

Handout #1, Lesson 9:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

...the children of God are peacemakers, because nothing resists God, and surely children ought to have the likeness of their father. The Sermon on the Mount, St. Augustine, Book I chapter 2.9

The peace shown by peacemakers brings a harvest of justice. James 3:18

Peace in the context of these 3 passages is a gift of God.

- *Philippians 4:7: Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.* = peace of God.
- *Colossians 3:15: And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful.* = peace of Christ.
- *Romans 15:33: The God of peace be with all of you.* = God of peace.

But in John's Gospel when Jesus speaks of "peace" He also defines the concept of peace by linking "peace" to His mission.

- *John 14:27: Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.* = the promise of peace defined as the gift of salvation.
- *John 16:32-33: Behold, the hour is coming and has arrived when each of you will be scattered to his own home and you will leave me alone. But I am not alone, because the Father is with me. I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have troubles, but take courage, I have conquered the world.* = the peace that comes from faith in Christ.
- *John 20:19-29: On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' [...]. Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, 'Peace be with you.' [...]. Blessed are those who have not seen and believed.* This is the typical greeting again, but it takes on a message of rejoicing in the miracle of the Resurrection of the Messiah and the promise of salvation as it is given through the breath of Christ from which the Apostles receive the Holy Spirit (verse 22).

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Handout #2, Lesson 9:

Question for group discussion:

For New Covenant believers it is necessary that we die to this world and its self-centered doctrine of what constitutes happiness and that we instead live for Christ and the blessedness that comes from being a child of God: *See what love the Father has bestowed on us that we may be called the children of God. Yet so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure* (1 John 3:1-3). When as a child of God, the Christian dies to self and lives for Christ, he is elevated to the position of Christ's Apostle of peace and love.

Question: Why is one of Jesus' titles the "Prince of Peace?" By "peace" Jesus doesn't mean "absence of conflict" (see Mat 10:34-36; Lk 12:51-53). With Christ there is no middle ground; either He is "the Gate" and "the Way" (Jn 10:7-10; 14:6-7) or you reject Him and choose your own way. What kind of peace was Jesus referring to in His homily at the Last Supper in Jn 14:27 and 16:33? What was Jesus' greeting to the disciples after His Resurrection? See Lk 24:36; Jn 20:19, 21, 26. What kind of peace was Paul speaking of in Phil 4:6-7?

Question: Mercy is one of the fruits of charity and so is peace (CCC# 1829). Peace is also listed as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (CCC# 736; 1832), and peace is a precious gift from God (CCC# 1424; 1468). What is the Christian's obligation as peacemaker in a troubled world? Read what the Catechism says about safeguarding peace in CCC# 2302-2306.

Question: After discussing our obligations as Christ's ambassadors of love and peace, discuss some strategies we can employ in our families, in our communities, in our nation, and in the world to fulfill our role as peacemakers. How do you practice internal peace? How do you express your peace externally? What are some strategies that promote internal peace?