eulogies in all the Bible is ascribed to Barnabas:

A. Barnabas was a Man of Encouragement. Acts 4:36

His real name was Joseph the Levite, yet as the result of his attitudes and actions, the disciples surnamed him Barnabas, which means "Son of Encouragement."

Wherever Barnabas is mentioned in the Bible, there is always the activity of encouragement [Acts 11:23; 14:22; 15:31]. The term encouragement is derived from the Greek *parakaleo*.

That word comes from the same root that Jesus used to describe the Holy Spirit when he said, "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, Comforter . . ." [John 14:16].

B. Barnabas was Submissive and Accountable to others. Acts 4:36-37

He was a man of status [a Roman citizen] and means [a property owner], yet he was willing to share his personal wealth by denying himself and giving to a higher cause.

<sup>37</sup>He having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Barnabas was not only submissive to God but also submissive to God's people!

Acts 14:26-27 Paul and Barnabas were accountable to their home church at Antioch.

Key: The mediation process must not be one of authority void of accountability. Finally, they returned by ship to Antioch of Syria, where their journey had begun. The believers there had entrusted them to the grace of God to do the work they had now completed.

<sup>27</sup> Upon arriving in Antioch, they called the church together and reported everything God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, too.

C. He was Spiritually Empowered

Acts 11:24 For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith,  
and a great many people were added [brought] to the Lord.

Rom. 8:6 The mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace...." Because Barnabas was a man full of the Holy Spirit, his peacemaking impact was a natural consequence of God at work in his life.

Rom. 5:1 teaches that when a man has been justified by faith, he will have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the primary goal of the Christian peacemaker is to point people who are in conflict to the Savior. This was undoubtedly the key to Barnabas' success in resolving a variety of conflicts, including tensions:

D. Between an individual and a group Acts 9:20-31

Context: Details the immediate aftermath of Saul's conversion (~ 36 AD), where he transitions from persecutor to proclaimer, preaching Jesus in Damascus synagogues.

This passage highlights the initial shock of the Jewish community, the threats against Saul's life, his escape at night in a basket.

Acts 9:26-31 And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples;  
but they were all afraid of him and did not believe that he was a disciple.

<sup>27</sup>But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. [Barnabas acted as a mediator, championing Saul's legitimacy.] So Saul stayed with the apostles and went all around Jerusalem with them, preaching boldly in the name of the Lord. <sup>29</sup> He debated with some Greek-speaking Jews, but they tried to murder him. <sup>30</sup> When the believers heard about this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him away to Tarsus, his hometown. [Saul will be out of the picture for 10-14 years.]

#### E. Between two "races" of people

Acts 11:19-26

Context: Details the rapid expansion of the early church to Antioch

following Stephen's persecution, marking a pivotal shift toward *Gentile* inclusion.

- Persecution dispersed believers, who traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, initially preaching only to Jews. However, men from Cyprus and Cyrene began sharing the message with *Gentiles* (Hellenists) in Antioch, resulting in a large number of conversions.

Acts 11:22 The church in Jerusalem heard of this movement and sent Barnabas to Antioch to evaluate the validity of the Christian movement in Antioch. They were confident of his discernment and peacemaking skills. A man of discernment looks at motives as well as facts.

Acts 11:23-24 When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit & of Faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Unlike many Jewish Christians, Barnabas did not shun the *Gentile* Christians, but rather rejoiced that God reached out to include them in His covenant.

After Paul had experienced ten to twelve years of tent-making in Tarsus and de-programming in the desert, Barnabas sought him out and brought him to Antioch for the beginning of the most dynamic ministry in the history of the Christian Church

They spent a full year teaching a large group of people.

- It was in Antioch that the disciples were first referred to as "Christians".

Result: The passage highlights the shift from a solely Jewish-believing community to an international church, establishing Antioch as a major center of Christian, mission, activity.

#### F. Acts 11:27-30 Barnabas was Trustworthy.

The *Gentile* Christians at Antioch raised funds to provide relief for the famine-stricken Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. Barnabas may have initiated that collection to remove any lingering skepticism in Jerusalem about the validity of the faith of the *Gentile* Christians in Antioch.

Acts 11:30 They Entrusted their gifts to Barnabas and Saul to take to the elders of the church in Jerusalem.

G. Barnabas was anointed by God. Acts 13:2-4

Acts 13:2 One day as these men were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them." God called and anointed Barnabas and Paul for missionary work, the ultimate peacemaking and reconciliation activity. God enables His servants to do His work. Although every Christian is responsible for peacemaking activities in his or her own sphere of influence, certain individuals are gifted with special abilities for exhortation [Rom. 12:8].

God has called His body to the peacemaking process, and it stands to reason that He will support His call by raising up anointed peacemakers.

H. Barnabas recognized his capacities and limitations. [Acts 13:7-8]

Paul confronted Elymas: You son of the devil, full of every sort of deceit and fraud, and enemy of all that is good! Will you never stop perverting the true ways of the Lord?

The incident of confrontation with the demon-inspired magician, Elymas, introduced a shift in church leadership. Up to that time, Barnabas had been recognized as the leader of the church in Antioch and Cyprus. Beginning with this incident, Paul became the prominent figure.

This was based on the human capacities, roles, callings and limitations that God has given each one of us for a particular season.

I. Man of Discernment Acts 13:13; 15:36-40

Barnabas recognized when John Mark was not ready for the mission field. Unlike Paul, however, he did not consider John Mark to be a permanent liability but rather a late-bloomer.

It is fortunate that Barnabas recognized the timing needed for John Mark's maturation since John Mark later helped Peter write his epistles!

John Mark also became useful to Paul in Paul's twilight years. [II Tim. 4:11]

J. Barnabas was a man of perseverance. Acts 13:50; 14:21-24

Perseverance means persistence in the task undertaken. After being pressured to leave Lystra because of the rioting crowd, Paul and Barnabas waited for a reasonable length of time and then returned to complete the task of "strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith" [Acts 14:22].

K. Barnabas was humble. Acts 14:8-14

A mediator or peacemaker must always recognize his role as one of God's servants. When Paul and Barnabas were acclaimed as gods and worshiped after healing the lame man [Acts 14:8-9], they quickly corrected that error and pointed men to the true Miracle-Worker, Jesus Christ [Acts 14:14-18]. Regardless of the success of his peacemaking mission, the mediator must always recognize that he is "an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master..." [II Tim. 2:21].

L. Between two churches, Jerusalem and Antioch Acts 15:1-35

Describes the Jerusalem Council, a pivotal meeting with early Church leaders.

The Conflict: Legalistic Christians from Judea came to Antioch and insisted that Gentile converts must be circumcised and follow the Law of Moses to be saved, causing sharp debate with Paul and Barnabas.

Acts 15:2 And after Paul and Barnabas had a heated argument and debate with them, *the brothers* determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem [~300 miles] to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.

The Debate [5-12] In Jerusalem, Pharisees argued for the necessity of the Law, but Peter spoke, recalling how God gave the Holy Spirit to Gentiles without requiring the Law, purifying their hearts by faith.

Paul & Barnabas' Testimony [v.12):

They shared accounts of God's miraculous work among the Gentiles, proving His acceptance. James confirmed Peter's account: God was taking Gentiles for His name, a fulfillment of prophecy.

James' Proposal [13-21] The apostle James summarized, agreeing that salvation is by grace through faith, not works of the law, and proposed requiring only basic concessions for fellowship.

The Council's Decision [22-29] The apostles, elders, and the whole church decided to send Judas and Silas with Paul and Barnabas, carrying a letter stating Gentiles should abstain from:

- Food sacrificed to idols                      Blood
- Meat from strangled animals              Sexual immorality.

The Letter Delivered [30-35]: Upon receiving the letter, the church in Antioch was overjoyed and strengthened by its message. It helped maintain unity between Jewish and Gentile Christians.

M. Barnabas was willing to confront others. Acts 15:2, 36-37.

The true peacemaker is willing to confront his enemies as well as his friends.

Barnabas confronted Paul about John Mark in Acts 15:36-37 and was temporarily wounded by separation from the man who was his best friend. Later, however, perhaps thanks to Barnabas, Paul and John Mark were reconciled [II Tim 4:11].

Barnabas and Paul confronted nonbelievers with the gospel, Judaizers with the truth [Acts 15:2), and fellow Christians with proper Biblical interpretations [Acts 15:2-11; Gal. 2:7].

The courage to confront exposes the peacemaker to misunderstanding and rejection, but it provides God with a channel through which He can work to bring about repentance and reconciliation.

Note: Rather than providing detailed methods or techniques for mediating disputes, Scripture focuses primarily on describing the character qualities of people, like Barnabas, who are used by God to bring others together. Although mediation techniques are important, the best technique will fail if the mediator lacks the qualities exemplified in Barnabas' character.

Sonship is God's Design of Perfection for Every Child of God

Perfection: #5046 teleios = complete, mature, or having reached its intended end or goal.

James 1:4 But let patience [endurance] have its perfect work,  
that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Eph. 1:5 He having Predestined Us

- See 1:1b To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

Eph. 1:5 He having Predestined Us To Adoption As Sons by Jesus Christ to Himself,  
according to the good pleasure of His will, [roots adoption in His eternal purpose]

- #5206. Huiiothesia: divine adoption as sons [huios]

Sonship is the privilege of being adopted into His family, not merely as servants, but as heirs through faith in Jesus Christ. This divine purpose, predestined by God's grace and "good pleasure," involves maturing into the image of Christ, leading to intimate relationship, inheritance, and the ultimate manifestation of God's glory.

The word adoption literally means to place in the position of a son.

Your position and your walk are two different things.

It is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit to make the position of righteousness and holiness a present reality in our daily walk.

Gal. 4:4-5 <sup>4</sup>But when the fullness of the time had come,

God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

<sup>5</sup>so that He might redeem and liberate those who were under the Law,

that we [who believe] might be Adopted As Sons

# 5206. Huiiothesia: as God's children with all rights as fully grown members of a family.

- This locates adoption in the accomplishment of Christ

Heb. 2:10 For it was fitting for God [an act worthy of His divine nature] that He,

- for Whom and by Whom all things exist, in bringing many sons [huios] to glory, should make the author and founder of their salvation perfect through suffering
- [bringing to maturity the human experience necessary for Him to be perfectly equipped for His office as High Priest].

Heb. 5:8-9 Even though Jesus was God's Son, He learned obedience from the things He suffered. In this way, God qualified Him as a perfect High Priest, and He became the source of eternal salvation for all those who obey Him. [NLT]

Truth: The Perfection of Christ as Son enables our perfection as Sons

It is crucial to note that *perfect* here means "complete," as in finishing a full course of training or education. In Jesus' case, He finished an altogether righteous human life and had a complete understanding of human frailty and suffering.

Rom. 8:14 For as many as are Led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons [huios] of God.

Rom. 8:15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery [bondage] leading again to fear, but you have received the Spirit of Divine Adoption as Sons [the Spirit producing sonship] by which we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Key Truth: It is the Holy Spirit who produces sonship in the children of God.

- Romans 8 mentions the Spirit at least 18 times.

### Purpose of Sonship

1. Sonship trains you to become a representative of God on the earth.
2. Sonship focuses on alignment with God's will.

Rom. 8:28-29 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.<sup>29</sup> For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

I Thess. 4:3a For this is the will of God, even your sanctification,

My prayer: "Lord, use me; shape me; make me what You want me to be."

3. Sons grow into who they must become for the promises to manifest.

- Maturity becomes the key to possessing the inheritance.

4. Sonship pursues transformation which is a life-long journey.

5. Sonship removes self.

- Pride dies, self-will bows, and the heart becomes aligned with the Father's desires.

Sonship is shaped in the secret place, forged through obedience, refined through discipline, and stretched through trials. The pressures you face are not punishments, they are trainings. God uses the process to build stature. Every stretching is God forming Christ in you. Every challenge is part of your spiritual development.

6. Sonship carries identity and intimacy.

A Christian knows God as Savior; a son knows God as Father. A son walks in confidence, not insecurity. He knows who he is and whose he is. Sons do not beg for what already belongs to them. They access their inheritance with understanding and authority.

7. Christianity gives you access to God, but sonship gives God access to you.

Many remain immature Christians and never grow into sonship because the path to sonship requires surrender. It asks for discipline, responsibility, consistency, and alignment.

It calls for choosing growth over comfort, transformation over convenience, and intimacy over mere attendance. Without growth, the treasures of God remain locked within.

8. Christianity changes your destination.

Sonship changes your identity, character, authority, and impact.

Christianity begins the journey. Sonship completes it. Christianity gives you life; sonship gives you purpose. Christianity connects you to God; sonship matures you into His likeness.

When a believer grows into sonship, something powerful happens.

- He stops living for God, and God begins to live through him.

9. Sons carry an unshakable hope about the future.

Max Lucado: Unshakeable Hope: We are building our lives on the promises of God. Because His Word is unbreakable, our hope is unshakeable. We do not stand on the problems of life or the pain in life. We stand on the great and precious promises of God.

Heb. 6:17-19 God also bound Himself with an oath, so that those who received the promise could be perfectly sure that He would never change His mind. <sup>18</sup> So God has given both His promise and His oath. These two things are unchangeable because it is impossible for God to lie. Therefore, we who have fled to Him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. <sup>19</sup> This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls.

#### Sonship Requires Suffering: Sons Rise Up & Grow In Hardship

Context of I Peter He is writing to Christians who have been exiled and experienced some intense persecution at the hands of the Roman authorities. It is about to get worse.

I Pet. 1:3-7 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

I Pet. 1:6-7 So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. <sup>7</sup> That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

I Pet. 2:20-21 After all, what kind of credit is there if, when you do wrong and are punished for it, you endure it patiently? But if when you do what is right and patiently bear [undeserved] suffering, this *finds* favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you would follow in His steps,

I Pet. 4:12-13 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though *something* strange were happening to you;

but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy

James 1:2-4 My brethren, start considering it all joy when you encounter various trials; Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patient endurance and steadfastness. Keep letting endurance produce its complete result, that you may be fully mature and whole, lacking in nothing of spiritual value.

The early apostles believed that participating in the fellowship of Christ's suffering is part of our preparation for sharing in His future glory. To his student Timothy, Paul explained,

II Tim. 3:12 Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

Paul taught believers in II Cor. 1:5 that the more we suffer for Christ,

the more God will shower us with His comfort through Christ.

Just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance so also our comfort is abundant in Christ.

II Cor. 1:6 the suffering and comfort experienced by believers are not in vain, but rather serve a greater purpose for the consolation, salvation, and endurance of others in the faith. Paul explains that his trials [afflictions] bring comfort to the Corinthians and help them persevere through similar struggles.

To be like Christ, we must enter the fellowship of His suffering and death "so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies" [II Cor. 4:10 NLT].

Paul in Col. 1:24 I am glad when I suffer for you in my body,  
for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for His body, the church.

Rom. 8:16-18 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>17</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Romans 8:17 captures the astonishing elevation of believers.

The clause links inheritance to discipleship's cost and future glory.

Rom. 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time  
are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Rom. 8:25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

Endurance or perseverance: 5281. Hupomoné: steadfast endurance that clings to God in the face of pressure. More than passive waiting;

it is active, faith-filled perseverance that refuses to abandon obedience or hope.

It is a Spirit-empowered tenacity that remains under trial until God's purpose is fulfilled.

It is associated with hope and refers to that quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial.

I Thess. 1:3 constantly keeping in mind your work of faith and labor of love and perseverance [endurance] of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father,

As we share in hardship and persecution on our downward path to the cross, Jesus is our co-companion on the journey. He promises never to leave us alone [Matt. 28:20]. Christ is a living Savior who pledges to impart His resurrection power and give us the strength to endure and even overcome [Rom. 8:11; Phil. 3:10; John 16:33].

Suffering is the precursor to Glory. Quit trying to press the eject button on our suffering.

### Sonship Requires Determined Choices

Phil. 3:10 I want to know Jesus that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

To know Him: A deep, personal, experiential knowledge of Jesus, beyond mere facts, involving fellowship and participation in His life.

The power of His resurrection: Experiencing Christ's life-giving power that raises believers from sin and death, enabling them to live transformed lives.

The fellowship of His sufferings: Identifying with Christ's hardships and trials, understanding that suffering is part of the Christian journey and a way to draw closer to Him.  
Becoming like Him in His death: Dying to self, sin, and worldly desires, mirroring Christ's sacrificial life, which creates the space for resurrection power to work and for Christ's divine life to be expressed in us.

Heb. 12:1-4 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.

Embrace trials as training: Suffering is not accidental but purposeful, conforming believers to Christ

Heb. 10:36 For you have need of endurance, [to bear up under difficult circumstances without compromising] so that after you have done the will of God, You May Receive The Promise:

There is a great deal at stake in our completing the course. Following Christ and being conformed to His likeness as Sons is not a leisurely stroll. It is not a 50-meter dash. It is not a one-time confession you make as a youth. Attaining the Adoption status of Sonship is a life-long journey that requires endurance and a faith commitment to Jesus Christ.

So we must consider the course before us, and determine to run it, no matter the cost.

We must realize this is a marathon, and trials will be great. There can be no turning back.

There can be no excuses. Remember all those who testified before to the worthwhile pursuit of this course. Remember the one who is our ultimate example...Jesus Christ!

Jeremiah quoting Dr. Jouett: Ministry that costs us nothing accomplishes nothing. If there is to be any blessing in what we do, there's got to be some bleeding in what we do. We want the product without the process. We want the end result without the requirements.

Dr. Jouett was browsing a Christian event with many booths. One both advertised:

Cheap crosses for sale. That's what most Christians are looking for. Something I can be involved in that doesn't demand anything from me. Trying to steal the blessing without the bleeding.

Jesus teaches us that Christianity is selflessness, surrender, service, submission and sacrifice.

Phil. 3:14-15a I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> All of us who are mature [pursuing spiritual perfection] should have this attitude.