



# *WELCOME BACK TO ADULT ED!*

Survey Results: more scripture,  
how better help others, and  
community services



Gracious God, open us to You and to one another as we explore Your call to be peacemakers. Fill us with Your vision of peace. Inspire us with ways in which we may live to help You bring that vision into being.  
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. SHALOM.

## Shalom = “peace” in Hebrew

When Jesus returned after the resurrection, His first word to the disciples was “Shalom.”  
"Peace to you!" (Luke 24:36)

“Peace be with you” is the most common greeting in the Middle East and is still spoken today in Israel and Palestine by Muslims, Christians, and Jews. Not just a wish for happiness and good health, it means **complete wholeness**, serenity, fulfilment, freedom from trouble, and liberation from anything that hinders contentment. So when uttering SHALOM, you are wishing **full presence, peace, and prosperity of all the blessedness of God**. It is far more than an external condition, but implies an **internal sense of all being well with our souls**. When we pass the peace of Christ to someone in worship, we are **praying a blessing on that person**, asking that all parts of their life be in right order.



# BEING THE OLIVE BRANCH



In honor of  
Rose Marie Rice

# Bringing Together of God's Peoples



Since the earliest practices of the temple, **olive branches have been incorporated into the temple's** interior and exterior and came to represent Israel herself. **Olive oil** has also been considered as a sacred symbol because ancient **kings in Israel were anointed** with it.

About Israel, the Apostle Paul wrote, "*If you were cut from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and grafted, contrary to nature, into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, the natural branches, be grafted back into their own olive tree*" (Romans 11:24) and

Gentiles, being "*a wild olive shoot, were grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing root of the olive tree*" (Romans 11:17), with the olive tree representing God's people.

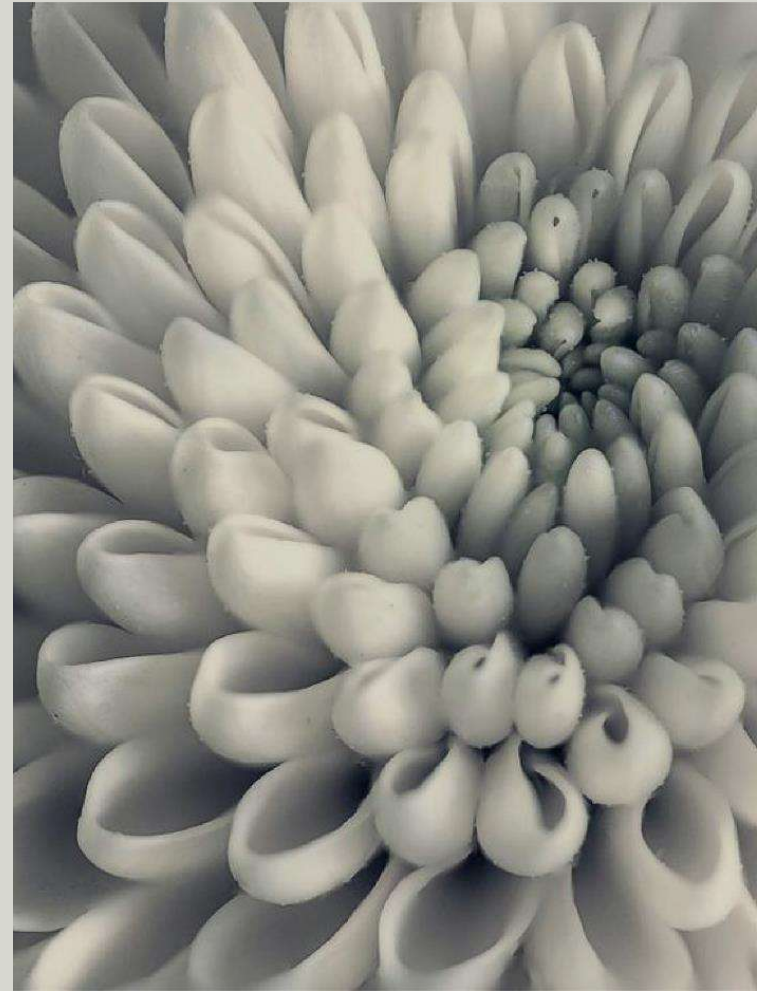






## Symbol of PEACE

*"After the Great flood, again Noah sent forth the dove out of the ark. And the dove came back to him in the evening, and behold, in her mouth was a **freshly plucked olive leaf**. So he knew that the waters had subsided from the earth" (Genesis 8:10-11). That was a sign of peace...God would later promise to never send another flood to destroy man and all the other creatures.*



## In the Garden of Gethsemane ('oil press' in Greek)

- Before taken to be crucified, Jesus' last will and testament was *"Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Your heart must not be troubled or fearful"* (John 14:27)
- A 2012 study tested three of olive trees in that very garden are amongst the oldest known to science. Dates of AD 1090, 1166, and 1198 were obtained by **carbon dating of their trunks**; and found that the trees were originally planted from the same parent plant. Indicating that **perhaps they could have been sprouts reviving from the older roots**. However 'the results have not settled the questions of whether the gnarled trees are the very same which sheltered Jesus, because **the trees can grow back from roots after being cut down.**' *Find it comforting that new growth can come from something that old and even injured!*

# From the MOUNT OF OLIVES to the SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Jesus delivers Beatitudes (blessed sayings) that essentially outlines what it means to be a moral and upright person in the eyes of God, and in particular this verse:



Used to read this and pat myself on the back, because I don't like to argue and overall am pretty peaceable – so assumed I was a peacemaker, but this is wrong.



# Peacekeeper $\neq$ Peacemaker

Avoids conflict

Keeps peace by not doing anything controversial

Accommodate issues, gloss over problems acting as if everything alright



Runs *toward* conflict to create peace

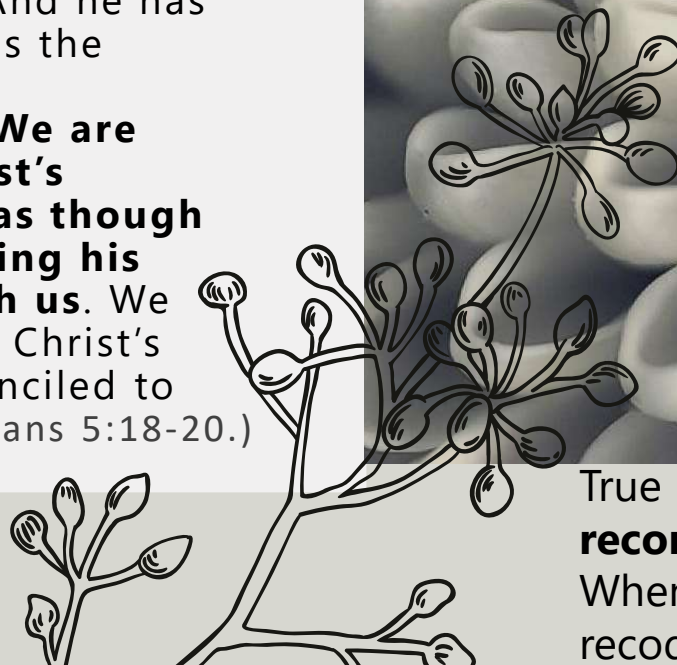
*Actively* pursues peace, sometimes creating friction

Not afraid of strife and just trying to appease warring parties


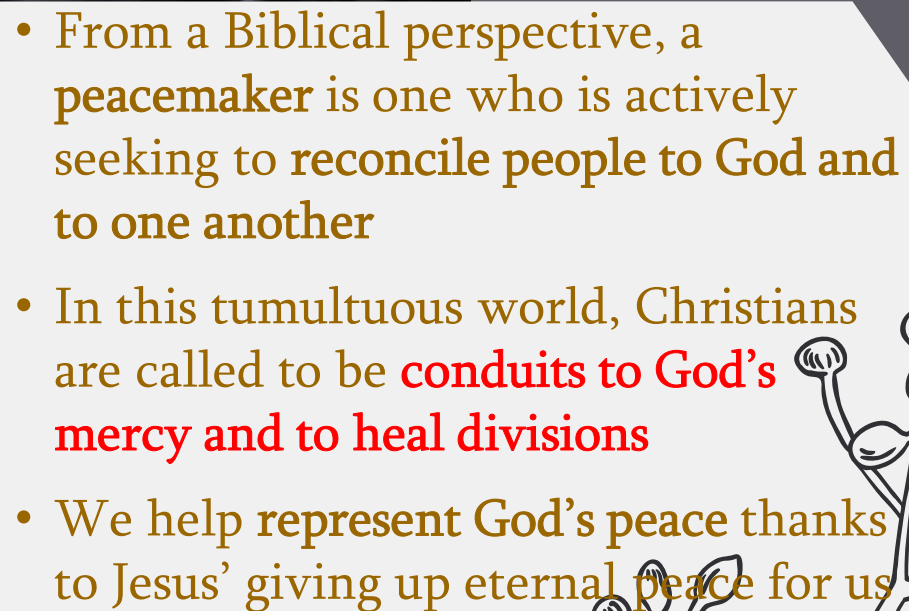
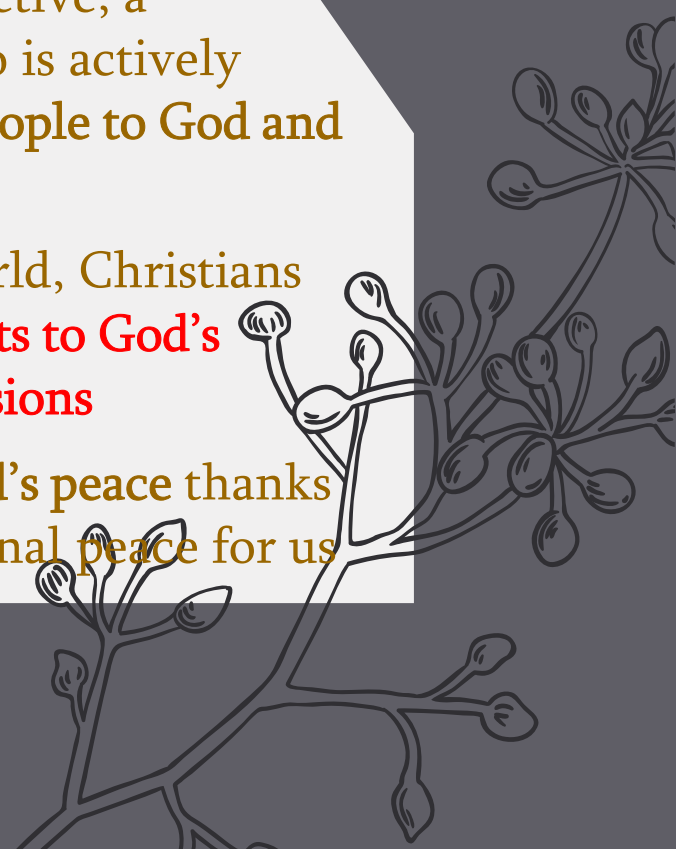


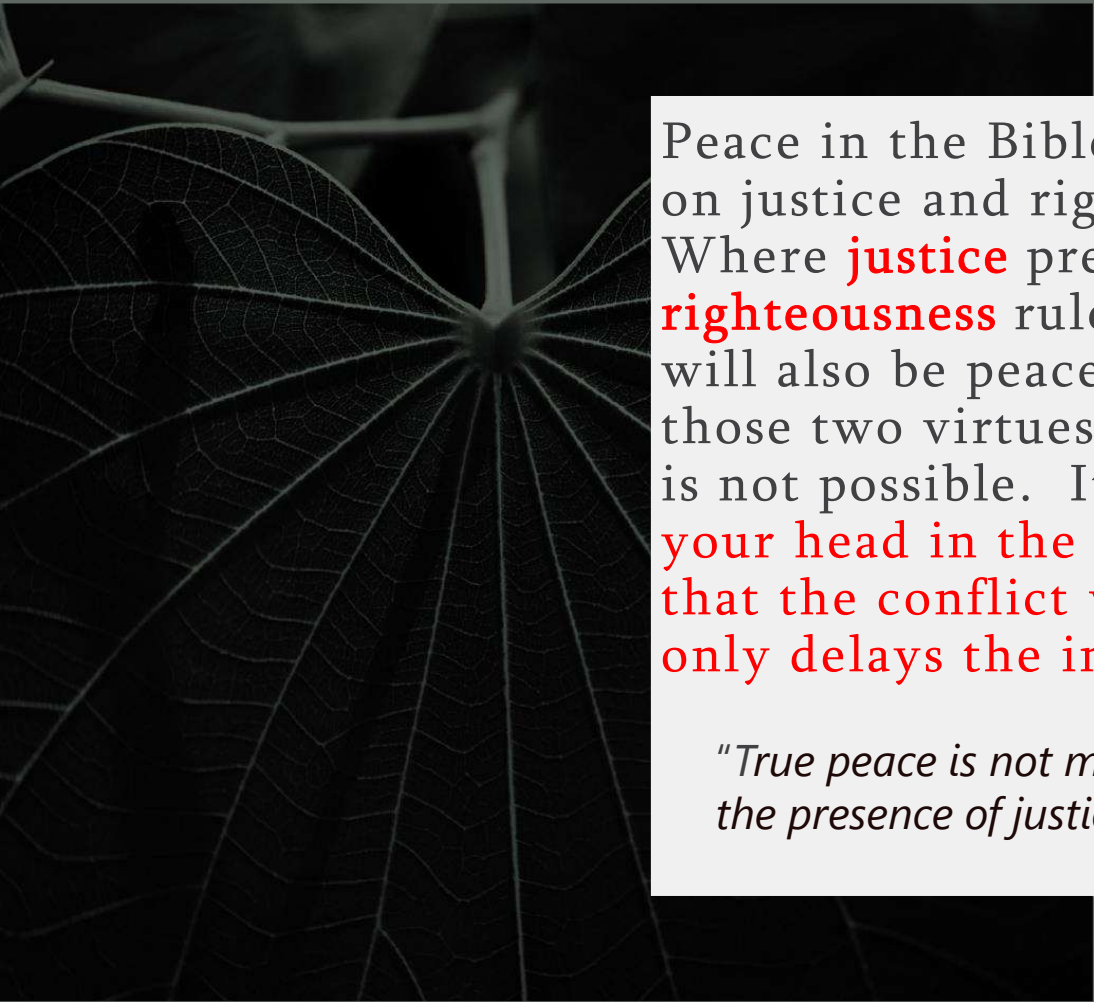
All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.** We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20.)

How are we as the  
“children of God”  
uniquely equipped  
to be peacemakers?



True peace **boldly points hearts** to Christ, **reconciling first to God and then to one another.** When others see believers making peace, they recognize them as God's children.

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- From a Biblical perspective, a **peacemaker** is one who is actively seeking to reconcile people to God and to one another
  - In this tumultuous world, Christians are called to be **conduits to God's mercy and to heal divisions**
  - We help represent God's peace thanks to Jesus' giving up eternal peace for us
- 



Peace in the Bible is also based on justice and righteousness. Where **justice** prevails and **righteousness** rules, there you will also be peace. But without those two virtues, **lasting peace** is not possible. It's just **putting your head in the sand**, hoping that the conflict will end – it **only delays the inevitable**.

*"True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice." - Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*



## 5 Characteristics of a Peacemaker\*

### 1) Peace **rules the heart.**

We only can calm wars and tempers when **conquer our own battles raging inside us.**

*And the peace of God, **which transcends all understanding**, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:7*

Not to say there won't be times when need to focus on internal issues, but to create peace among others we must find it in Christ alone *first*.

### 2) Peacemakers are active, not passive.

A true peacemaker would try to **bring the two parties together, disarm them** of their weapons, and **work through** the hard stuff **with** them to help them reconcile. That's putting in the peacekeeping work.

\*<https://www.prettysimpleideas.com/2020/07/5-surprising-characteristics-of-a-peacemaker/>



### 3.) Are Gentle

If you are **hostile**, no one is going to really listen to you – much less go to you for **advice** or reconcile with you.

As a peacemaker, we must **be willing to listen, and be slow and careful in how we respond**. People's feelings may be involved, or it might be a sensitive topic. That does not mean we will always agree with people. **Sometimes agreeing to disagree, politely, is all we can do to keep the peace. And that's an important step.**

### 4.) Resolute in the truth

While peacemakers are open to hearing all sides, they are **NOT willing to set aside God's truth to appease someone else**. Muting our own convictions and affirming someone else's, if it goes against ours, can be just as wrong.

**Seek out what the Bible says about a certain situation before diving in. Ask the Holy Spirit to help guide you. But always stick to God's truth (not just your own) and what the Bible says.**

## 5. ) Be Patient

In 1781 Ben Franklin wrote to John Adams, “Blessed are the peacemakers’ is, I suppose, for another world. In this world, they are **frequently cursed**.”

If you are trying to reconcile with someone else or trying to help two parties reconcile, things **can get messier before they get better. Be willing to not only work through that mess, but able to walk away if necessary.**

**Sometimes all we can do is plant seeds and wait for God to grow them and bring about a harvest in His own time.** But if we’re patient, peacemaking can be divine work.

**“The harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”**  
– James 3:18



How can you be a Peace  
MAKER today as an  
individual, us together  
as a Church?



## Practical Steps to get us going in the right direction:

1) Take it to God. **Surrender the broken relationship to Him and let Him know you want to fix it!** Before talking to those involved, praying to God helps us bring perspective and tenderness to the situation.

2.) **Make the first move. Take the lead in reaching out to the person to reconcile or start building up a relationship.**

*“If your brother sins against you, go and **rebuke him in private**. If he listens to you, you have won your brother” - Matthew 18:15*

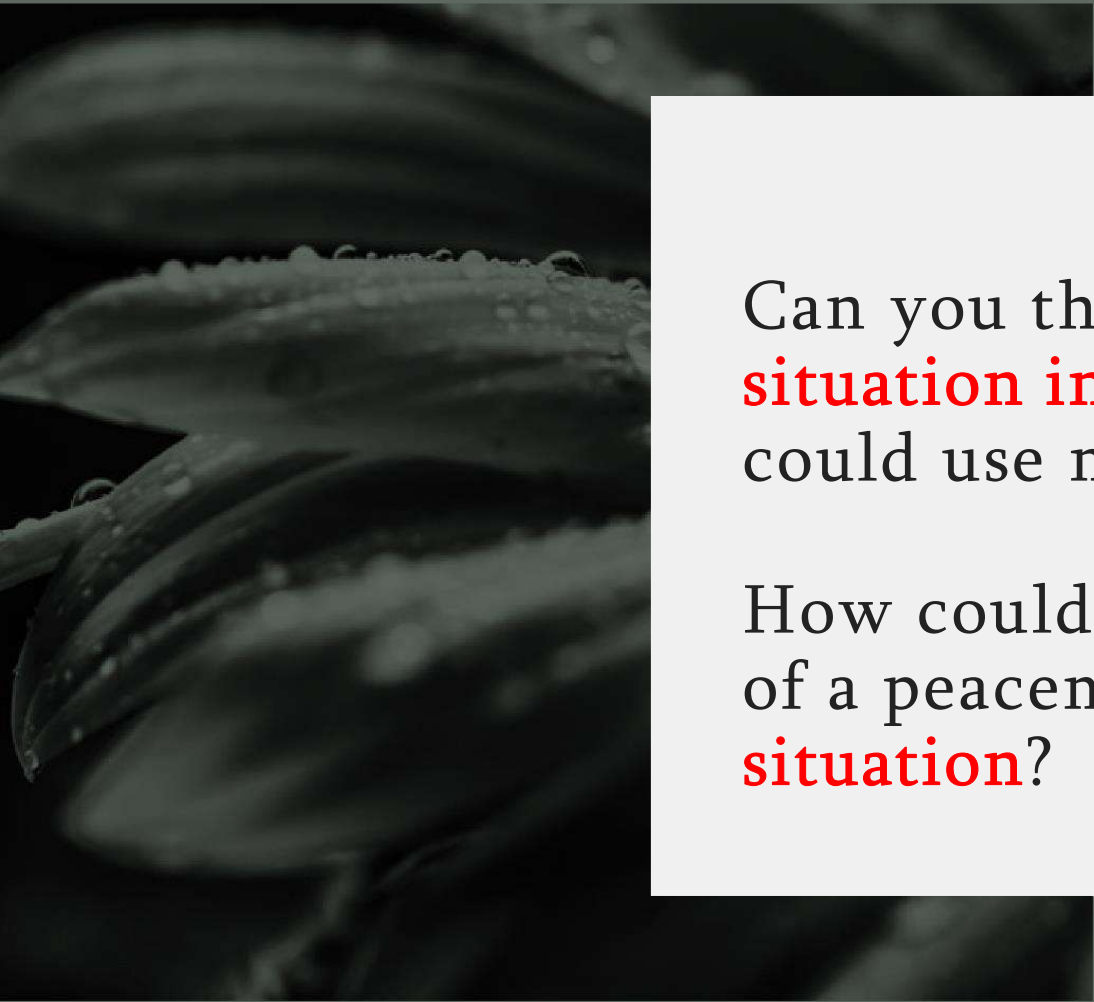
## Practical Steps (continued)

3.) **Attack the problem, not the person. Empathize with their feelings, consider all the things going on in their situation. Clarify, don't confront. Even if unable to meet resolution, emphasize reconciliation, so at least have a relationship base to build from.**

4.) **Stop talking bad about the other person or situation to others.** You can always find someone ready and willing to validate your opinion, so don't fall into that trap. That's **not going to bring about peace but hinder any chance of reconciliation.** Because as the game 'Telephone' demonstrates, messages get mutated along the way but always find their way back around.

*"No rotten talk should come from your mouth, but **only what is good for the building up of someone in need, in order to give grace to those who hear.**" (Ephesians 4:29)*





Can you think of a **current situation in our world** that could use more peace?

How could we **apply** these traits of a peacemaker **to that situation**?



## Mandates Action



Notice Jesus did not say “Blessed are the peace *wishers* or the peace *hoppers* or the peace *dreamers* or the peace *lovers* or the peace *talkers*.”

We are to be Peace *Makers*. **Peace must be made.** Peace doesn't happen by chance.

Someone has to **drag the combatants to the table, give them a reason to put down their arms, and settle their disagreements.**

Peacemaking does not mean to yield to merely appease another's stubbornness or selfishness. **Instead of trying to accommodate everyone, pursue all the beauty and blessedness of God upon another.**

# Grace Before Peace x Troublemaker

- Spreading rumors and gossip about others, looking for scandal, and always finding faults shows one is unwilling to be a peacemaker but the opposite: troublemaker. They create **conflict in their external world** often because they have internal strife, but the good news (and thanks to the Good News) **they can change!**
- The salutation of the Apostle Paul's letters almost always begin "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:2). Reading his letters, the order is never reversed to "peace and grace." **Grace always comes before peace. We have to experience the grace of God, before we can experience the peace of God. We do that by coming to come into relationship with God through his son Jesus Christ.**
- So fellow Christians, **bring on God's mercy by having patience with others' shortcomings and being slow to take offence.** That's hard because everywhere you go there are people behaving badly. With selfish & rude way we often act it's a wonder why God wants to save us at all, but figure if gracious God have mercy on me I can share a little bit with others.

Peacemakers are people of hope, connected to God's vision of peace that reminds us the world does not need to be the way it is. God's vision calls us to explore new possibilities. God's vision preserves us as we work to bring those possibilities into reality, reminding us that God's will, will be done.

This involves laughter, smiles, dancing, and singing. Peacemakers make wonderful colleagues and friends. Celebrating small steps, little victories and moments of grace amazing, helps sustain peacemakers for the long haul. Trusting God to guide and bless our efforts-sometimes in ways we cannot even begin to imagine!

-from the  
Presbyterian  
Peacemaking  
Program



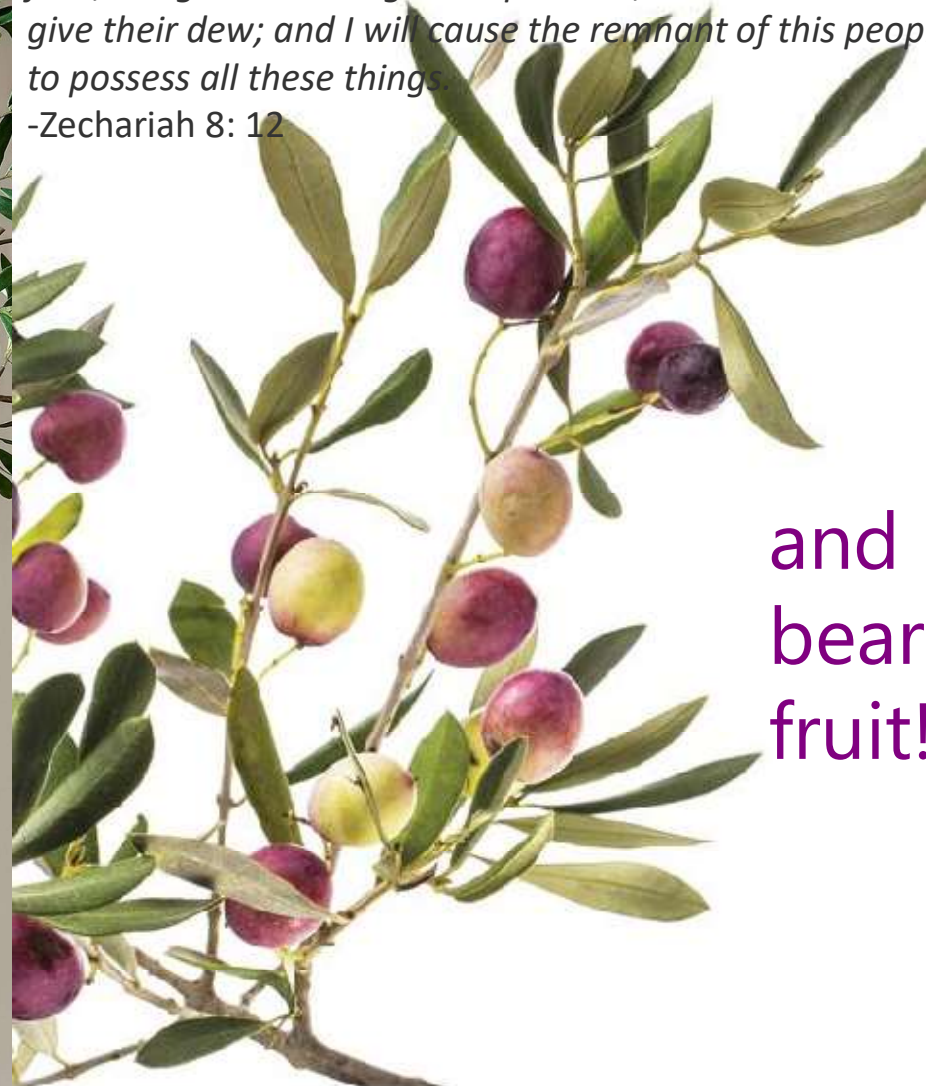
Like an olive branch,



continue to reach out

*For there shall be a sowing of peace; the vine shall yield fruit, the ground shall give its produce, and the skies shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things.*

*-Zechariah 8: 12*



and  
bear  
fruit!



September 3 – October 1, 2023



- Creation
- Family / Household
- World Witness
- Federal + State Governing – violence in our streets
- Community Building
- Neighborhood
- Friends & Strangers

[Korea Peace Appeal](#)

[Gun Violence Policies, Studies and Resources](#)

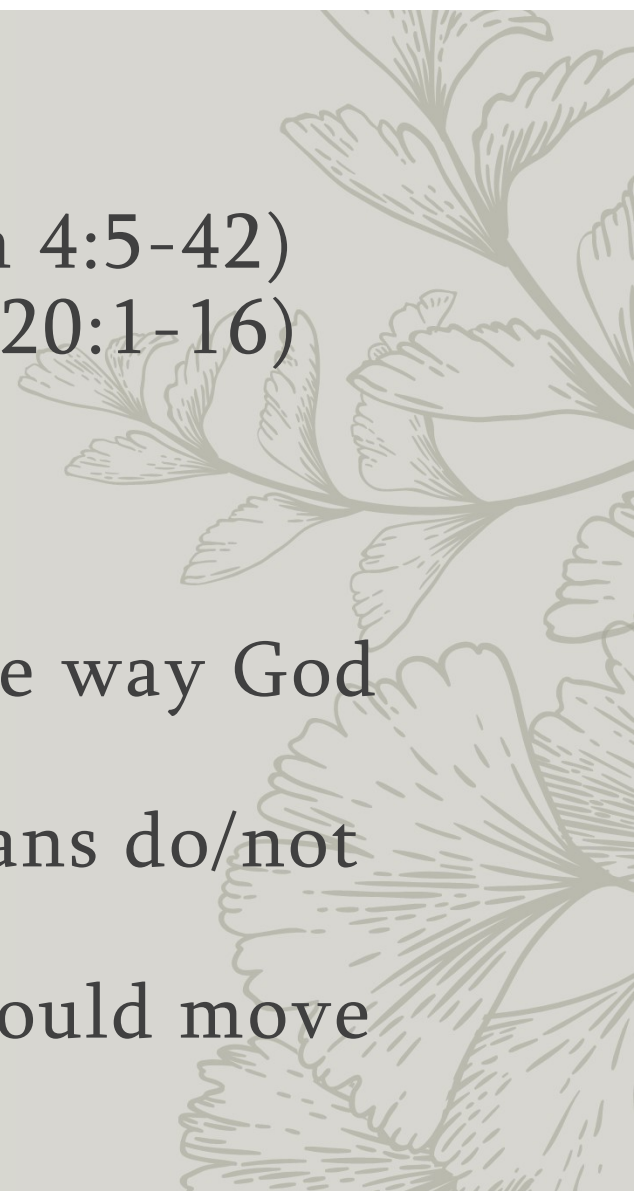
[Becoming a Peace Church](#)

[Living Out the Commitment to Peacemaking](#)

## GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Rich Young Man (Mark 10:17-22)
2. Samaritan Women at the Well (John 4:5-42)
3. Laborers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16)
4. Cain & Abel (Genesis 4:1-16)
5. Mary & Martha (Luke 10:38-42)

- What do these verses tell us about the way God relates to us as a peacemaker?
- What does it say about the way humans do/not relate to one another as peacemakers?
- How does it help show us how we should move forward as God's peacemakers?





## Optional Slide & Your Chance to OPT IN

Our Lord is on a recruiting mission this morning. He's looking for a few volunteers to join God's Peace Corps. He's looking for a few good men and a few good women who will spread God's peace all over the world. So much war, so much strife, so much pain exists in the world. That's means there is plenty of work for you and me to do. Will we take up the mantle of peacemaker? Every tiny step, every pure action, receives God's blessing!