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**Series: The Sermon on the Mount**  
**Message: The Peacemakers**

**Transcribed Message**  
**November 12, 2017**  
**Matthew 5:9**

It doesn't seem like it was that long ago, but as Covenant Community and Southwest Covenant worked through some issues 10 years ago, it seemed at a time there that we were not going to be able to find the answers that we so desperately wanted. It seemed as if the two ministries might even separate and go in different directions. Praise be to God, He brought to our attention and into our path a ministry called Peacemakers. Peacemakers was used by God to bring these two ministries to a place of understanding and agreement together, applying a biblical principle truth to that circumstance that ultimately honored God in a way that I don't think any of us could have ever envisioned at the time. We even sent one of our favorite pastors over there to look around and he never came back. He just stayed over there. We're appreciative to Steve and his ministry at Southwest Covenant school. We're grateful to God for how He took the word that He's given to us and brought it to life in a very real and practical way that has had a wonderful continuing impact.

Jesus said in the 7<sup>th</sup> beatitude blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God. Here is what I know. Everybody here this morning has been in conflict, is currently in conflict, or will be in conflict. Some of you fit all of those categories this morning. You have been in conflict. You're in the middle of conflict, and you know that it's coming as well. What Jesus says to us in light of that truth is we are to be peacemakers. It is a wonderful promise that He has given to us here in this passage because peacemaking ultimately is all about following after Jesus, following after His person, His work, His message and His manner. It is really just to live out the gospel and that's what God has called us to do.

Let's do a quick review of the Beatitudes. We've got one more to go after this one so we're almost at the end of the Beatitudes. One thing that we have seen consistently is first of all they are birthmarks of a believer. These are the things that mark a follower

of Christ. If these things aren't in your life, I'm not going to categorically say you're not a believer. I'm just going to say if these things aren't in your life and you claim to be a follower of Christ, then you're walking out of fellowship with the truth. You're not walking in the light that God has called us to. These things are to characterize the life of a believer.

Secondly, they are internal graces. They're internal graces. They're things that God is doing within our lives, changing us from the inside out. That is so important because you remember the context in which Jesus gave these originally in the first century was to a group of religious leaders that were basically training up a generation to believe that all that mattered is what people can see. As long as they saw things that were acceptable, then what is going on inside of you didn't really matter to them. A total distortion obviously of God's plan for how it is that we are to be relating to Him and to each other. Jesus just peeled it back and says what you really need here is you need heart surgery. You need heart surgery so that these graces will be a part of your life.

Thirdly, we've said that they're in a purposeful order. They're in a purposeful order. You can't be a peacemaker if you don't first of all start at the beginning of this list of Beatitudes and find that you're poor in spirit. To be poor in spirit is basically to find yourself in a place of total dependency on God. You just work your way down through this list and interestingly here we get to number seven and it is the call to be a peacemaker. But first we have to be poor in spirit. We have to mourn over sin. We have to have a spirit of mercy. We have to pursue righteousness. All of these things have their place.

Fourthly, they're in sharp contrast to the world. They're in sharp contrast to the thinking of the world. The world is not going to espouse the kind of things we're going to talk about this morning. The world is going to take the exact opposite tack of every one of these Beatitudes. We're living as we said from the beginning going against the flow. We're swimming upstream in a culture that doesn't value the things that we're looking at in the Beatitudes.

Let's do that. Let's look at the blessings of being a peacemaker. What's the blessing of peacemaking? Before we look at that 9<sup>th</sup> verse in detail, I want to do two things. First thing I want to do is just take a few minutes and talk about the importance

of peace, and really just simply ask how big of a deal is this to God. How big of a deal is it that we would be peacemakers and be involved in this ministry that God has called us to? Let me suggest five reasons why this is a really big deal.

The first one is because peace is a part of the very character of God. God as He reveals Himself to us in the Old and the New Testament. This is part of who He is and how He defines Himself. He calls Himself a God of peace. If we're looking for importance, then it's right here. He begins by saying He is a God of peace. The Holy Spirit says in Galatians 5 that one of the fruit of the Spirit is that of peace. Everywhere we turn we're going to see that this aligns with the character and the heart of God.

Secondly, peace is one of the blessings that God has given to us. Peace is one of the blessings that God has given to us. We need to unpack that just a little bit to say three things. One of the ways that that peace has come to us is in an objective sense. It's in a vertical relationship with God if you will. It has to do with our salvation. Paul says in Romans 5:1 – therefore having been justified by faith we have peace with God. Why is it necessary to have peace with God? Because, Paul says in Ephesians 2, we're born into this world hostile to the spiritual things, hostile to the things of God. We have no desire for any of that whatsoever. That's the condition that we're born into the world. We're really born into the world at war with God. It's called sin. When Paul says in Romans 5 now you've been justified. Now you have peace with God. He is talking about our vertical relationship with God. That's a big part of what is going to guide us through this beatitude.

The second part of that is the idea of peace within. You have the objective side. Now you have the subjective side, the peace which passes understanding that Paul talks about in Philippians 4. There is within this world a lot of reasons to be anxious and to worry. Paul says don't do that. You don't have to live that way. Rather by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace which passes understanding will guard and protect your heart by means of what Christ has done for us. So we have peace with God, we have peace of God and where do you think that goes next?

It goes right out, doesn't it? To the horizontal. Peace with others. Of course, that speaks to what we're going to look at this morning. The horizontal relationship with each other flows out of this gift that God has given to us.

Thirdly, peace is something that we're commanded to pursue. We're commanded to pursue it. Listen to this. Every one of the New Testament epistles – what Paul wrote, what Peter wrote, what James wrote, what John wrote. Every one of the epistles says something about peace and the pursuit of that peace. Many times it has to do with our relationships with each other. We'll come back and touch on that in a minute, but that's a pretty big deal when you realize that every writer of the New Testament epistles says something about the subject.

Fourthly, peace is the word that God uses to describe His covenant. When God wants to describe the covenant that He has entered into with His people, do you know what He calls it? He calls it the covenant of peace. He does that in Isaiah 54. He does it in Ezekiel 36. He talked about the covenant that He has made with His people.

Finally, it all beautifully culminates in this last point and that is to say this: peace is at the heart of Jesus's mission. Peace is at the heart of Jesus's mission. Jesus came to bring peace. We've already talked about that in terms of our relationship to God. We're justified by faith and we receive God's peace. Isaiah said when Jesus would come, He would be called the wonderful Counselor, the mighty God, everlasting Father and the Prince of peace. Jesus Himself brings all of this to a head when He reveals to us that He is the one who has come to bring peace.

Guess what? He's given to us the ministry of reconciliation. What does it mean to be a minister of reconciliation? It means to step into situations and bring God's peace into those. He has entrusted that to us just as Jesus had that as His ministry. Listen, as you read your Bible from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22, there is an understanding of the importance of peace. Get this. When you read your Bible from Genesis 3 to Revelation 20, in every one of those chapters there is an underlying sense that something is not right. There are in many of those chapters story upon story about conflict. That all came about because of sin.

Let's think then secondly about the enemy of peace. Here we have five vibrant reasons why it is that we are called to be peacemakers. We counter that and we add to

that the idea that there is an enemy of peace. I would suggest that we just follow John's list in his epistle and say first of all the world is going to be fighting against us in this matter of peace. The world's system is what we're talking about. The way the world thinks. Our world glories on some level in the idea of revenge. There is a whole genre of movies that has that as the theme. There are the bad guys that are doing bad things to good people, and at the end of the movie, revenge is exacted on them and everybody cheers. That is the way the world thinks. Revenge is the way to go. The whole world system is geared to holding onto your rights, maintaining a grudge if that's what you do and that's what makes you feel good. It mocks the idea of being a peacemaker. Understand that the world is at war, at war with God. We can see it from that vantage point. Since 1945 and the war to end all wars, there been 70 wars involving over 100 countries. In those 70 years, there has been almost a war a year and in most cases multiple conflicts going on all of the time.

What is the second enemy of peace? The second enemy of peace is right in here. It is called the flesh. It is just our fallenness. It's our human nature. If I was to turn to the New Testament outside of the Gospel of Matthew to find a passage that might help us here, where do you suppose I might go? I might go to the book of James. We're going to get that one for sure before we're done here because James gives us insight into the Sermon on the Mount. Listen to what James says about how our flesh works against being a peacemaker. He says in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter verse 13: Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his work in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere, and a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." It's an incredible chapter.

Listen to what he says in the first verse of chapter 4: What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this? That your passions are at war within you. It is the flesh. It's our own fallenness. It's our desire to have our own way. It's our desire

to make sure that things go the way that we want them to go. We're going to elaborate on that in a minute, but it's important for us to see that one of the enemies of peace resides right in here in every one of us. It's our own fallenness.

What's the last one going to be? We have the world. You have the flesh. We have the devil. That's the third. The antithesis of peacemaking is Satan himself. The devil himself. He is a warmonger. He is a destroyer. He is a divider. He has targeted you. He has targeted your family. He has targeted your marriage if you're married. He has targeted this church. He is going to target anyone or anything that attempts to stand within the righteousness of God and live in the way that God has called us to live. That's the nature of Satan. Look at Matthew 5:9. Peacemakers are called sons of God. What do you suppose troublemakers are called? Could they be called sons of the devil? Could they be called sons of Satan? Some may say that's kind of harsh. I don't know if you want to be saying something like that. Okay, I won't. but I'll let James say it. Remember what he said? This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual and demonic. If you're doing the work of a divider, if you're doing the work of sowing discord and disturbing peace, then you're on the wrong side of the deal here. You're helping out the wrong side. That is how important this is to God and how important it is Jesus.

Let's look at this 9<sup>th</sup> verse. How is it that we're going to be an ambassador of peace? Because we have been called by Jesus to step into the blessings of being a peacemaker. I want to start off by saying what I think Jesus isn't calling us to. When we talk about blessed are the peacemakers, I do not think Jesus has in mind first of all some grand plan for global disarmament. That might be a good and virtuous thing to pursue and certainly there's an application there, but remember Jesus is the one who said in our time there would be wars and rumors of wars to the end. He is the one who said He would come and make peace among the nations and He would do it as coming back as judge over all of these nations. When Jesus says blessed are the peacemakers, I believe He is speaking, as He has in every one of these Beatitudes, to how it is that we're looking at ourselves and how it is that we're relating to others. The Sermon on the Mount bears this out all the way through that His great concern is

interpersonal relationships and what's going on with our own hearts. I think first of all Jesus has that in view rather than global disarmament.

Secondly, Jesus is not talking about simply a peaceful person. Whatever comes to mind when you think of a peaceful person. You know maybe somebody who's kind of passive, quiet, unassuming. They avoid any kind of quarrel. They never argue. They're generally just an all-around good person. Jesus isn't calling us to that. There's nothing wrong with many of those qualities, but that's not the picture that Jesus is calling us to. He's definitely not calling us to be weak or wimpy or to be avoiding anything that even looks like there could be a trouble or conflict.

I don't think thirdly He's talking about just someone who yearns for peace. Someone who just aspires to it and desires it more than anything else. That's not enough. A peacemaker isn't somebody who's simply stops at the point of desire. Or maybe they just talk a good game of peace. Jesus has something else in mind.

Lastly, I surely don't think He has peace at any price in mind. Peacemaking is not appeasement. There is a peace that is too expensive. There's a peace that is too costly. Remember before World War II began when Neville Chamberlain went and met with Hitler and came back to England? He had this wonderful announcement to make that he had made peace – peace in our time. He was so sure that he had solved the world's problems by appeasement. Of course, we know the terrible story that unfolded and how radically wrong his approach was. I think that's frankly where a lot of mainline denominational churches find themselves today. They have for a decade or two. They don't want to take on the cultural issues that have come to the church and face those with the truth of God's Word because they want to maintain peace. There is a desire obviously, as we're going to see, for us to all work for that. But there is a peace that is too expensive. You cannot pursue peace at the expense of purity. You can't pursue peace at the expense of truth. There has to be a willingness at times. there are issues that arise that you have to simply say we're going to have to deal with this. We're going to have to take this on. That's why frankly God has entrusted to the elders the responsibility of church discipline. There are things that you simply cannot overlook within the body and say what works is not to deal with that because we don't want to stir

up anything. Now there are places and times where there has to be confrontation. Luther said it best: Peace if possible but the truth at any rate.

So what's a peacemaker look like? I want you to see that when Jesus says blessed are the peacemakers, there two things that a peacemaker is committed to. It seems to me first of all a peacemaker is one who works to resolve conflict biblically. He is going to work to resolve conflict in a biblical matter. In this first scenario, we already have a problem. There's a conflict that is already in place. There's an issue that has divided people. A peacemaker, as Jesus described here, is going to be one who is going to move towards that conflict. He is not going to ignore. He is not going to pretend like it's not there. He is not going to hope that it goes away. He is in fact going to move toward it. I think what Jesus talks about here is exemplified all through Scripture.

The ministry that I mentioned before in the Peacemaker ministry has a beautiful picture for us as to how this works. I'm just going to share that with you. It's called the 4 G's. Each of the G's gives us a description of what we do when there is a conflict that has already ensued. We being led by the Spirit, maybe we're a part of it; maybe we feel like God is calling us to be a help. What do we do in that case? The first G is glorify God.. What if in every conflict your underlying desire was I want to glorify God? Can you imagine how a conflict would change if the two parties involved in the conflict said as they face this conflict honestly and together, whatever else happens I'm going to seek to glorify God in everything that I do and everything that I say. Now how would that change how you approach that conflict? That would take a whole bunch of vocabulary words out of the game. That would take a whole lot of one-liners and zingers right out of the conversation. There would be a whole lot of things that if you really desire to glorify God in solving this problem that you're just not going to do and you're not going to say because your number one commitment in the midst of this conflict is first to glorify God. To act like Christ is simply what this is saying.

Secondly, get the log out of your own eye. The second thing you do is you get the log out of your own eye. We're familiar with Jesus's statement. We'll see it later on. You get the log out of your own eye, which is just simply Jesus saying to us, you're a contributor to this problem. If you're involved in this, it's very likely that there's something that you could look at within yourself as to how it is that this has come about.

Rather than focusing as Jesus says on the sliver in the other person's eye, work on that log sticking out of your own eye. He's just calling us to a time of personal introspection. He is calling us to a time of personal honesty and a realization of how we have contributed to the problem that is right there before us.

What I do with that then is I confess that sin. I prepare my heart for the third one which is to gently restore. To gently restore. Everyone responds to conflict differently. Some people run away from it. Some people run toward it with a great deal of enthusiasm. I'm not sure that's what Jesus has in mind here, but I do think He wants us to move in a spirit of gentleness toward each other. You can play this whole thing out in a hundred different ways. Some work situation where there's conflict between people. Something in your neighborhood where there's conflict between people. Something within your family where there's conflict. Conflict between husband and wife. What if in every conflict that we had as husbands and wives, children to parents, parents to children, children to each other, if the very first thought we ask the Holy Spirit to give us was God, how can I glorify You in the midst of this conflict? It would change things quite a bit. God, how is it that I have contributed to this? Show me the log in my own eye before I say something to the other person about the sliver in his eye. God, help me to be gentle as I speak to this person. Use me in this person's life in showing love and grace.

And then what you do? You go and be reconciled. You go and be reconciled. Be at peace with each other. Forgive each other. Move on. Let go of bitterness, resentment. We have peace with God. That's what He's given to us through Christ. We can have the peace of God within our own heart. It's not often there when we're in the midst of conflict because we're oftentimes are very exercised and disturbed, but God wants us to move from peace with Him to having peace within our own heart so that we can share that with each other.

So that's when there's conflict already in place. But you know what? There's something even before that, and that is we can be a peace keeper. Peacemaking might be one part of this but I think peacekeeping is another part of it. One who works secondly then to keep conflict from happening. Okay, how do we work to keep conflict from happening? Surely Jesus has in mind both of these scenarios. There are situations

in which there is conflict that is already in place. What we do? How can we be a part of the solution? Every day we have the opportunity to conduct ourselves like peacekeepers. What would that look like in our life? Let me suggest four things here too.

First of all, one who is going to keep conflict from their life is anyone who takes God at His word. Listen to the word of God. I said before that the enemy of peace is the world, the flesh and the devil. I said that in every epistle there is something said about peace. We're not going to read every epistle. But listen to what the Word of God says to us in this regard. If possible, live peaceably with all. The full statement in Romans there says: As much as it's possible with you, live at peace with everybody. To the extent that you can, then you take responsibility for this. In 2 Corinthians – live in peace with one another. 1 Thessalonians 5 – be at peace among yourselves. Romans 14 – pursue what makes for peace. Hebrews 12 – strive for peace with everyone. 1 Peter 3 – let him seek peace and pursue it. Do you see all those verbs in there? Do you see those statements that that are passive in any way? They are pursue it, strive for it, seek after it. There's an engagement here. We want this. This is something that we value. These are things that God values. You can add to that list Ephesians 4 verse 3 where Paul says work hard at maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. That's right. It's hard work to be a peacemaker. It's hard work to be a peacekeeper. There is first of all this mandate from the Word. I would encourage you as you just read your Word on a daily basis to pay attention to how many times we're called to be involved in keeping the peace or in making the peace.

Secondly, put others before yourself. Do you want to be a peacekeeper? Put others before yourself. How many conflicts would be avoided if we were just less self-absorbed, if we were just less selfish, if we were just not so about ourselves? Paul says in that wonderful statement in Philippians chapter 2 verse 3: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," he goes on to say. Here we have this wonderful statement about how it is that we're to be peacekeepers. We're going to put other people ahead of ourselves. We're not going to be self absorbed. Pride is always ready to pounce in a situation where conflict is close by. Much of the time when

there is unnecessary conflict, where there's conflict that isn't of a godly nature, it's more selfishness and looking out for one's own interests. Pride is right there at the head of it all. Here we're told to focus less on yourself, on your own rights as you see them, on your feelings, on your ego getting bruised a little bit.

Thirdly, be quick to hear and slow to speak and slow to anger. Who do you suppose said that? Our friend James again. James chapter 3. James says let everybody be quick to hear. What a good word. Be quick to hear. Be slow to speak and, as a result, be slow to anger. Proverbs 10:19 says, "When words are many, transgression is unavoidable." Usually in conflict there's a lot of words – not always, but usually a lot of words are part of conflict.

Then finally, let love cover a multitude of sin. Peter says in 1 Peter 4:8, listen to the way he starts this. I love this. Peter says: Above all, above all, above everything else, love each other deeply because love covers a multitude of sin. Now what he's talking about here can't just be taken and applied willy-nilly anywhere you want. What he's talking about is specific to interpersonal relationships and how it is that love is willing to do what we've just talked about. It's willing to put other people first. It's willing to be quick to hear and slow to speak and slow to anger. He is talking about interpersonal relationships. Let me give you a paraphrase of 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 8: Don't sweat the small stuff. If you're not going to remember it a million years into eternity, then don't worry about it. If somebody says something that rubs you the wrong way, if somebody doesn't acknowledge you and greet you the way you think you should be greeted, or if they greet you in a way that you don't like to be greeted, or if they don't seem to be paying attention to you, what does love do? Love covers a multitude of sins. You have no idea what's going on in that other person's life as to why it is that you think they may have shortchanged you in some regard. Yet that's where we so often find ourselves. Don't take yourself so seriously. Develop a little thicker skin. We need to be rhino Christians really. We need to be rhino Christians. We need to have a thick skin. We need to lighten up. We need to be a peacemaker. What happens when you're a peacemaker and a peacemaker?

Look at this last thing that Jesus says. There's the badge that is given to the peacemaker. What is that badge? Jesus says blessed are the ones who make for

peace. Blessed is the peacemaker for they're to be called sons of God. Think about that for a minute. What is in view here? We're called sons of God. I would have you note that Jesus uses the word "son" here and says we're to be called sons of God. He doesn't use the word "children" and say they'll be called children of God. He could have used that, I suppose, but He picked the word sons of God. Children generally has to do with our position within the family. We're in this privileged position of being children of God. Sonship and the idea of calling us sons of God has to do with one's character and how it is that God would see that within our life. Remember Barnabas was called son of encouragement? That was speaking about the character of Barnabas. The point of it is there is to be a family resemblance between you and God. There should be a family resemblance between you and God.

Let me tell you a funny story really quick. Our three sons to many of you look very much alike. Many of you have trouble telling them apart or knowing who is who. Ben, Andy, Mark. It so happens that Andy and Mark are both in law enforcement. Mark is OHP and Andy is with Oklahoma City. They have encounters occasionally with other law enforcement guys. In many cases, they don't necessarily know them very well. They just know their name or their face. Mark stops to assist and an Oklahoma City policeman stops to help him. This guy gets out of his car and starts to walk up to Mark. He looks at him and sees Andy in his mind. He's an Oklahoma City policeman and he knows Andy. He sees Mark standing there in an OHP outfit and he just lost what he was going to say next. He was confused and wondered if Andy had changed places of work. It took him a while to figure out that Andy had a brother. Family resemblance. That is supposed to be true of us. There is supposed to be a family resemblance between us and God to the point that as people see us, they see us as sons and daughters of God.

Now who's calling them this. They're going to be called sons of God. Who was calling them sons of God? I think this could go either way. We'll give you both. They could be called sons of God by others. As we see peacemaking going on among us, we appreciate that. We identify with that. People who see you as a peacemaker may very well think in their mind, I appreciate that person. They work at doing what Jesus has called us to do in being a peacemaker. But it's also possible, and I like this one almost a little bit better, it's also possible that we'll be called sons of God by God. We'll be called

sons of God by God. Wouldn't be cool? God Himself sees you and He sees your heart. and He sees that you're committed to being a peacemaker, stepping in to areas where there is conflict in your life and around you and you seek to bring peace instead of further disturbance. You're one who brings peace. He sees in your heart that you're a peacekeeper, that you regularly put yourself second, that you regularly lift up somebody else ahead of yourself. You go out of your way to be a peacekeeper. God as our Father looks at us and He says that's My son, that's My daughter. They're peacemakers. They're peacekeepers.

Just two chapters before this in Matthew's Gospel in the third chapter, Jesus is being baptized. What happens? The Father's voice pierces the silence and says, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." I get something of the flavor of that from Jesus saying what He does here. Knowing how God values peace, knowing that He says we need to work hard at maintaining the spirit of peace within the body life of Covenant Community Church. How thankful we are as pastors and elders that by and large that's what we have. We have a church family that strives for and works for, not perfectly because none of us are, but for peace bringing honor and glory to God. Peacemaking is all about following Jesus. It is about following Him in His person, in His work, in His message, in His manner. It is living out the gospel among each other.

What do we take away? Just two questions. What would those who know you best call you? Would they call you a peacemaker? Or would they call you a troublemaker? You only get two choices. This is one of those two word answers. As your family knows you, as your friends know you, are they more likely to associate with you, your character, your name, your behavior someone who is consistently known as being a peacemaker or a troublemaker?

Lastly, who's one person you have an unresolved conflict with and what is one step that you will take in this peacemaking process? It is very likely that in all of our lives there's somebody with whom we could do a very practical application of Jesus's words to us here this morning. Not think about it, not just aspire to it, not just desire it, not just want it, not just talk to somebody else about it. What is one very specific step that you would commit to take to move towards this conflict and trust God to resolve it? We're never more of a peacemaker than when we bring the gospel, are we? That's what Jesus

has called us to. He has called us to bring to the world this message of peace that God has given to us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our heart's desire this morning if you're here and you do not know Jesus Christ in a personal way, if you don't have a personal vital relationship with him, if you've thought that what God wants for you is to do something, to work for something, to earn your salvation, then our heart for you is that you would understand that God has provided for us already everything that we need in His Son. If you believe that what Jesus did was enough, God will forgive you of your sin. He will welcome you into His family and He'll give you the gift of eternal life.

Let's pray. Father God, we are thankful for Jesus. What an amazing life Jesus lived! What an amazing example He is to us, Father. A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, living out the gospel in the midst of a fallen world where He was persecuted, where He was hated, where He ultimately was killed. He did all of that, Father, for each one of us so that we would follow in His example of bringing peace which passes understanding to this world. Continue to bless us, I pray, at Covenant, Father, with a spirit of peace. Give us peacemakers. Give us peacekeepers. Let us exemplify what it means to be a son of God, a daughter of God in the truest sense of that word. In Jesus's name, amen.