

Application Guide: “Blessed are the Peacemakers (Part 3)...”

Nov. 14th, 2004: Kimber Kauffman, Sr. Pastor of College Park Church, presented his 21st sermon on The Gospel of Matthew. Based on the seventh Beatitude (Matt. 5:9), Kimber spoke on what peacemaking looks like amidst the “gray” areas of the Christian life. His message focused primarily on the setting Paul addressed in Romans 14 and how that ought to play out in our own circumstances in striving for unity amidst disagreements.

1. This past Sunday was the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church. Share with the groups your thoughts on the video about your brothers and sisters in Christ who are persecuted.
 - a. What does the Bible say about Christians being persecuted (cf Mt. 5:10-12; 24:9; Jn. 15:20; 1 Cor 4:12; 2 Cor. 4:9; 2 Tim. 3:12; Heb. 11:37)?
 - b. If you want to stay informed about your fellow brothers and sisters around the world, sign up for newsletters from Voice of the Martyrs (www.persecution.com) or International Christian Concern (www.persecution.org).
2. Kimber briefly turned to Col. 3:12-17 to emphasize that our relationships are to be marked with peacemaking.
 - a. What characteristics and commands does this passage tie in with peacemaking? Or more simply, what kind of people are peacemakers?
 - b. What’s the tie in of the “peace of God” with peacemaking? What about the peace of God ought to compel us to strive for unity with others?
3. Kimber noted that two believers can have opposing convictions when it comes to gray areas and still be right before God (Rom. 14). In matters of gray areas, he provided us several guidelines to live by:
 - a. *Learn to distinguish commands & areas of freedom.* How do we distinguish between the black and white commands and gray areas? What are issues that we ought to be able to disagree with and still live in unity together?
 - b. *In debatable issues, cultivate your own conviction.* What will it look like for you to strive to live in unity with another person yet have a different conviction about a “gray” area? How should you share your opinion when it differs from others?
 - c. *Allow your brother the freedom to his own choice, even if it’s different.* What kind of attitudes ought you to have about fellow believers who have differing views from you? How should you treat them (cf. Rom 14:1-4)?
 - d. *Let your liberty be limited, when necessary – by love.* What are some situations where you may have to limit your liberty in order to honor and respect the convictions of others?
 - e. *Follow Christ as the model & motivator of servanthood.* How does being a servant tie into the topic of “gray” areas and liberty? What does it look like to look out for the interests of others over your own?
4. Rom. 14:20 – “Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food...” Kimber challenged us with this verse and applied it to specific areas that churches today commonly have quarrels.
 - a. What “gray” areas do you *personally* struggle with blowing out of proportion, that have the potential to “destroy the work of God”?
 - b. How can you work on keeping the Main One the Main Thing in these issues?