

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, July 8, 2017

Peacemaking is not peacekeeping. As a young boy, I was intrigued with “The Gun That Won the West” – Colt Manufacturing Company’s Colt .45 Peacemaker. This single-action revolver with a revolving cylinder holding six metallic cartridges was the official weapon issued to the US Cavalry from 1872 to 1892. It was also popular with ranchers, lawmen and outlaws alike and we’ve all seen replicas of this weapon in Western cinematography. The revolver was so named because it did help create peace as US Marshals roamed the Old West tracking down outlaws and others who took the law into their own hands. There’s your example of peacemaking and it still exists today with those entrusted to enforce law throughout the world. I believe peacemaking is best explained in the Bible.

In Matthew 5:9, Jesus tells us *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”* Peacemaking requires positive action. It is not pacifism, the avoidance of conflict. It is not appealing or accommodating the inappropriate actions of others. It is not condoning social acceptance of what we know is not pleasing to God. Peacemaking requires actively seeking God’s will and desire to increase His Kingdom and sharing the “Good News” of His Son’s death, burial and resurrection. Peace is elusive and I believe it cannot be gained in this world without a right relationship with our Heavenly Father.

You may be quite happy in your present lifestyle, but that is not true peace. If you are anxious about things in life that tells me that you do not have God’s peace. In Philippians 4:6-7 Paul instructs us *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.”* So there we have it. Our hearts and minds will be guarded by the Holy Spirit, if we simply submit to His will and trust Him to watch over all aspects of our lives. Proper prayer is an integral ingredient in experiencing the peace of God.

In Numbers 6:24-26, the Lord instructed Moses to tell Aaron and his sons how He wanted them to ask a blessing upon the Israelites. Here’s that Aaronic blessing as it was given by God. *‘The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.’* This well-known blessing is still used today in many churches and synagogues. What it conveys is that our Heavenly Father wants us to know Him, understand His grace and discover His wonderful peace while we are in this world. Peace is available to all today, yet most people will not accept God's terms to receive it!

As followers of Christ, we are instructed in how we must live. In Colossians 4:5-6 Paul conveys *“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders, make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”* And in Hebrews 12:14, the writer instructs us to *“Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”* Our Lord wants none to perish, but many are destined for Hell if they don’t accept Christ as Savior and Lord. We must strive for the peace of God and do our part to share it with those who have not yet experienced its wonderful power.

Passages to Ponder: Psalm 34:11-16; John 14:27-29; John 16:33; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Colossians 1:19-20

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Psalm 34:11-16 New International Version (NIV)

¹¹ Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
¹² Whoever of you loves life
and desires to see many good days,
¹³ keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from telling lies.
¹⁴ Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.
¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are attentive to their cry;
¹⁶ but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil,
to blot out their name from the earth.

John 14:27-29 New International Version (NIV)

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.
²⁸ "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. ²⁹ I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe.

John 16:33 New International Version (NIV)

³³ "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

2 Corinthians 13:11 New International Version (NIV)

Final Greetings

¹¹ Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Colossians 1:19-20 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.