

## PACIFISM

*By Allon Maxwell*

Jesus clearly identified true children of God as people who choose to love enemies and do good to them, praying for persecutors and blessing them instead of hating and cursing them. ([Matthew 5:43-44](#), [Luke 6:27](#) and [Luke 6:35](#))

*"Blessed are the peacemakers"*, He said in [Matthew 5:9](#).

It is an essential, non-negotiable part of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, as Jesus preached it, that it is the peacemakers ..... NOT the war makers ..... who belong to the eternal family of God.

Personally, I do find that to be GOOD NEWS.

I do not believe that I would find it at all pleasant to spend eternity in the company of those who were still war makers at heart and who had never learned, instead, to commit their cause to God.

It was at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, that Jesus called for obedience to his teaching about the way of life that pleases God, as a condition of acceptance for entry to the Kingdom of Heaven. ([Matthew 7:21-23](#))

Jesus said that those who hear His words and do them, build a house which will stand for ever.

Those who presume to call him Lord without obeying, are building a house on sinking sand. ([Matthew 7:24-27](#) and [Luke 6:46](#)).

In another place He said that those who do not obey, do not love either Him or His Father, at all. ([John 14:24](#)).

The Apostle John said it even more bluntly when he wrote that those who claim to know Jesus while disobeying, are LIARS, devoid of the truth. ([1 John 2:4](#))

If we take Jesus, literally, at his word, true faith in that word leads us to the conclusion that obedience to his GOSPEL OF PEACE is the only way to God. No man comes to the Father except by Jesus. ([John 14:6](#))

The Sermon on the Mount is all about finding God through His Son.

If we listen honestly to Jesus, receive His teaching, surrender to him as Lord of all life, are born again to new life in the Spirit of God, and begin to obey with all our heart ..... it is inescapable (at least to me) that to become a peacemaker in any real sense of the word, is also to become a pacifist.

This is part of the repentance to which Jesus calls us.

This is part of the new nature which we must put on as we are created after the likeness of God, in TRUE righteousness and holiness. ([Ephesians 4:20-24](#))

No man can truthfully claim to be a peacemaker and, at the same time, continue to make war, justifying it in himself and condoning it in others. No man in this position can possibly be doing what Jesus meant when He called **all men** to make peace with God and each other.

If we take Jesus at his word (and I do), only the mind of a carnal man, not yet reborn as a child of God, could reach any other conclusion.

Of course, the cost of such radical obedience is potentially very high.

Jesus warned us of this cost when he said that following him could result in loss of family, friends, houses, lands, possessions and even life itself.

To obey the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, literally, as he meant us to, can lead to exactly that.

That is why he said that we could not be his disciples, without first counting the cost and renouncing all that we have. ([Luke 14:33](#))

It is not unlikely that we will be hit the second time, when we turn the other cheek!

It is implicit in what Jesus says that we CAN expect to suffer loss or be defrauded, when we refuse to defend ourselves, our loved ones, or our rights to reputation, possessions or freedoms. But it is, without question, our calling to leave all redress in the hands of our God. ([Romans 12:14-21](#)).

Has he not promised that if we do make obedience to Kingdom righteousness our first priority, that he will continue to provide our needs? ([Matthew 6:33](#))

Has he not also promised that if we do suffer loss for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven, we shall receive much, much more in this life, and that in the Age to Come, we shall also receive eternal life?

These promises are indeed as much a part of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God as anything else that Jesus said. Our problem is that few of us dare to believe them enough to commit our safety and our possessions into God's hands instead of our own.

It is imperative that we ask ourselves some hard questions about what it really means to be peacemakers. It is even more imperative that we accept the hard answers to these questions, if it is really true that our whole aim in life is to become children of the living God.

How is it possible to do good, resist not evil, and yet be ready to strike back at the aggressor?

How is it possible to shoot at the enemy, or drop bombs on him, or threaten him with all the other horrors of warfare, when our REAL calling is to pray for him and bless him?

How is it possible for us to delude ourselves that praying for the defeat of our enemies, is what Jesus meant by "blessing"? Is not such a prayer really a curse ..... instead of the blessing to which our calling commits us?

How is it possible for two Christians in opposing armies, to shoot at each other, instead of laying down their weapons to pray together and be reconciled?

How could two Christians who do shoot at each other, convince the world that they love one another with that divine love which Jesus says is THE mark of his disciples.

([John 13:35](#))

How is it possible for a Christian to make war against any man, friend or foe, for whom Christ died and for whom he also has taken up his cross with Jesus?

How is it possible for a Christian to make a career in a military organisation, which trains its servants in the best methods to hate and maim and kill?

How is it possible for a Christian to swear an oath to obey orders which require him to commit these sins?

How can such "Christians" ever give meaning to the self-sacrificing love which took Jesus to the cross?

How can we ever claim to carry a cross with Jesus, if our own love falls short at the point where safety IN THIS LIFE is threatened?

Certainly, if the example of Jesus means anything at all, we have not attempted to live at peace with all men, so far as it lies with us, ([Romans 12:18](#)), until we have determined that we will go all the way to preserve peace ..... even to an undeserved death ..... even to an unjust crucifixion!

Nothing less can adequately demonstrate the love that cannot be quenched by even the worst evil devised by carnal men.

### **TO THIS WE ARE CALLED! ([1 Peter 2:21](#))**

It is simply not possible that any part of this high calling can fit into the framework of military service, or its support industries, in any way.

Repentance, Jesus said, is the way to prepare ourselves for the Kingdom of God. The Sermon on the Mount defines clearly the standard by which real repentance is measured.

Repentance encompasses turning away from every sin, every way in which we have been a party to evil, every action and every thought in which we have hated our brother.

To be real and complete it must not fall short of a total willingness to agree with Jesus about loving our enemies.

Purity of heart and peace making must replace lust and covetousness and war making, at all levels of thought and action.

The truly repentant heart will confess its failures and seek forgiveness for all that has grieved God. This will certainly include godly sorrow for all past involvement in war making or preparation for war making. These things can have no place, ever again, in our lives.

This is pacifism. This is peace making. This is the inevitable consequence of becoming a true child of God.

It is prophesied that in the Age to Come, the nations will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. They will never again learn to make war. ([Isaiah 2:4](#))

They will learn this from their rulers, those followers of Jesus who have already, in this life, put on the new nature in which peace making is a fundamental eternal quality.

There will be no place in that age for any aspiring ruler who has rejected the Lordship of Jesus in this, or any other aspect of his teaching about the life of the Kingdom.

Some people want to class this teaching about pacifism, as non-essential and contentious. Others become verbally violent in opposing it!

My own position is that it is totally essential. It is a matter of salvation.

For me, it is simply not possible that the same Christ who taught the Sermon on the Mount, could now change that teaching to tell some disciples that they must be peace makers, others that they may (or must!) be war makers, and still others that it does not matter either way! That is confusion.

I will not make war with you about Pacifism!

If you disagree with me, then so far as it depends on me, I will live at peace with you.

However, peace can never mean either compromise or silence.

I may not achieve peace by pretending that it does not matter.

I may not keep silent about something which I believe affects the eternal welfare of those who seek the Kingdom of God.

For conscience' sake, I will insist that Pacifism is essential Christian doctrine, and I will continue to warn those who will hear the words of Jesus, that it is the PEACEMAKERS who are called the children of God.