

20 Questions for Confirmation

20: What does it mean to be a peacemaker? Who are the peacemakers in your life?

Watch the Video clip: [Blessed are the peacemakers | Talks at the Desk | Episode 1 - Season 2 \(2023\) - YouTube](#) (Start at 20:36-end 22:38) Background: A member of Hephatha Lutheran Church in Milwaukee shares his peacemaker t-shirt design. What he sees as peacemaking is what his congregation does: responding to the lead poisoning experienced by some in the city, water justice work, and supporting the victims (all talked about in the rest of the video).

AND/OR

Video Clip: [We Have Work to Do - YouTube](#) Former ELCA Bishop Mark Hanson talks about being peacemakers in a world of violence. (2 minutes)

A response: Knowing that true peace isn't just the absence of conflict, but rather a sense of wholeness for more than just myself, it's hard work to be a peacemaker! We all have needs, and the world with its scarcity mentality teaches us to compete against one another to have our wants and needs fulfilled. True peacemaking I think begins with God's kin-dom vision: rejecting the scarcity mentality and acknowledging God's abundance. There IS enough for all of us. Kin-dom vision also reminds us who is God (not us), and that our own viewpoints are limited by our life experience and social location. With kin-dom vision we learn humility and gratitude, which allows us to work out of the assumptions that (1) there is enough and (2) that we ourselves don't know everything. Thus, in humility and gratitude, we can stop competing, and start collaborating! We work toward wholeness for all of us (kin-dom work), instead of solely striving for what's mine (worldly scarcity mentality).

Who are the peacemakers? The peacemakers I see in my life are the people who hold space for and honor all the different voices in the room. They don't shy away from hard conversations simply because they'll be hard, rather intentionally engaging in them because they're important conversations for the sake of the community. Peacemakers actively listen, put themselves in another person's shoes, and truly understand where they are coming from, before responding from their own viewpoint. We don't see this very many places in our country or world – but one place can be our congregations. Lutherans hold so many different viewpoints, yet can worship together in the Lord. Maybe we can practice peacemaking here and now, seeking wholeness, holding space to hear and honor one another's viewpoints, and collaborating on kin-dom work despite all our different ideas about how best to do that! Who are your peacemakers?

What's the Bible say?

1. Jesus, speaking to his disciples during his last meal with them, right before his arrest: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." (John 14:27)

- a. What does peace mean here?
 - b. Jesus is the source of peace for us as Christians, and peace is a promise we receive from him and then extend to each other. What does Jesus mean that he does not give as the world gives? Do we give as Jesus does or the world does? What makes you say that?
2. Jesus, speaking to his disciples in the sermon on the mount: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Matt 5:9)
 - a. How do we be makers of peace? What is the blessing in it?
 - b. Is Jesus saying ONLY peacemakers are children of God? If not, what IS he saying?
3. Rom 12:18 – “If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”
 - a. Is peace always possible? Why or why not?
 - b. How or when does peace depend on you?
 - c. What does it even look like to “live peaceably with all”?
4. Finally, Jesus’s response to scarcity: Feeding 5,000 (Lk 9:10-17, or any of the gospels)
 - a. What is the scarcity mentality here? What is the kin-dom vision?
 - b. Why would Jesus tell the disciples to give this huge crowd something to eat?
 - c. How much is enough?

Deeper Dive: One of our promises in baptism/affirmation of baptism is “to work for justice and peace in all the earth.” This is a huge promise that we cannot hope to fulfill alone, but also one we cannot afford to abandon. It is kin-dom work! So...

1. What does it mean for Jesus to invite us into peacemaking? How was Jesus himself a peacemaker? And what does God want from us as followers of Jesus’s way?
2. Part of baptism is knitting us into this community, so that we are not doing these promises alone. What kinds of peacemaking is already happening in your congregation? Community?
3. Where is peacemaking a need in your congregation? Your school? Your community?
4. How can we practice gratitude and humility? How might gratitude and humility affect our relationships?

Prayer: God of grace, you long for wholeness for all of creation, and yet what we often see around us is brokenness, need, and suffering. Your call to peacemaking is hard. Please show us the way. When we stumble, lift us up. When we feel unable to make peace because of our own suffering, grant us compassion and healing. When we are feeling broken, empty, confused, angry, or hurt, give us your peace, your wholeness, your grace and comfort. Help us to know that our doubts and our mistakes are not deal breakers – that you still love us, are still with us, and are still inviting us to be a part of your mission of love. God of peace, give us your peace which surpasses all understanding to keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.