



Beatitudes for the Workplace - #7

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

The Beatitudes (Mt 5: 1-12) are Jesus' promises to bless us, often beyond our imagination. The scope of his promises includes our work, where we spend most of our time and energies. Following is an explanation of *peacemakers* for our work.

Explanation:

1) *Blessed* is what Jesus does. He gives; we gratefully receive. Blessing helps us experience life's purpose, which is to *be with God*. God's will always is to help us experience life as it can be with God – not as anyone or anything imposes.

God blesses us primarily by changing our hearts, minds and souls. We come fully alive, living our from the inside, out – not the other way round, subject to the whims of other people, institutions or things. Though the world may not change, we change, and so does the world's ability to affect us. Luke's Christmas story (2:8-20) about the shepherds illustrates the point. Their world did not change; they did, and they were overwhelmed with joy.

2) *Peacemakers* 'Peace' is more than the absence of conflict. Peace is God's gift to us. God invites us to receive and share it with all people. Peace is love (caring for, and serving everyone) and justice (defending people with God's values and actions). Those who receive and apply this gift are God's *peacemakers*.

Our model for peacemaking is Jesus. He was centered in right-relationship (love, trust, obedience) with God, proclaiming God's love in words and actions. He advocated for the wellbeing of all people, often ministering with those whom others rejected. He defended everyone as being special and loved. He sacrificed his life for loving, serving and defending them.

3) *Children of God* So valued are peacemakers by God, they are called *children of God*. The meaning of *children* is time and culture-specific to the Roman Empire. It means: we are God's *adopted* children.

Adoption was the highest honor that could be given to a child. Adopted children were chosen by gender, age, nationality, or whatever other value a parent held. Because adopted children were chosen, they were valued more than one's own children. In law, they had first claim on the family's estate. So, *children of God* is a measure of how much God values *peacemakers*.

So What?

To be a *peacemaker* in a workplace is a God-given gift and responsibility. We might want to ask God in prayer if we have, or desire, this gift. If we have it, how does God want to help us realize it? Let us ask God about that, also, always expecting God to answer.

God's gift of peacemaking is specific to each person and situation. But, common to everyone is God's invitation to proclaim God's values by word and example. For example, how do we treat people – especially those who lack influence, opportunity, or both? How do we respond to those who cry out for help? Do we recognize (and respond to) those who may be too broken or intimidated to speak?

How willing are we to help all other people according to God's values of "love the poor, serve the poor, and defend the poor?"

Empathy helps us develop *peacemaking*. No doubt, all of us can recall at least one horror story where we were treated abominably by an individual, department, or organization. It hurts. It makes us mad, and leaves us frustrated.

Hopefully, we can also recall at least one instance where we were treated exceptionally well. We were valued, felt special, and enjoyed the experience. Whoever did that should be given a medal!

Allowing ourselves to go through that exercise helps us develop empathy for those who are treated poorly, and those who are treated well. Empathy helps us recognize what values were present: God's or evil's. Then, encouraged by Christ's Beatitude, and nurtured by God's values, we can BE and DO as *peacemakers*, and *children of God*.

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