

The Blessed Life
Peacemakers
Matthew 5:9

Are You A Peace Maker?

Are You Merciful?



President Clinton with Yitzhak Rabin (Israel) and Yasser Arafat (PLO). 1993 Oslo Accords

Hailed for creating peace in the middle east.

How many “cease-fire” agreements and peace agreement have been made in the middle east in your life time? >20 (1948)

Has there ever been peace?



- Perhaps this is one of the reasons many of struggle with the proclamation of the angels when Jesus was born: “and on earth peace among men” (Luke 2:14, NASV).
- Yet it is painfully clear that in the couple of thousand of years since then, there has been practically continuous conflicts between men and nations.



- There are at least two explanations:
 - 1) what the angels predicted and what Jesus came failed miserably; or
 - 2) we've completely misunderstood the meaning.
 - I tend to believe it's the latter.

Blessed are the
peacemakers:
for they shall be
called sons of
God.



Peacemakers

"blessed"

> Happy

= Approved by God



Much deeper meaning: approved by God and therefore favored by God; we are to be congratulated. Applause of heaven (Lucado)

Blessed are the
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peacemaker



peace = harmony

not absence of conflict

Symphony (or two musical instruments) making music together, working to make something beautiful.



Sometimes, even in the best of relationships, there is conflict.

Marriage, family, church



But even if there is not outright fighting, or anger, there is not necessarily peace.

Resentments, grudges, silence.

Though no obvious conflict, there is no harmony.



There is peace, harmony, in the relationship when the two are united in purpose and focus and work.

For disciples this is always going to be founded in our relationship with Jesus.



The Example of Christ



Prince of peace

Isaiah 9.6

Isaiah 9:6: For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace**.

The coming of the Messiah is about peace, and His kingdom is about peace (Romans 14:17).

But to get the full significance of this peace and what Jesus did for us, we need to understand the reason there is not peace in our relationship with God.



- Of course, in a sense the problem goes all the way back to the beginning in the garden, when Eve and Adam disobeyed Jehovah in eating of the fruit.
- That rebellion, vividly demonstrated by Adam and Eve trying to hide from God, shows the enmity that exists between man and God when we choose to sin.



Prince of peace

Isaiah 9.6

- Paul reminds us that each of us has sinned (Romans 3:23), and so describes us as enemies of God (Romans 5:10).
- My own choice to sin has made me an enemy of my Father.
- It's no wonder that Paul describes our salvation as a reconciliation (Romans 5:10, 11).



And he came and preached **peace** to you who were far off and **peace** to those who were near.

Ephesians 2:17

Ephesians 2:13–18: But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been **brought near** by the blood of Christ. 14 For **he himself is our peace**, who has **made us both one** and has **broken down** in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by **abolishing** the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might **create** in himself one new man in place of the two, so **making peace**, 16 and might **reconcile** us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby **killing** the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have **access** in one Spirit to the Father.



And he came and preached **peace** to you who were far off and **peace** to those who were near.

Ephesians 2:17

14 For **he himself is our peace**

- Himself: not just what He does, but WHO HE IS (prince of peace)
- It doesn't matter who our ancestors were, or how they separated themselves with borders and races and languages and all the other ways that we find to separate.
- He preached peace far and near because we all have sinned, each of us has sinned, and need to be reconciled.



And he came and preached **peace** to you who were far off and **peace** to those who were near.

Ephesians 2:17

16: thereby **killing** the hostility

- He didn't just take away the hostility, He killed it.
- The hostility between me and God is dead.
- And so the hostility between me and my brother in Christ is dead.
- And together we work toward the expansion of his kingdom of peace.



And he came and preached **peace** to you who were far off and **peace** to those who were near.

Ephesians 2:17

- Jesus is the ultimate peace MAKER.
- Look at the terms Paul uses: “brought near”; “made us”; “broken down”; “abolishing”; “create”; “reconcile”; “killing”.
- What was bad between man and God, He obliterated.
- What was lacking between God and man, He created.
- He put himself between God and man and did what was necessary, sacrificing himself, so that there would be peace.



And he came and preached **peace** to you who were far off and **peace** to those who were near.

Ephesians 2:17

- He proclaimed the peace to all.
- We must understand the incredible cost, the immeasurable love, and the staggering effort Jesus gave in making peace between God and me.
- It was never a simple thing.



And he came and preached **peace** to you who were far off and **peace** to those who were near.

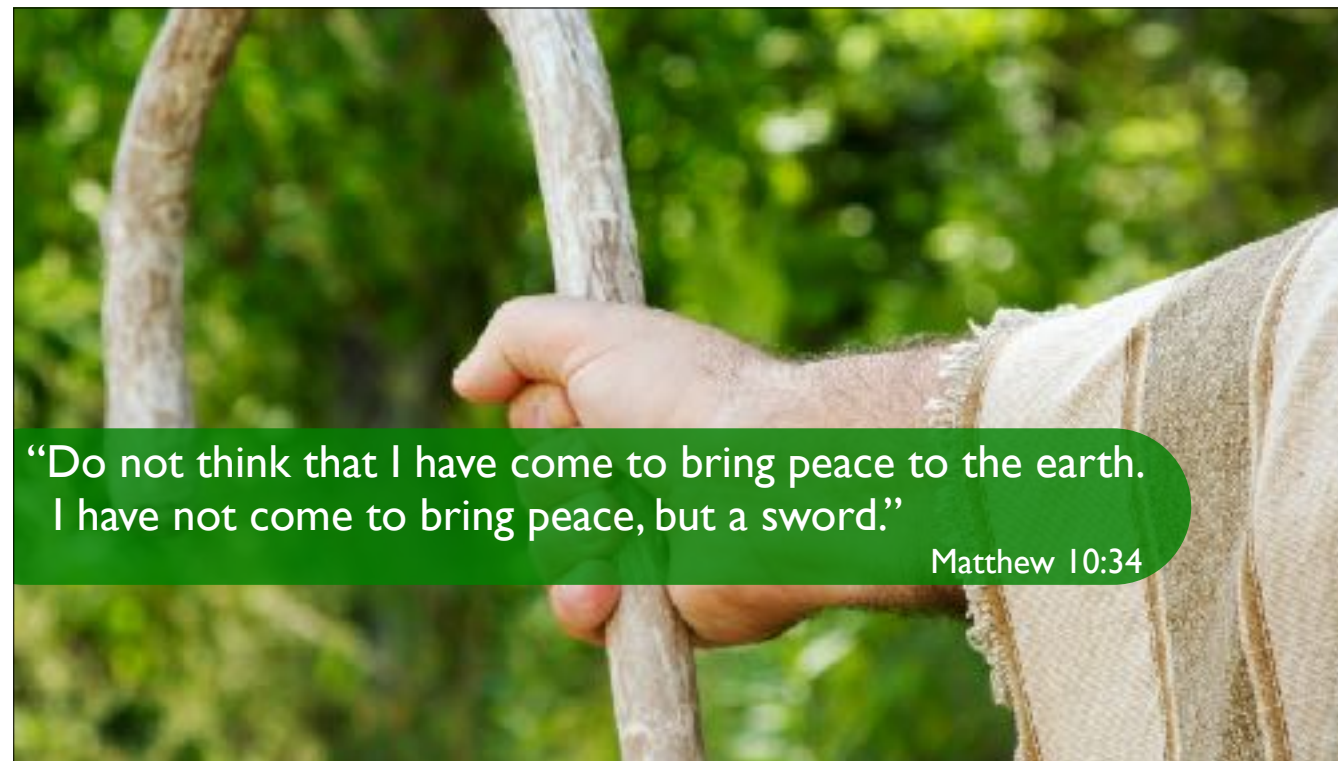
Ephesians 2:17

- “Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).
- Having done so much to make peace, our savior desires that we respond in faith to the one who died to make peace possible.
- And like Abraham we are justified by faith and have peace with God.

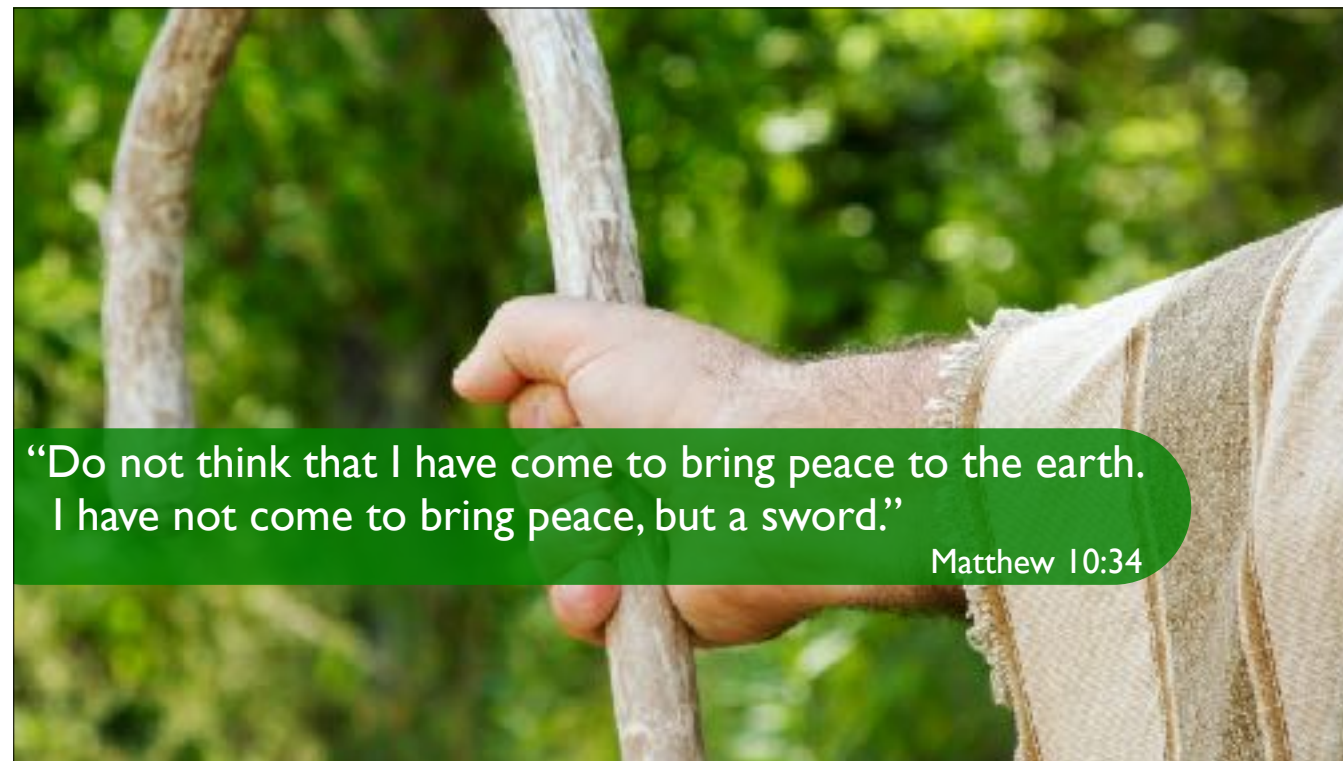


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Ephesians 2:17

- Amazed at the example of Jesus as peace maker?
- And this is what He desires that I be.
- That I be like him to make peace in this world.
- Of course, I cannot do what he did.
- But He has set a very high standard for me to achieve.



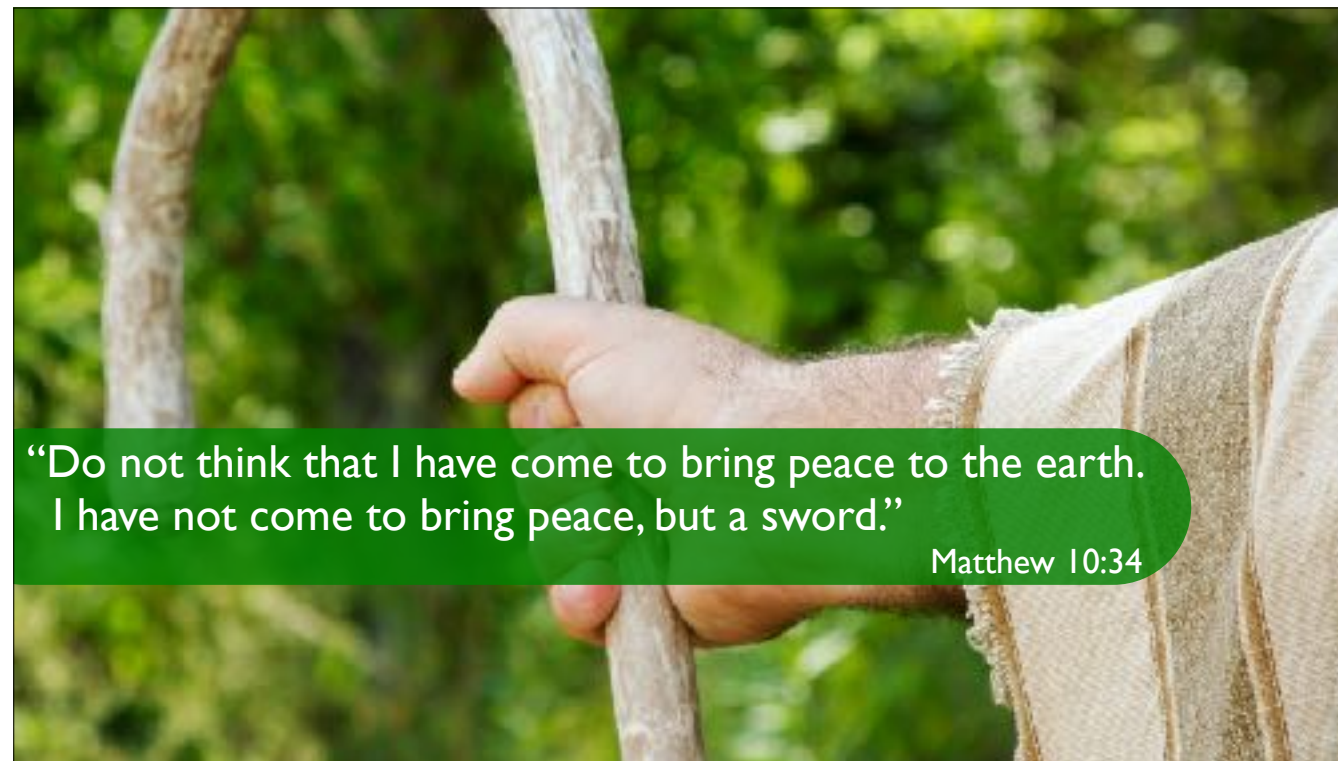
Matthew 10:34–39: “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.



“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth.
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Matthew 10:34

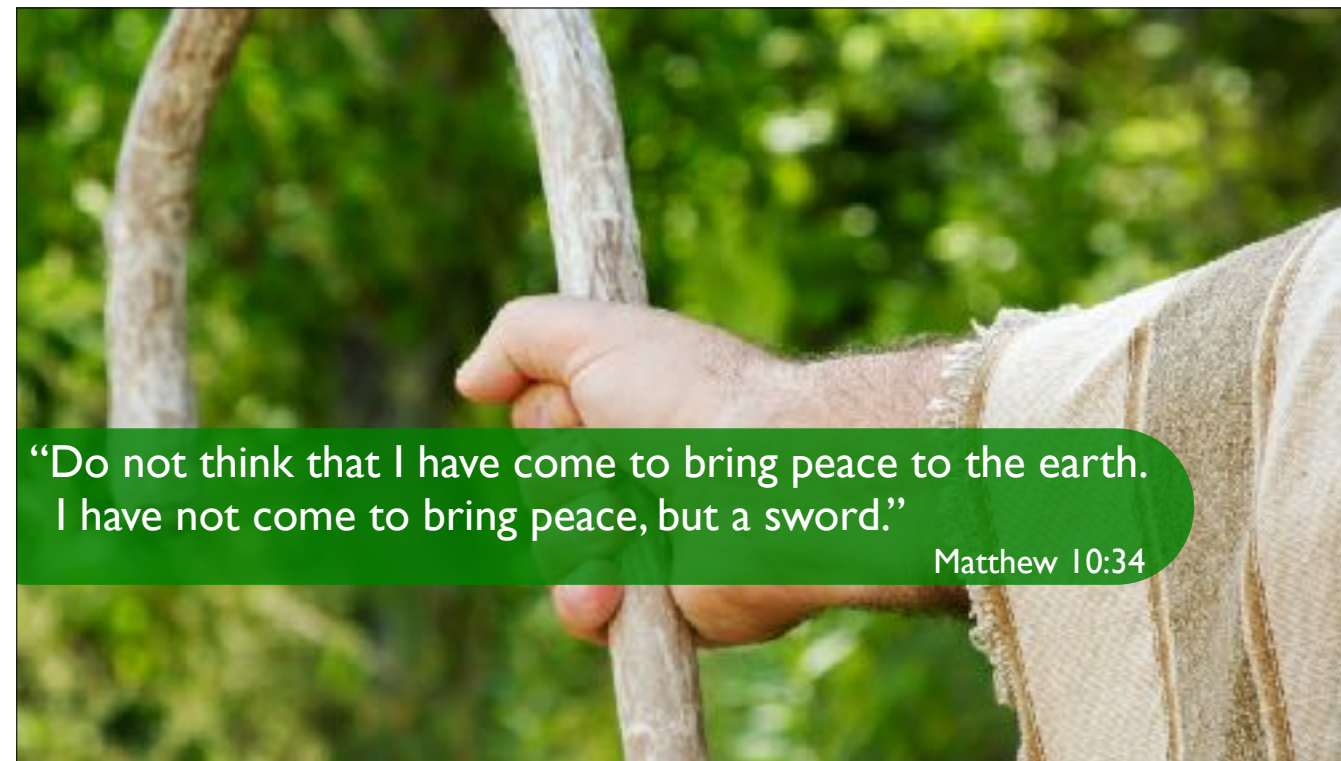
- This is one of those passages that is just vital to consider in it's context.
- Jesus' instruction to the twelve as they go out to teach is full of warnings of the difficulties they will face.



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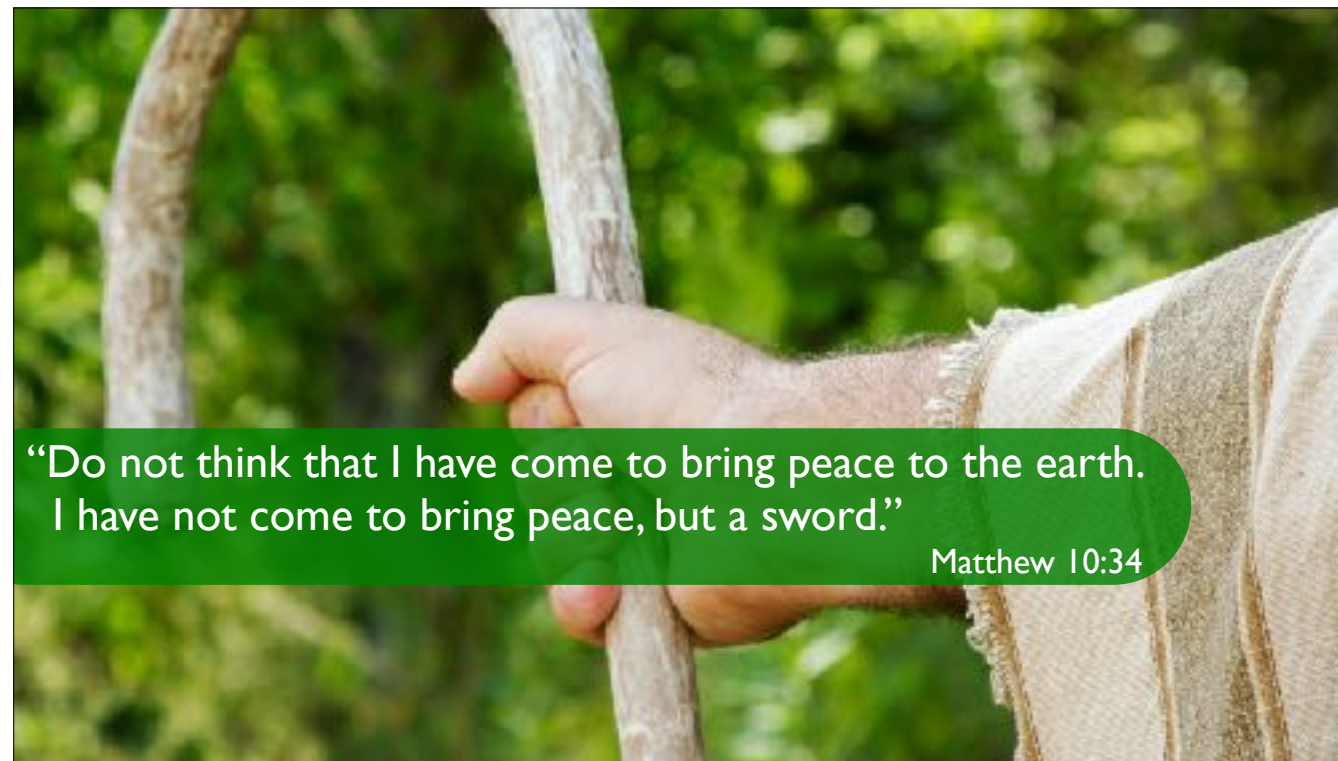
- Some households would not receive them, and being unworthy they were to “let your peace return to you”.
- They were to shake the dust off their feet if a house or town didn’t receive them.
- And those who did such would face judgment worse than Sodom and Gomorrah.



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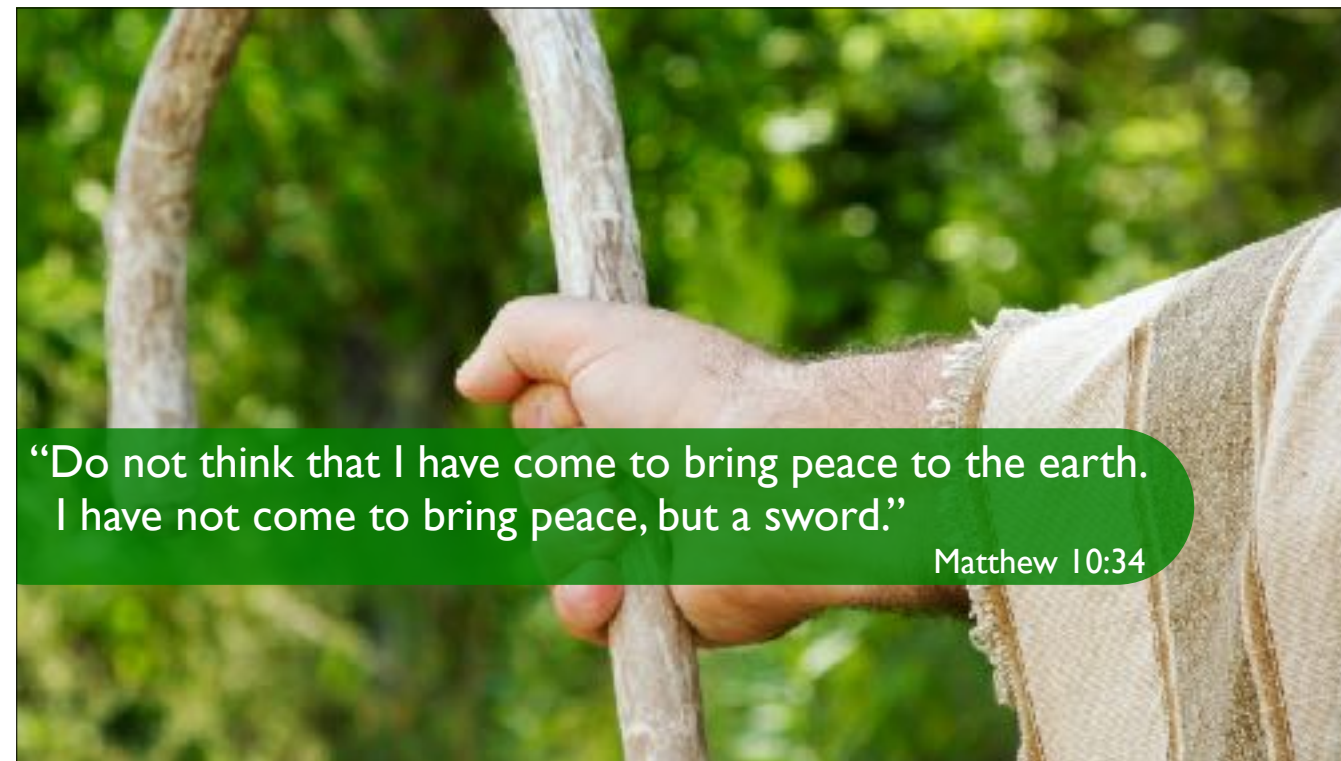
- Jesus warned them that they would be sheep in the midst of wolves; they would be delivered over to courts and flogged in synagogues and dragged before governors.
- Familial betrayals would be fatal and the disciples would be hated and persecuted and maligned.
- Clearly going out to proclaim the good news of Jesus to Israel was not going to be accepted by everyone.



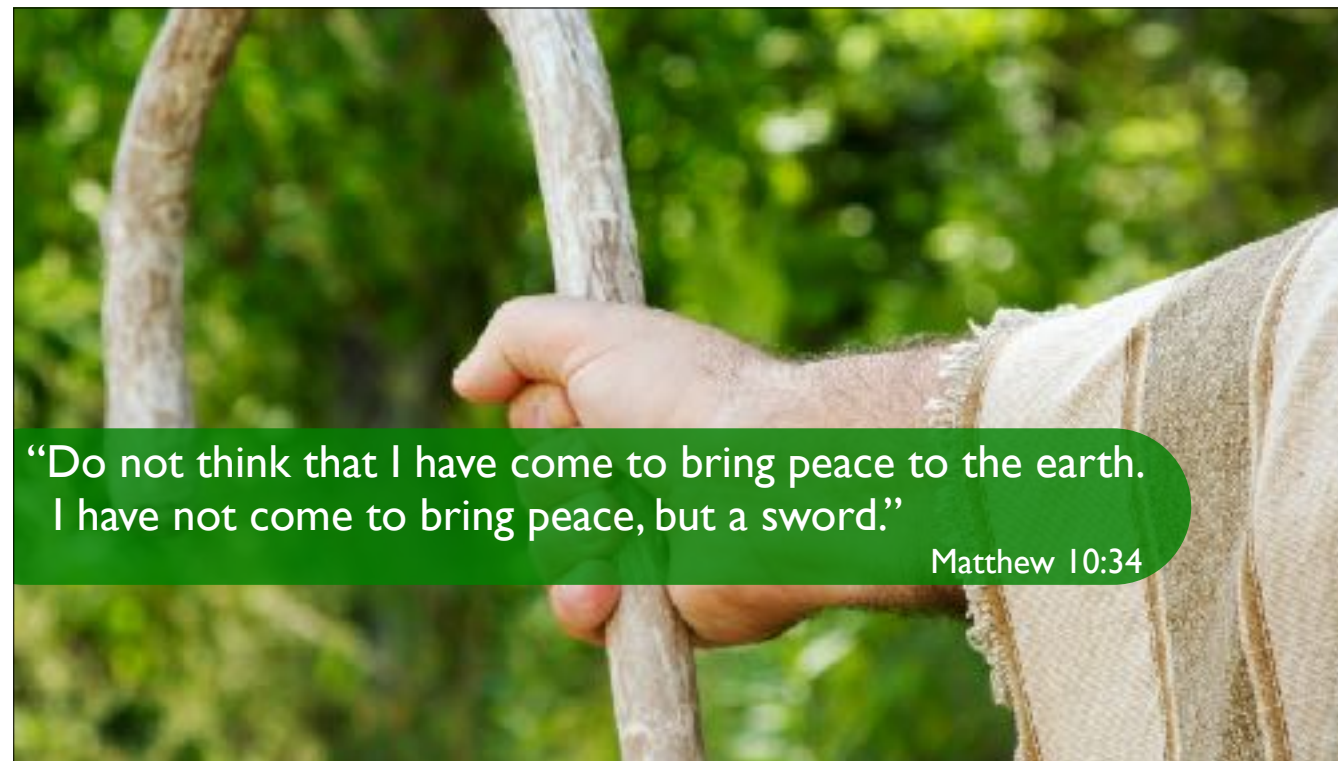
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- The message of Truth would bring out the worst in those who are evil.
- Jesus’ teaching of the truth, including reconciliation with God, is a sword that divides those who seek righteousness and those who seek ungodliness.



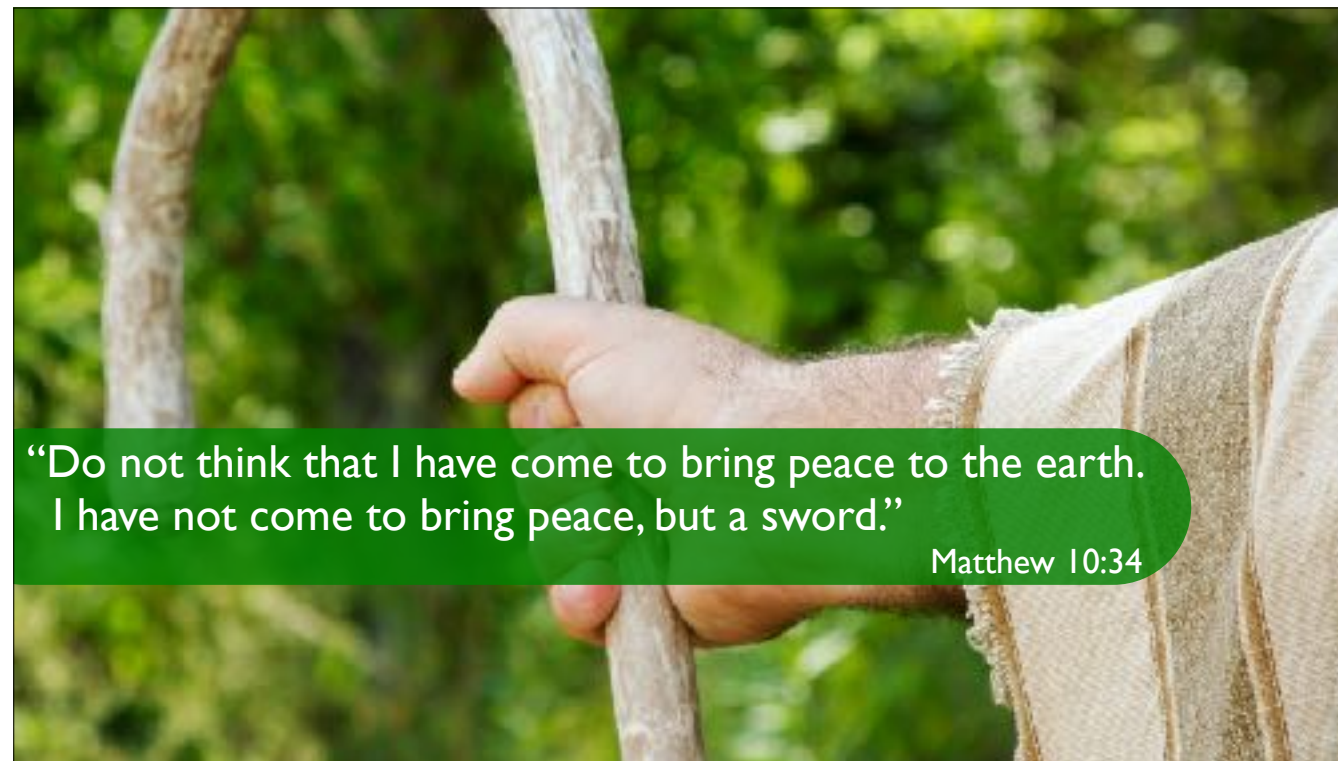
- To the message of peace, some will respond with hatred and violence.
- But Jesus was not going to compromise the truth in an attempt to make everyone happy (which is impossible anyway!).



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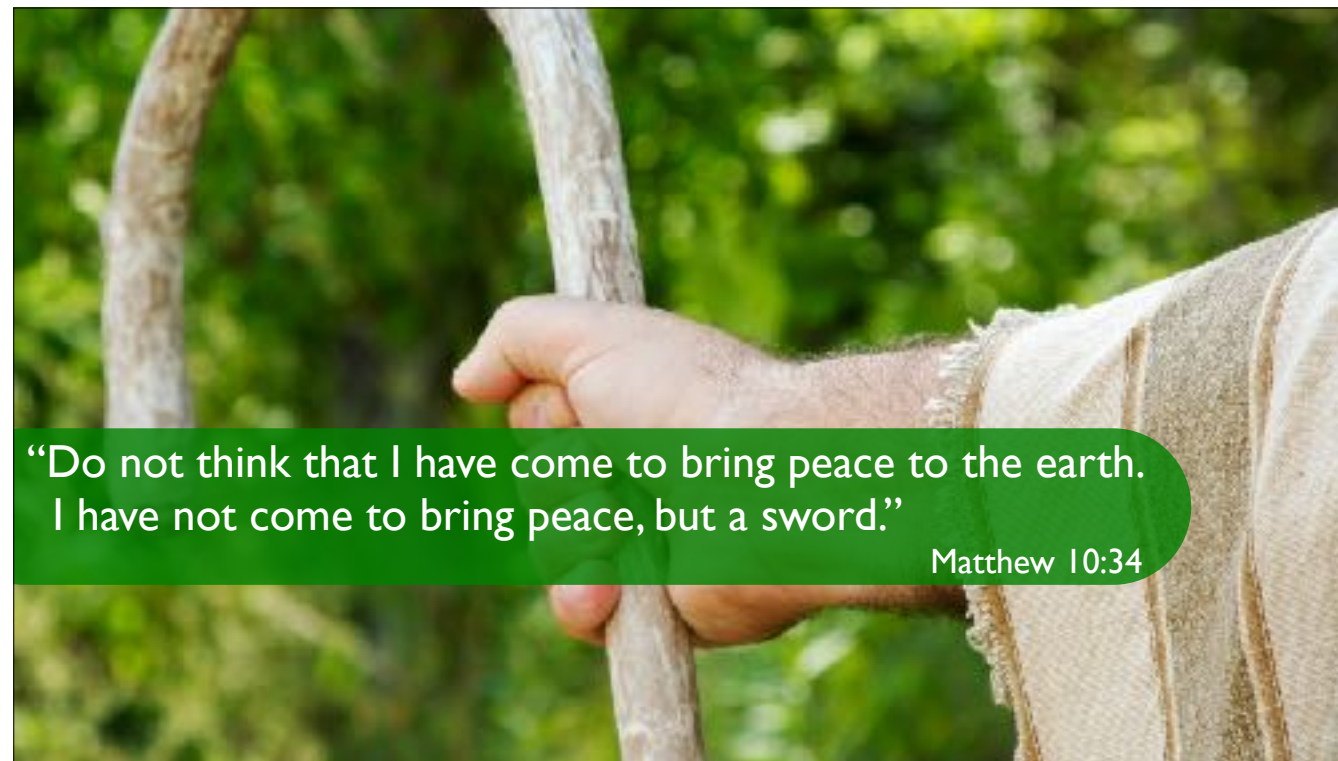
- Being a peacemaker does not mean compromising on the truth.
- Not: Peace at any Cost, Compromise!
- Jude 1:3, NKJV+ “3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to **contend** earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.”



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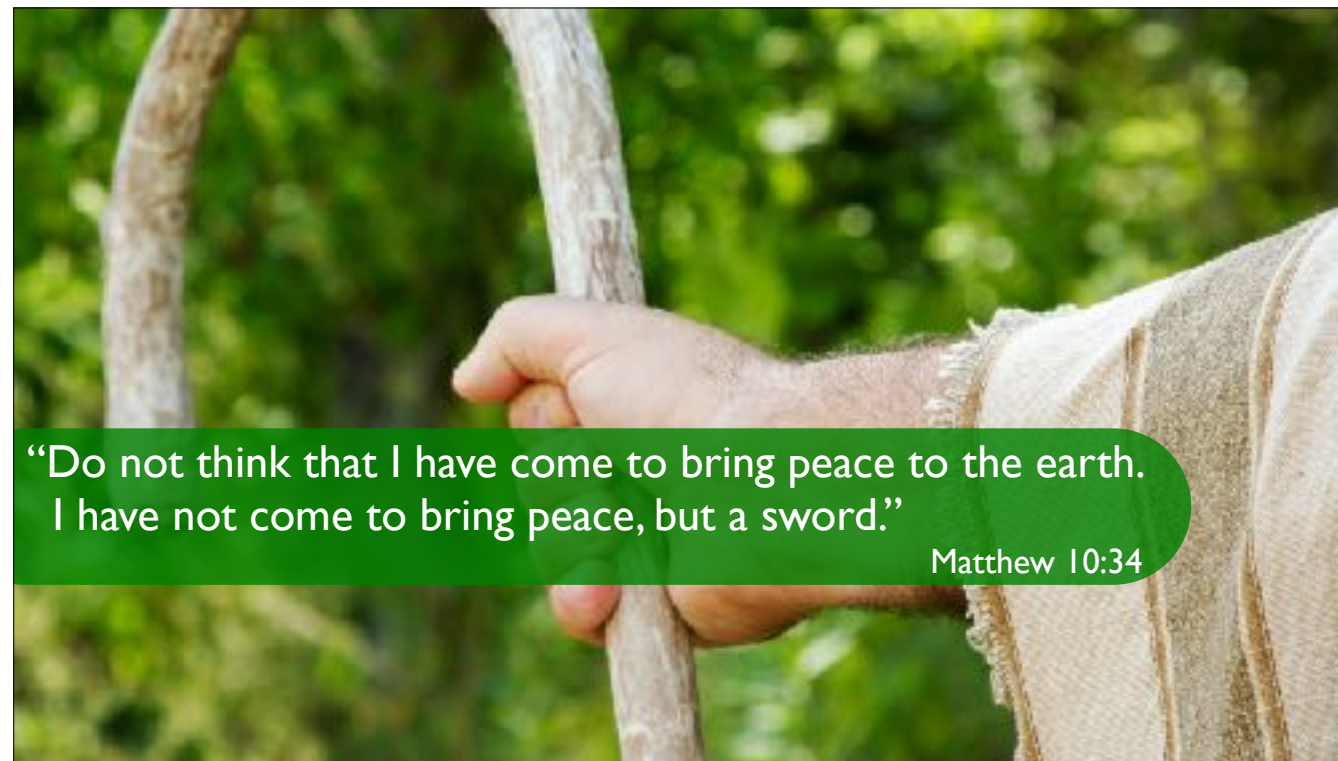
- That's a fighting word. It's about combat.
- There are some things that must be stood for and some things that must be stood against.
- There's no room for a "peacemaker" who would attempt to combine contrary doctrines and then agree to disagree.



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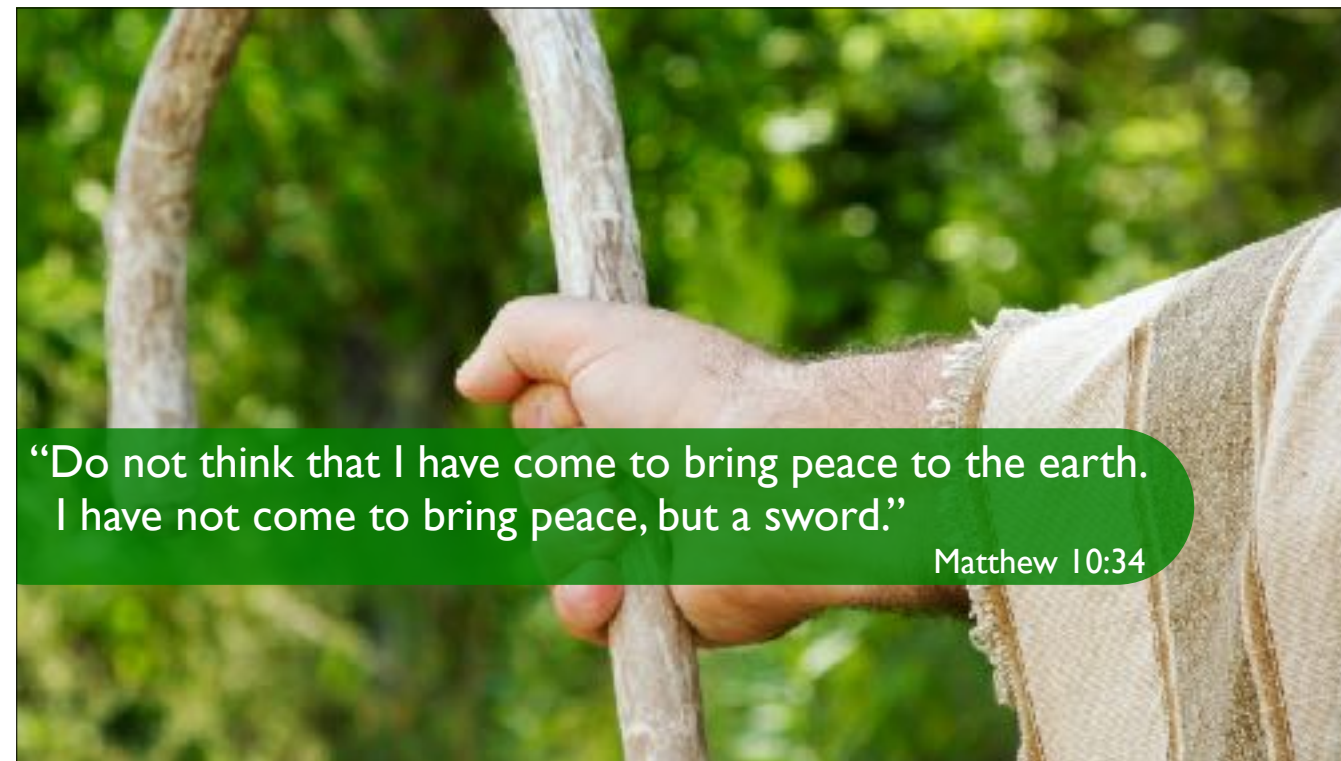
- Jesus never spoke well of false teachers.
- When the Pharisees or Sadducees confronted Jesus about His failure (in their estimation) to keep the traditions, or His teaching, Jesus didn't tell them that “we are all entitled to our own opinions,” or such nonsense.



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- He would clearly point out the error in their reasoning and provide them with knowledge of the truth.
- At which point they could either accept the truth (and be at peace with God), or walk away from the truth and continue in their ungodliness.



“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth.
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Matthew 10:34

- We don't have the advantage of knowing their hearts, as Jesus did, so we have to be very careful not to condemn unjustly.



- Abigail: 1 Samuel 25



1 Samuel 25:1–13: Then David rose and went down to the wilderness of Paran. And there was a man in Maon whose business was in Carmel. The man was very rich; he had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. The woman was discerning and beautiful, but the man was harsh and badly behaved; he was a Calebite.



So David sent ten young men. And David said to the young men, “Go up to Carmel, and go to Nabal and greet him in my name. And thus you shall greet him:



‘Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. I hear that you have shearers. Now your shepherds have been with us, and we did them no harm, and they missed nothing all the time they were in Carmel. Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David.’”

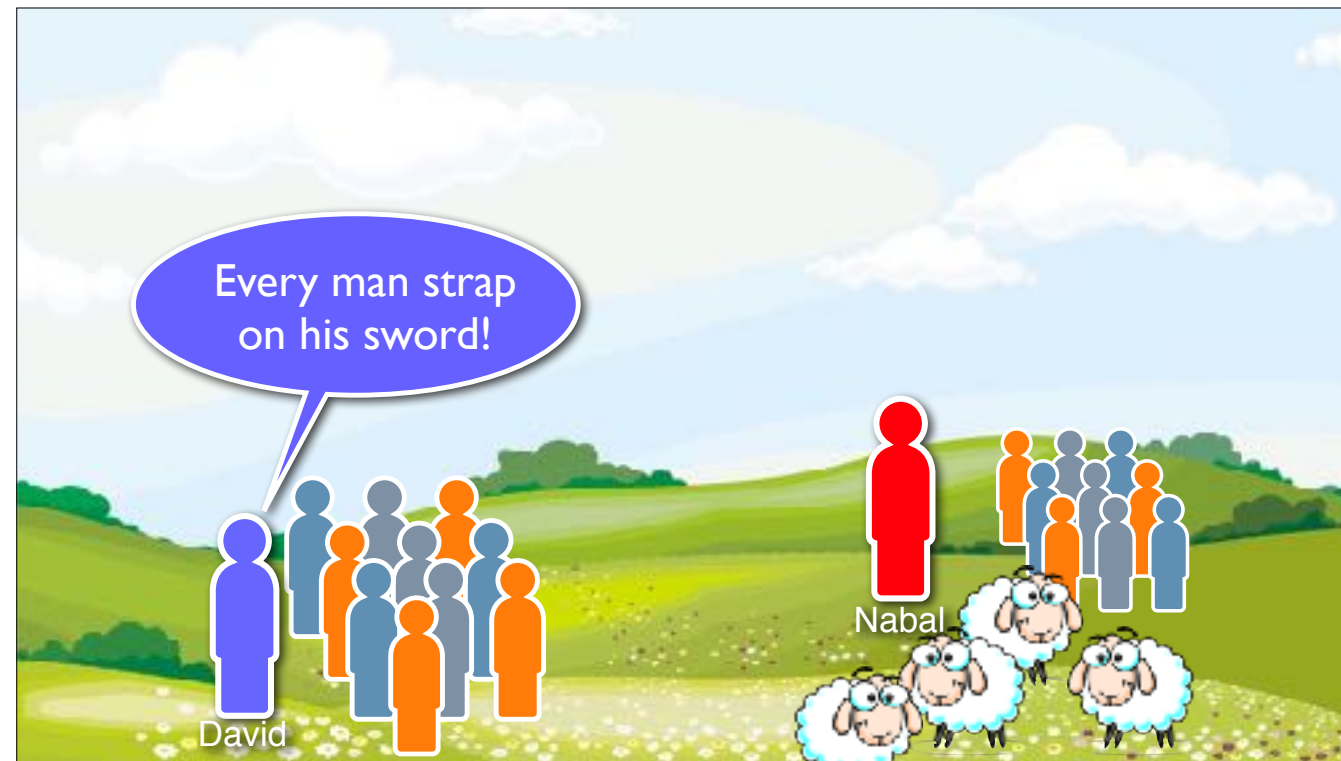
When David's young men came, they said all this to Nabal in the name of David, and then they waited.



And Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is David? Who is the son of Jesse? There are many servants these days who are breaking away from their masters. Shall I take my bread and my water and my meat that I have killed for my shearers and give it to men who come from I do not know where?"



So David's young men turned away and came back and told him all this. And David said to his men, "Every man strap on his sword!" And every man of them strapped on his sword. David also strapped on his sword. And about four hundred men went up after David, while two hundred remained with the baggage.



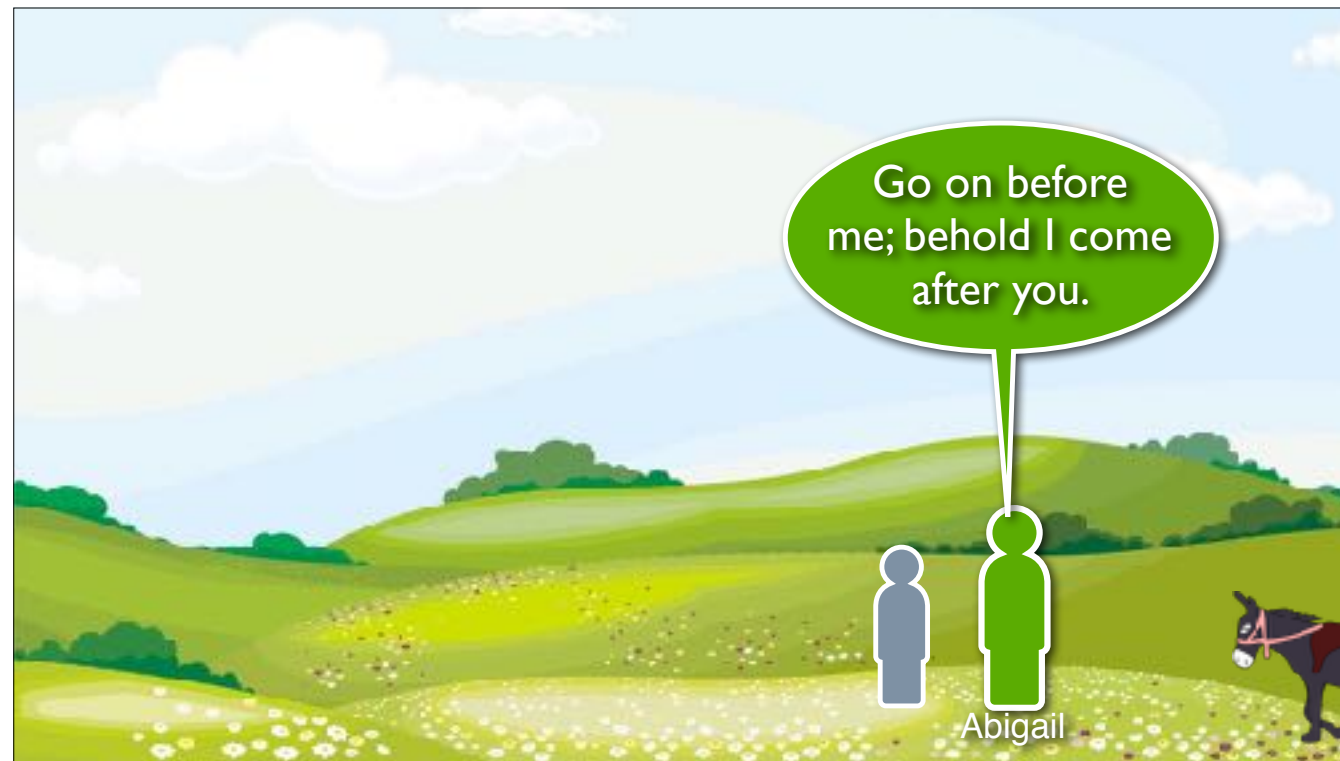
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1 Samuel 25:14–35: But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, “Behold, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to greet our master, and he **railed** at them. 15 Yet the men were very good to us, and we suffered no harm, and we did not miss anything when we were in the fields, as long as we went with them. 16 They were a wall to us both by night and by day, all the while we were with them keeping the sheep.



17 Now therefore know this and consider what you should do, for harm is determined against our master and against all his house, and he is such a worthless man that one cannot speak to him.”



18 Then Abigail made haste and took two hundred loaves and two skins of wine and five sheep already prepared and five seahs of parched grain and a hundred clusters of raisins and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on donkeys. 19 And she said to her young men, "Go on before me; behold, I come after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.



20 And as she rode on the donkey and came down under cover of the mountain,



David and his men came down toward her, and she met them. 21 Now David had said, “Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good. 22 God do so to the enemies of David and more also, if by morning I leave so much as one male of all who belong to him.”



23 When Abigail saw David, she hurried and got down from the donkey and fell before David on her face and bowed to the ground. 24 She fell at his feet and said, "On me alone, my lord, be the guilt. Please let your servant speak in your ears, and hear the words of your servant. 25 Let not my lord regard this worthless fellow, Nabal, for as his name is, so is he. Nabal is his name, and folly is with him.



But I your servant did not see the young men of my lord, whom you sent. 26 Now then, my lord, as the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, because the Lord has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal. 27 And now let this present that your servant has brought to my lord be given to the young men who follow my lord.



28 Please forgive the trespass of your servant. For the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house, because my lord is fighting the battles of the Lord, and evil shall not be found in you so long as you live. 29 If men rise up to pursue you and to seek your life, the life of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living in the care of the Lord your God. And the lives of your enemies he shall sling out as from the hollow of a sling.



30 And when the Lord has done to my lord according to all the good that he has spoken concerning you and has appointed you prince over Israel, 31 my lord shall have no cause of grief or pangs of conscience for having shed blood without cause or for my lord working salvation himself. And when the Lord has dealt well with my lord, then remember your servant.”



32 And David said to Abigail, "Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me!"



33 Blessed be your discretion, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodguilt and from working salvation with my own hand! 34 For as surely as the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, who has restrained me from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, truly by morning there had not been left to Nabal so much as one male."



35 Then David received from her hand what she had brought him. And he said to her, "Go up in peace to your house. See, I have obeyed your voice, and I have granted your petition.



Abigail was a peacemaker! And blessed.

She stood between Nabal's foolishness and David's anger and prevented bloodshed.



What she did may not be appropriate in every circumstance.

What she did was impressive: admitted guilt and sought forgiveness (although it wasn't her fault); brought gift; appealed to his good conscience.



What is the difference between a peacekeeper and a peacemaker?

A peacekeeper is passive.

A peacemaker is active.



1 Peter 3:11: (whoever would love life and see good days ...) let him seek peace and pursue it.

seek: object of all our endeavor

pursue: hunt down



Hebrews 12:14: Strive for peace with everyone

Peace does not come easily nor automatically

First desire it with whole heart

Second work to make it and maintain it.

If possible, so
far as it depends
on you, live
peaceably
with all.

Romans 12:18



Romans 12:18: If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

What does it mean to be a peacemaker? Like Jesus, I will strive to create harmony in my relationships.

James 3:18: And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

If possible, so
far as it depends
on you, live
peaceably
with all.

Romans 12:18



Peacemaker v. troublemaker (Abigail vs. Nabal)

Cannot w/o poor in spirit, mourning, meek

selfishness destroys peace

go as far as Jesus did to make peace

**We implore you on
behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.**

2 Corinthians 5:20



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Smiling girl: iStock_000009494535

Thumbs up: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/2c/Thumbs_up.jpg

Two violins: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/82/Girls_playing_violin_at_a_wedding_ceremony.jpg/1280px-Girls_playing_violin_at_a_wedding_ceremony.jpg

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Clinton, Arafat, Rabin: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oslo_I_Accord#/media/File:Bill_Clinton,_Yitzhak_Rabin,_Yasser_Arafat_at_the_White_House_1993-09-13.jpg

Are You A Peace Maker?

Matthew 5:9

Synopsis: Peace means much more than absence of conflict; it means to bring into harmony. In this lesson we'll see what it means to be a peace maker by seeing what Jesus has done for us and the example of Abigail.

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"Let all that you do be done with love."