

2023-02-17: Be a Peacemaker

Objective

- If we are true Christians, we must behave as Christians
- An evil person must not shake the inner peace, and we must not resist them
- Let us not shake anyone else's inner peace

Key Verse

"But I tell you not to resist an evil person..." (Matthew 5:39)

Body

Peace

- What is peace?
 - The world defines peace as quiet, tranquility
 - Psychology also defines peace as ease, tranquility, awareness, peace of the unchanged
 - In both cases, peace seems to come about in certain places, times, conditions.
 - In both cases, peace is something that is internal or mystical in the mind
 - External peace is simply when there is no war or fighting
 - Is this definition in line with the Christian understanding of peace?
- What is peace to Christians?
 - Peace is knowing that God is in control... even if I am surrounded by anger and fighting and conflict, I can have inner peace. Conversely, there may be no war or fighting, but internally I am really struggling with hateful thoughts, anger, etc.
- What about Peacemakers?
 - The Lord is the source of all peace
 - "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27)
 - The Lord Jesus Christ was a peacemaker on earth, and we as Christians, likewise, should be peacemakers
 - "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God." (James 1:19-20)

- There is a special blessing for peacemakers
 - "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called sons of God." (Matthew 5:9)
- Inner peace begets external peace
 - A peacemaker is someone who has inner peace and it can shine from him and manifest as external peace
 - "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify Your Father in heaven."
- When might I lose my peace?
 - In Rebellion: "He's trying to control me, so let me show him that he's not in control."
 - Testing Boundaries: "Let me see how far I can go and how much I can bother him before he snaps."
 - Vengeance: "He wronged me, so I need to hit back at the same level or harder."
- With whom might I lose my peace?
 - With my enemies
 - With my parents
 - With my friends
 - Even with myself

Peacemaking & Troublemaking

- Two categories of peacemaking
 1. Peacemaking when you are provoked ("Do not resist an evil person")
 2. Peacemaking when you are not provoked ("Don't be a troublemaker")
- Peacemaking is a show of my love to God

Peacemaking

- Do not resist an evil person
 - "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away." (Matthew 5:38-42)
 - Imagine if you are being robbed by someone and they say "give me your wallet" and you respond with: "take my wallet and my phone too" - this is the principle that the Lord is teaching. This is the Christian life.
 - Do not resist an evil person - Christ did not resist the evil people who crucified Him. Joseph the righteous did not resist the evil brothers who sold him. Able did not resist Cain.
 - Some people went to St Anthony once and asked him for a spiritual word of benefit. And he told them "You read the Scriptures, and they will give you all the words you need." So they said "please, something from your mouth our father." So he recited to them this verse: "Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also." And they said "we cannot do that" so he said "if you can't turn the other

cheek, then patiently endure the first blow.” and they said: “We can’t do that.” So he said “if you can’t do that, then do not return the blow you received” and they said “we can’t do that.” So he said “If you can’t do that and you won’t do this, then what can I do for you? You need prayers.” (Sayings of the Desert Fathers - Anthony 19)

- It is a difficult principal to put into action in our lives today... but unfortunately, we do even worse than those young men who went to see St Anthony. Nowadays, we don’t even treat our NEIGHBOR or our FRIEND or the person WHO LOVES US, in the right way... let alone our enemies.
 - Imagine if the servant of your class, who loves you, who cares for your salvation, comes to you and says ‘you’re using your phone too much. Give it here.’ – what is your response?
 - Ignore him and rebel
 - Get upset and start yelling
 - Accuse the servant of whatever “being unfair” – “picking on me” – whatever.
 - So we make someone who is not our enemy into our enemy, and then treat him in a way that is non-Christian.
 - No my beloved, let it not be this way. But rather, let us learn the Christian response and make good habits.
- Here will be an impromptu skit.
 - Kirollous will start to talk to Gabriel
 - Morcous: "Kiro"
 - Kiro keeps talking and ignores Morcous
 - Morcous (2 more times): "Kiro"
 - Morcous: KIRO
 - Kiro: What dude calm down
 - Morcous: Can you stop talking to Gabriel?
 - Kiro: I'm not even talking
 - Morcous: Yeah but you were
 - Kiro: Everyone else was talking
 - Morcous: Okay so are you gonna stop?
 - Kiro: We'll see
 -

Let’s have a round of applause for Kiro on his acting skills.
- Now I want to analyze what happened here?
 - When Kiro ignored me, I started to get angry – this is not good on my part, but if Kiro was a peacemaker and used the technique that I will teach you in a second, it wouldn’t have happened
 - When Kiro finally answered, he told me to calm down which I took as an accusation
 - Then Kiro didn’t take responsibility for his action when he said “I wasn’t talking” and he tried to reflect it on everyone else
 - Then when I asked Kiro for a resolution, he didn’t give me one. Just “we’ll see”
- Do you recognize this conversation? It happens a lot in this class, in Bible Study, in Liturgy, in the Bathroom, etc.

- So today I will teach you a technique to overcome all of these pitfalls and it is called "Yes" - "Okay" - "I have sinned" (na3am 7ader a5tet)
 - HG Anba Peter was telling us one time that one of the things they teach in the monastery is called “na3am – 7ader – a5tet.” They would tell the new novices that you can answer any conversation with “yes?” – “okay” – “I have sinned”
 - Someone calls you over? “Yes?”
 - Someone asks you to do something? “Sure!”
 - Someone rebukes you? “I have sinned”
 - Here will be another impromptu skit.
 - Andria will take out his phone and start using it
 - Morcou: Andria!
 - Andria: Yes?
 - Morcou: Can you put your phone away please?
 - Andria: Okay, I will
 - Morcou: How can you pay attention when you’re always on your phone?
 - Andria: I have sinned, forgive me
 - Let’s have a round of applause for Andria on his acting skills.
 - Now I want to analyze what happened here?
 - In this scenario, Andria used our new technique, and it made peace – even though I was acting as a character who didn’t want peace.
 - I was gonna go at Andria even after he put his phone away. But with those simple words “I have sinned, forgive me” he shut down anything I could have said or done.
 - There is power in the words “I have sinned, forgive me.”
 - With these three words, you can save yourself a lot of trouble

Troublemaking

- The Opposite of a Peacemaker is a Troublemaker
- No one likes to be called a troublemaker because typically, we are not setting out to make trouble!
 - I'm not using my phone in Sunday School to make trouble, I'm just checking the message I just got
 - I'm not sleeping during the Sermon in the Liturgy to make trouble, I'm just tired
 - I'm not going to the bathroom during the Liturgy to make trouble, I'm just bored and I want to take a walk
 - I'm not skipping my homework or my Passport to make trouble, I just forgot
- I may find myself having a reputation for being a troublemaker... at home, at school, at church.
- I may find that I have a reputation as a troublemaker in just one of those places... at church, at home, at school.
- Why is this?
 - Sometimes, troublemaking is used as an outlet for our inner emotions and inner feelings
- So how do I overcome it? Inner Peace that we talked about

- One who finds himself living a life of prayer, will not at the same time find himself bored in the Liturgy
- One who finds himself regularly reading the Word of God, will not at the same time find himself speaking the language of the world
- One who finds himself submitting himself to the Lord in repentance and confession, will not at the same time find himself resisting his elders (parents, servants, priests)
- One who finds himself regularly bringing his body into subjection through fasting and prostrations, will not at the same time find himself falling into the sins of the flesh

Peacemaking is a Show of my Love to God

- St Basil has a writing called "The Morals" where he lists out 80 Morals one by one and then supports them with verses from Scripture and expounds each of the verses
- **Rule #5:** "That we must be free from all enmity toward all men and love our enemies; and, when necessity requires, lay down our life for our friends with a love like that which God and His Christ had for us."
 - Cap 1: That the mark of the disciples of Christ is their love for one another in Him
 - Cap 2: That to wrong one's neighbor in any way or to cause him such disedification that his faith is destroyed is a sure sign that one does not possess the love of Christ for one's neighbor, even if what is done is allowed by the Scripture for a special reason.
 - Cap 3: That the Christian must serve even one who is vexed with him, in every way, at least so far as he is able.
 - Cap 4: That he who has the charity of Christ sometimes causes pain, even to one whom he loves, for his good.

Application

- "Yes?" - "Okay" - "I have sinned"

Contemplation

Resources

- St George and St Rueiss Curriculum G10
- The Sayings of the Desert Fathers
- St Basil - Ascetical Works

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