# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“God Blesses Those Who Work For Peace”**

**Matthew 5:9**

 **February 26, 2023**

“God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.” These words spoken by Jesus form the seventh Beatitude. I invite you to turn with me to Matthew 5:1-10

One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them. “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted. God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth. God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied. God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy. God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God. God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God. God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

“God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.” The children of God are those who do the work of their heavenly Father, and one of the Father’s works is to bring about peace between us and himself. Because of our sin, we have become alienated from God to the point that the Bible calls us enemies of God. The good news is that we can be at peace with God through the One who is known as the Prince of Peace. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, stepped out from eternity and into this temporal world, bringing peace with God through himself. His death on the cross is the way by which our sins are forgiven and, having been forgiven, we now have peace with God.

Bringing peace on earth to those who by faith call God their heavenly Father, Jesus went further and both preached and lived peace between people. Just a few verses later in this fifth chapter of Matthew, Jesus tells us to love our enemies and to pray for those who persecute us. Considering the beatitude and the later teaching together, we can state that Jesus’ definition of working for peace means all the acts of love by which we try to overcome the hostility between people. In other words, to work for peace means to actively seek to resolve conflict. Following Jesus’ example, how can we work for peace?

Jesus said that when someone is in conflict with us we’re to “Go and be reconciled to that person.” Jesus is saying that we are to take the initiative. Don’t wait for others to make the first move, whether we’re the offender or the offended. Conflict will not solve itself. Another thing we can do when working for peace is to empathize with others, that is, we need to put ourselves in their place. Consider their feelings and experiences, not just our own. Thirdly, we must be careful to attack the problem, not the person. How can we bring about peace when the person we are addressing is feeling attacked by us? Lastly, remember Paul’s words from Romans 12:18, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” There are some people that are just hard to get along with. God doesn’t expect us to do the impossible, but as his children he asks us to do everything possible. Do what you can to bring about peace, attempt what is possible, and leave the consequences of the other person’s reaction to God.

This communion table represents God’s offer of peace with himself. That offer came at a terrible cost for God – it cost him the life of his Son. That we might not forget the necessity of his death on the cross for us to have peace with the Father, Jesus commanded us to remember his death by sharing together in the bread and the cup.