

Why We Do What We Do

Scripture Text: 1 Corinthians 10:31

Introduction

In this sermon series about making peace, we are learning some things about having peace and making peace. God wants us to have peace. He also wants us to make peace with others, or as Jesus put it, to be *peacemakers* (Matthew 5:9). But, how can we make peace with others, especially when they may not want to be at peace with us? Becoming a peacemaker involves embracing a new identity in Christ and living for Him. It means we constantly put off the old ways that defined us before we knew Christ. It also means we constantly put on the virtues of Christ and be the people He called us to be. We should be more and more like Jesus as we grow in our walk with Him. As we walk with the Lord, we should also let the peace of Christ rule in both our individual and corporate lives. Since we are at peace with God through Jesus Christ, that should direct our hearts. When the world falls apart, our health fails, or conflict occurs, let the peace you have in Jesus control your attitude and your response. We should also let the Word of Christ dwell within us. We need to feast on the Word of God and let it exude through our lives. But, what is the goal for all of this we do? Why do we do what we do?

Do Everything Under the Authority of Jesus

We left the passage last week with a statement that focuses on every “word or deed” we have. God’s people *should* do everything with a single purpose. The goal of everything we do is to point to our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Look at the following verse.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Whatever we say or whatever we do, we should make sure that we do it to bring glory to Jesus. Is there anything that is excluded from that statement? Is there anything that should not be done *in the name of Jesus*? No! Whatever we say, whatever we do, whatever decision we make, whatever action we take, we should do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus. How much? Everything! All of life is addressed with the words “whatever you do” and “in word or deed.” Earlier in the same chapter, Paul called the church to “put off” their old, sinful ways, and instead “put on” the new virtues of Christ. Basically, the way we live our lives should match the confession we have made, that Jesus is our Savior and we follow Him. Our lives should be *consistent* with the *commitment* we have made in Jesus. Our lives should represent Jesus so well that people will know whom we serve. What we say and what we do in this verse encompasses every area of our lives.

The “name of the Lord Jesus” provides the proper focus for our lives. Jesus is not only the One Who has saved us, He is not only the One Whom we worship, but He is also the One Whose authority and reputation should direct our lives. To invoke His name may bring to mind our baptism, which was done *in the name of Jesus* (Matthew 28:16). Notice that it is not just the name of Jesus. It is not just the Savior, Jesus. It says in the

name of the *Lord Jesus*. This signifies Jesus' *authority* in your life. The person of Jesus is everything to the church. We should do nothing apart from Jesus' direction, Jesus' approval, and Jesus' purposes. Living in accord with His name means to do so in harmony with His revealed will, in subjection to His supreme authority, and in dependence on His divine power. Therefore, whatever you say or do, *anything at all*, ought to be done under the authority of Jesus Christ, Who is Lord of your entire life.

Do All to Bring Glory to a God

Today we look at the *Four G's of Peacemaking*. The first "G" is "Glory to God". That sounds like a description I have heard about one of my favorite preachers. Just about every sermon this preacher delivered would be about bringing glory to God. Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory to God! That is, after all, the chief end of man - *Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever*. But, that is not what many people think is their chief end, or their purpose in life, or their goal for life. Many people want the "good life". They want to be happy. That is not necessarily wrong, but we seek the good life or our happiness in all the wrong things. We usually define happiness as accumulating stuff or people in our lives. Happiness involves getting what I want or getting my way. But happiness is ultimately found in God. The purpose of life is to bring glory to God and to enjoy Him forever. Look at the following verse.

1 Corinthians 10:31 *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

The context of this verse is eating food sacrificed to idols. Eating and drinking is the focal point of the passage. It is by eating and drinking that we interact with each other. Eating and drinking in the ancient world was the place where people interacted with one another, both believers and unbelievers. Paul was saying to the church in Corinth that if an unbeliever invites you to dinner, then eat whatever is put before you. However, if someone says, "That meat was sacrificed to idols", then do not eat it on account of the one who told you. Basically, do not use your freedom in Christ to cause someone else to stumble. Then, Paul said this, "Whether you eat or drink, do all for the glory of God." If you choose to eat and drink, do it for God's glory. If you abstain from eating and drinking, do that for God's glory. Whatever you do, do it for the glory of God. Paul intended that this "rule" of bringing glory to God dictate our behavior. Put another way, what is not, or cannot be, for God's glory should be excluded from "whatever you do."

What does it mean to bring glory to God, though? Basically, it means whatever will bring *praise to God*. What will praise God and declare Him great! The overarching Christian life can be summed up in this way, "Live life to bring praise to God." What will you say or do that will cause others to praise God? What will you say or do that will honor God and please Him? Oftentimes, we are more concerned with what brings ourselves glory. We want what we want and we want it no other way. Even when we say we want to bring God glory, we are really seeking our own glory in a thinly veiled statement, "Whatever you will, Lord." God is to be praised in everything we say and do because He alone deserves it. Even our very lives belong to God and should bring glory to Him. *Everything*

does not mean just those parts of our lives we choose to surrender to God. We should not say, "God, I want to bring you glory, but I hope people recognize me. God, I give you this offering and want that to bring you glory, but I will keep the rest for my glory. God, I dedicate this church to Jesus, but I want it to serve my needs and do what I want." Those statements do not demonstrate a heart that wants to bring glory to God.

Conflict Between Members of a Church

What does all this have to do with making peace with others? Let me tell you a story about a conflict between church members. Bob and Joe are members of the same church. Bob is a contractor who builds homes in the area and has a reputation of doing a good job. Joe and his family have been going to the same church for many years, but Bob's family are founding members of the church and have been going there for decades. Joe and his wife decide to move to a new neighborhood that is a little further from where the church meets. They decide to hire Bob to build them a home in the new neighborhood. Things go well at first, but problems start to happen. Joe and his wife notice several things wrong with the house - the kitchen cabinets are not installed correctly, and the master bathroom is smaller than they had wanted. Joe contacts Bob about these issues and Bob fixes the issues, although not as quickly as Joe's wife would like. More serious, however, is the living room floor is unstable. Bob tries to correct the problems the best he can, but the real issue is that the foundation to the house has a problem and needs to be fixed. This is going to take more time, more money, and puts the project behind schedule. Joe and his wife were planning to be in their new home soon, as they are also expecting a baby. This adds to the conflict. Joe and his wife do not think Bob is working hard enough or fast enough, and begin to seriously question whether Bob can fix all of the problems. Joe's wife starts telling others in the church about their "problems with Bob" and encourage them to not hire Bob to do any work. She even suggests to her husband, Joe, that they should sue Bob. How does this situation glorify God? How should Bob and Joe respond to this?

The Slippery Slope

If the chief end of man, the purpose of our lives, is to bring glory to God, then it stands to reason that our peacemaking efforts ought to first begin with what will bring glory to God. Look at the following passage from Paul's letter to the Romans.

Romans 15:5–6 ⁵ *May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In this passage, Paul calls for God to bless the church in such a way that they will live in harmony, in peace with one another and in accord with Christ Jesus. We should all focus on Christ who brings the church together. Notice that the goal of the church's harmony is to *glorify God*. Our peacemaking efforts ought to start with what will bring glory to God. Our focus should be what will honor God, what will bring praise to Jesus'

name, what will make Him famous. Oftentimes, however, bringing glory to God is not how we choose to respond to conflict. We often choose a response that either focuses on us or on our situation. There are several ways we can respond to conflict.

Escape Responses: *Denial* (pretend a problem does not exist), *Flight* (run away from the problem), *Suicide* (lose all hope and take one's own life).

Attack Responses: *Assault* (using force or intimidation, both verbal and physical), *Litigation* (taking the person to court), *Murder* (killing those who oppose you).

The responses above do not resolve conflict or make peace between people. Rather, these responses oftentimes make a situation worse. But, there are ways to respond to conflict that at least *attempts* to make peace with others. These responses are below:

Peacemaking Responses: *Overlook an Offense* (a form of forgiveness where you choose to not dwell on the issue), *Reconciliation* (resolve issue through confession, correction, and forgiveness), *Negotiation* (seeking to reach a settlement that satisfies each other).

Peacemaking responses seek to resolve an issue between two parties and bring restoration to relationships in a way that brings glory to God in the situation. Seeking God's glory in a situation is the *first step* in making peace. It is the "why" to what we do!

What Will Bring Glory to God?

Whenever we are in conflict our response either draws attention to our circumstances and ourselves or it draws attention toward God. Everything we say or do should bring glory to God. Let us look again at the passage from 1 Corinthians 10:31.

1 Corinthians 10:31 *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

Do all things to bring glory and praise to God! How can we apply this to making peace with others? When dealing with conflict with someone else, ask yourself, "What will bring glory to God in the situation?" Instead of focusing on your own desires or dwelling on what other may do, or what you think you should do, you should rejoice in the Lord and bring Him praise by depending on His forgiveness, wisdom, power, and love. You should then seek to faithfully obey God's commands and maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude to others. Will ignoring the problem, hoping it will just go away, bring glory to God? Will digging your heels in and refusing to bend to the other person bring glory to God? Will arguing to the other person, attacking the other person, or saying hateful things to the other person, bring glory to God?

When dealing with any conflict and trying to make peace, first pray about what God's will for the situation is. Commit yourself to seeking what action will bring glory to God. Be intentional about seeking the right response and the right outcome, not just what you

want. What you want in then situation could be the wrong thing. Be open to change! In the previous scenario, what would bring glory to God between Bob and Joe? For one, both parties should pray about how their situation could bring glory to God. They could commit to pray with one another and *for one another*. They could also refrain from complaining to others in the church, and especially outside of the church, about their problems with one another. If, and only if, they could not resolve the issues, they should seek help from someone else, preferably another church member. Remember, how we respond to conflict is an opportunity to point people to ourselves and to our problems, or it is an opportunity to point them to the living God of the universe. What response will you choose?