I’m so BLESSED! We hear this word thrown around from time to time. I’m so blessed because of…

- the success that I have in life
- the clothes I wear
- the car I drive
- the locations I’m in
- the food I eat
- I don’t have any problems or issues in my life.

We often equate our external circumstances with blessing. While money, status, popularity and possessions are not wrong in and of themselves, they are not a true indication of blessing.

What does it really mean to be blessed in God’s eyes?

As large crowds began to follow Jesus, excitement mounted around Him and his disciples. In a pivotal moment, Jesus pulled his disciples aside to teach the ways of God’s Kingdom that are upside down and backwards when compared with the teachings of the world.

What are the Beatitudes?

The entire Sermon on the Mount spans three chapters in Matthew 5–7. The preamble to that sermon found in Matt 5:1–12, commonly known as the Beatitudes, consists of a description of the inward character that produces Christlike conduct and results in heavenly blessing.
Following the Beatitudes (in the rest of the Sermon on the Mount), Jesus details the outward actions and behaviors that should describe the lives of his followers. The order in which Jesus delivers this sermon is significant because it highlights that true righteousness is cultivated on the inside first and then subsequently radiates out through our words and actions. Over the next six weeks we will be diving into the Beatitudes in our series entitled #BLESSED.

Matthew 5:3–12 - New Living Translation (NLT)

The Beatitudes

3 “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

4 God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth.

6 God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

7 God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8 God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

9 God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

10 God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

11 God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers. Be happy about it!

12 Be very glad! For a great reward awaits you in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted in the same way.”
SERMON NOTES - WEEK 1
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

SERMON NOTES - WEEK 2
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

SERMON NOTES - WEEK 3
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
SERMON NOTES - WEEK 4
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

SERMON NOTES - WEEK 5
Blessed are those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

SERMON NOTES - WEEK 6
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
UNPACK IT

What would the first century audience associate with the word blessed? This powerful word carried rich meaning in the culture of that day. It would have brought to mind an image of someone whose well-being transcended worldly circumstances.

Today, we often connect blessing with being happy. The English word “happy” is from the root hap which means lucky and thus is dependent on our circumstances. Happiness tends to go up or down depending on what “happens” or how things are going in our lives, but this is far inferior to the idea of being blessed (makarios) which, by definition, is independent of external circumstances.

So “blessed” does not mean “untroubled”; it means “between you and God all is well.” You are deeply secure, profoundly content, happy in God – regardless of what is happening around you.
IT’S ALL GREEK TO ME
Looking at the Greek words gives us a fuller understanding of the text.

The word translated blessed in Greek is makarios meaning happy, fortunate, blissful. The ancient Greek poet Homer used the word to describe a wealthy man, and the philosopher Plato used it of one who is successful in business. Both Homer and Hesiod spoke of the Greek gods as being makarios within themselves, because they were unaffected by the world of men, who were subject to poverty, disease, weakness, misfortune, and death. The fullest meaning of the term, therefore, had to do with an inward contentedness that is not affected by circumstances. That is what God desires for His children, a state of joy and well-being that does not depend on physical, temporary circumstances.

DIG DEEPER
As we dive into the beatitudes, the first one we will examine is,

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Matthew 5:3 (NIV)

Each phrase of the Beatitudes appears to be short and simple, yet every word is pregnant with deep meaning. To truly grasp what Jesus was conveying to his listeners, then and today, we must examine each carefully chosen word. What did Jesus mean when he said, “poor”?

We can know that Jesus was not simply talking about external poverty because Matthew chose to record the modifier “in spirit.” Regardless of our outward circumstances, Jesus calls us to examine our inner state and recognize that in and of ourselves we are completely destitute.
There are three Greek words used in the Bible for “poor”. Two of these words refer simply to your financial status and come from the root word penes (one who works for a living). The word Jesus chose is the third Greek word for poor, ptóchos, which means poor, destitute, spiritually poor, deeply destitute or completely lacking resources. This word was used to described beggars because they were helpless and completely dependent upon others.

Sometimes it is hard to identify our own spiritual poverty because we struggle to grasp the full meaning of what Jesus meant when He said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” To expand your understanding of this blessing, read the various translations below and circle the words that offer you more insight.

**Blessed are...**

“they who know their spiritual poverty” (Berkley)
“those people who depend only on Him” (CEV)
“who recognize they are spiritually helpless” (GWT)
“those who know they are spiritually poor” (GNT)
“those who are destitute in spirit” (ISV)
“those who realize their need for him” (NLT)
“people who know they have great spiritual needs” (NCV)
“the poor in spirit (the humble, who rate themselves insignificant)” (Amplified)
“when you’re at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule” (Message)
“those who have surrendered completely to God and trust only in Him” (TPT)

... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**IT’S ALL GREEK TO ME**

Looking at the Greek words gives us a fuller understanding of the text.

There are three Greek words used in the Bible for “poor”. Two of these words refer simply to your financial status and come from the root word penes (one who works for a living). The word Jesus chose is the third Greek word for poor, ptóchos, which means poor, destitute, spiritually poor, deeply destitute or completely lacking resources. This word was used to described beggars because they were helpless and completely dependent upon others.
Real life application:

The realization that we are “poor in spirit” is the beginning of the journey with Christ, not the end. The Christian who truly walks as one who is “poor in spirit” will have a day-by-day, moment by moment mindset which leads to a lifestyle of continual submission to and dependence upon God.

- In what ways have you recognized your own spiritual poverty?
- What emotions did you experience when you realized that you were poor in spirit?
- What can you practically do to live a lifestyle of dependence upon God?
- Choose one area of your life where you have become aware of your spiritual poverty. Write a prayer to the Lord acknowledging your dependence on Him in that area. Ask Him to reveal to you ways that He would have you surrender this area to Him.
BLESSSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN, FOR THEY WILL BE COMFORTED.
MATTHEW 5:4 (NIV)

Death, loss and mourning have plagued humanity since the Fall. Different cultures throughout the ages have attempted to cope with these universal experiences in various ways. Some people embrace mourning as a natural part of life, others avoid dealing with loss and mourning through distraction, and still others remain stuck or misplace blame on God.

- What types of things do people typically grieve or mourn in our culture today?

- Everyone, everywhere experiences loss. What have you been mourning in your life in this season (big or small)?

HISTORICAL CONTEXT
Understanding culture will help us bring meaning to the text.

The Hebrew Mindset
The Jewish people allow time and space for mourning. Judaism embraces mourning as a discipline. Rather than avoiding grief, the mourner is supported by the community as they actively engage in the process of mourning.

Knowing the character of God, they await the comfort and blessing that come from Him during the process of mourning. They have a structured process that their community observes to guide them through the experience of mourning the death of a loved one. It begins with shiva. Shiva is a period of seven days in which the Jewish family observes a formal time of mourning to honor their loved one. According to Jewish law, after losing a parent, spouse, sibling, or child individuals should “sit shiva.” Jewish bereavement marks the days and then the months, and then all the years after a death.
UNPACK IT

Have you ever thought about the fact that Jesus himself mourned?

Jesus, the Blessed One, mourns. Jesus mourns when his friend Lazarus dies; he mourns when he overlooks the city of Jerusalem, soon to be destroyed. Jesus mourns over all losses and devastations that fill the human heart with pain. He grieves with those who grieve and sheds tears with those who cry. The violence, greed, lust, and so many other evils that have distorted the face of the earth and its people cause the Blessed Son of God to mourn. We, too, must mourn if we hope to experience God’s consolation.

Henri Nouwen

We often associate mourning with grieving the death of a loved one or the loss of a personal dream, but the realization of our own brokenness can also bring us to a point of mourning. Once we have identified our poverty of spirit, it naturally follows that we would mourn the sin that separates us from God.

Pastor and author Pat MacLeod writes:

“Through mourning we see ourselves as we really are – as those created in God’s image to know God and commune with Him in perfect love. But our sin has marred that image. Evil and death are not just at work out there, they exist inside of me. Through mourning, we linger over the effects of our sin on others, including the Son of God. The resulting sorrow leads to repentance and change.”

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just...’ The biggest word in scripture just might be the two letter one, if. For confessing sins – admitting failure – is exactly what prisoners of pride refuse to do.”

Max Lucado, The Applause of Heaven

Many of us are content with hoping that God will love us for our good parts and not notice the rest. Yet those parts of us that we try to hide are exactly that parts that He wants to heal. Not until we truly understand the depth of our sin can we process and accept the height of his love and grace. In our desperate need for Him, He brings His comfort.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.  
Matthew 5:4 (NIV)

Read the following scriptures. What promises do these scriptures give about mourning and/or comfort?

- Psalm 34:18
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- Isaiah 61:1-3
- Psalm 126:5-6

IT’S ALL GREEK TO ME

Looking at the Greek words gives us a fuller understanding of the text.

The Greek word used is this passage for comfort is paraclete. It is the same Greek word that is used in the New Testament for the Holy Spirit. This word comes two Greek words, pará meaning “from close beside: and kaléō meaning “to make a call.” The Holy Spirit is the paraclete - the one called to your side to help and comfort you. Isn’t this the way you want to be comforted? God comes near and meets all your needs bringing His presence, peace, and provision.
BE TRANSFORMED
Real life application:

• How have you experienced the comfort of the Holy Spirit in a time of loss?

• How can you share the comfort that you have received from God with others?

• Choose one area of your life where you have become aware of your need to mourn (this could be the loss of a dream, a relationship, awareness of your own brokenness, etc.) Write a letter from God to you and let Him speak to you about how He wants to comfort you.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Matthew 5:4 (NIV)
BLESSED ARE THE MEEK, FOR THEY WILL INHERIT THE EARTH.
MATTHEW 5:5 (NIV)

Many view the beatitudes as descriptions of different groups of people who will receive blessing. In their view, some people are merciful, others mourn, others are meek and still others are persecuted. To the contrary, Jesus intentionally ordered the beatitudes to be a progression of character formation where one character trait leads to the next in the life of each believer. None of the character traits that Jesus mentions in the beatitudes are natural traits so by default they can only be supernaturally produced. Gentleness or meekness especially highlights the supernatural origin as it is mentioned as one of the fruits of the Spirit.

When Christ said, “Blessed are the meek,” He was using a military term. The ancient Greek army would wrangle wild horses and bring them in from the wild in order to train them for war. Not many possessed the strength or willingness to obey needed to be utilized by the Greek cavalry. Some were made into pack animals; some were simply discarded. But those that qualified after being broken were said to be ‘praus’ (πραΰς). They were no longer unruly or rebellious or out of control. The war horses – the ‘meek’ – would now charge into battle under control of their masters and maneuver according to his commands. A meek horse was one that had kept its strength but placed it under the authority of the one who had tamed it.

Further this Greek word ‘praus’ (πραΰς) means displaying the right blend of force and reserve (gentleness). A person who is meek avoids unnecessary harshness, yet without compromising or being too slow to use necessary force. Biblical meekness is not weakness but rather refers to exercising God’s strength under His control.
UNPACK IT

What is meekness? Meek is not a popular word today and is easily misunderstood. Meek is not weak; it is not defeatist, timid, fragile, lazy or sluggish. Meekness is “power under control.”

In short, the biblical notions of meekness and gentleness are incomplete without both strength and control. Biblical meekness is not passivity or weakness. Rather, it entails a measured, deliberate, and properly deployed power.

**Meekness** could be described as:

- power under control
- submitted power
- surrendered strength
- strength in gentleness
- formidable determination in the face of the constant onslaughts of the enemy
- the humble willingness to do what your Master commands you to do

Not only did Jesus not meet the Jews’ expectation of a Messiah who conquered with military force, but he celebrates characteristics that are the exact opposite. Jesus does not describe himself in scripture very often, but He does purposefully describe himself as meek.

Read Matthew 11:28–30 below. Underline all the ways that Jesus describes meekness in these verses.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

If we are called to live like Jesus, how can we display meekness like He did? We can’t just try harder!
The historical context is important when interpreting the meaning and significance of “blessed are the gentle (meek)”. Remember that Jesus is speaking primarily to Jews in this sermon which was likely His first major message. Can you imagine the expectation that buzzed through the Jewish crowd as they prepared themselves to hear from their Messiah who would lay out His plans to conquer the hated Roman oppressors? Nothing could have come to them as more of a shock than these eight beatitudes, but this one, the third, must have been especially shocking. “Blessed are the meek”. How much further from their expectation of a materialistic, military kingdom could Jesus’ statement have been?

“We think of the Christian life as a ‘changed life’ but it is not that. God offers us an ‘exchanged life’, a ‘substituted life’, and Christ is our Substitute within. “I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ lives in me.” This life is not something which we ourselves have to produce. It is Christ’s own life reproduced in us.

God will not give me humility or patience or holiness or love as separate gifts of His grace. He is not a retailer dispensing grace to us in doses, measuring out some patience to the impatient, some love to the unloving, some meekness to the proud, in quantities that we take and work on as a kind of capital. He has given only one gift to meet all our needs, His Son Christ Jesus, and as I look to Him to live out His life in me, He will be humble and patient and loving and everything else I need - in my stead.”

The Normal Christian Life, Watchman Nee

In keeping with this quote, Galatians 5:23 says the “fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control.” Notice these are the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruits of the Spirit. Whatever we have need of, the solution is the same – the Holy Spirit. We simply need to acknowledge our need and trust Jesus to live out His life in us. The Spirit within us releases the fruit that we need as we surrender and depend on Him.

Which fruit of the Spirit do you need Jesus to release into your life right now?
An extra “amplified” translation of Matt 5:5 might be, ”O the bliss of the man who is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time, who has every instinct, and impulse, and passion under control because he himself is God-controlled, who has the humility to realize his own ignorance and his own weakness, for such a man is a king among men!”

William Barclay

BE TRANSFORMED
Real life application:

- What misconceptions did you have about the meaning of the word “meek”?

- Mother Teresa may be one of the most well-known examples of humility and meekness. Below is a list of qualities she practiced. As you read the items in this list, circle the ones that are impossible to do in your own strength. Star one of them that you will ask God to develop in your life.

1. Speak as little as possible about yourself.

2. Keep busy with your own affairs and not those of others.

3. Accept small irritations with good humor.

4. Accept being forgotten and disregarded with ease.

5. Do not dwell on the faults of others.

6. Be courteous and delicate even when provoked by someone else.

7. Give in, in discussions, even when you are right.

8. Choose always the more difficult task.

God does not hand out meekness on its own, but instead we receive meekness as we become more like Christ. Choose a situation in your life where you have become aware of your need to be meek. Pray to give this situation to the Lord.
BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEY WILL BE FILLED.

MATTHEW 5:6 (NIV)

When was the last time you really felt hungry or thirsty? What signs does your body give you when it is time to get something to eat or drink?

What does it feel like to be satiated – to be completely filled related to physical hunger?

In this beatitude, Jesus uses imagery that is immediately relatable for all of humanity, but especially for his first century audience in Israel.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Looking at the Greek words gives us a fuller understanding of the text.

At the time of Jesus, for a family to eat meat in Palestine was a rare experience. In that ancient world hunger was not something which could be satisfied with a passing snack. It could often be the hunger which threatened life, the starvation in which one had to eat or die. The same is true of thirst. There are few of us who have ever known what it is to be genuinely thirsty. We live in a situation in which we turn a tap and water flows. In that ancient world people were dependent on streams and wells, and there might be a long, long distance between them on a journey, and the waterskin might be empty. Still worse, the sandstorm might come, and all that a man could do was to turn his back to the swirling sand, and hide his head in his hood, while his mouth and his throat and his nostrils and his lungs were filled with the fine sand, which made him choke with thirst. People who lived in conditions like that knew the thirst which had to be satisfied if they were to survive.

What Jesus is saying here is, “Do you desire righteousness with the intensity of desire with which a starving person desires food, and the one parched with thirst desires water?”
UNPACK IT

Hunger and thirst are a universal experience. We all hunger and thirst for a variety of things. Some satisfy for a moment, but ultimately leave us needing more, while others truly fill and quench our desires.

It doesn’t matter if you are rich or poor, old or young, it is impossible to satisfy your deepest desires apart from God. As we heard in this week’s sermon, King Solomon is a case study. He had access to search in every facet of life for something to fulfill him apart from God, but in the end, he found that anything that came from his own hand was meaningless and did not satisfy. You can revisit his story in (Ecclesiastes 2: 4–11).

BE TRANSFORMED

Real life application:

God knows that our hunger and thirst will never be satisfied apart from Him. In Jeremiah 2:13 God says,

“My people have committed two sins:
They have forsaken me,
the spring of living water,
and have dug their own cisterns,
broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”
On the jar on the right, write the ways you have tried to quench your thirst or satisfy your hunger apart from God.

On the jar on the left, list the ways that God promises to fulfill us when we seek Him. (see Isaiah 55:1-2, Psalm 107:8-9, John 7:37-39, Prov 21:21, Psalm 34:8)

“The word which is used for filled is an extraordinary word. It is the word chortazesthai. Originally this word was used to describe the special fattening of animals for killing. When it did come to be used of humans, it meant to stuff a person full to the point of complete satiety. It always remained something of a colloquial word, and it always retained something of the idea of filling a person full to repletion. If a person hungers and thirsts for that righteousness which God alone can give, God will not send him away empty, but God will fill him, until his longings are achieved, and his soul is satisfied.”
• Read the following translations of Matt 5:6.

1. You’re blessed when you’ve worked up a good appetite for God. He’s food and drink in the best meal you’ll ever eat. (MSG)

2. How enriched you are when you crave righteousness! For you will be satisfied. (TPT)

3. Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires; God will satisfy them fully! (GNT)

4. God blesses those people who want to obey him more than to eat or drink. They will be given what they want! (CEV)

• Rewrite the beatitude to capture the fullness of its meaning in your own words below:

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Matthew 5:6 (NIV)
BLESS ARE THOSE WHO ARE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY WILL BE SHOWN MERCY.

MATTHEW 5:7 (NIV)

At this point in the Beatitudes, we see a shift in focus from the believer’s relationship with God to the believer’s interaction with others. The first four Beatitudes (poor in spirit, mourn, meek, hunger and thirst for righteousness) address our total dependence upon God and the next four (merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, and persecuted) are the outworking in everyday life of that dependence upon Him. As we turn our attention to the concept of mercy, it is imperative that we understand the biblical meaning of mercy.

The Hebrew word for mercy is hesed which also means lovingkindness. Often, when we picture mercy, we think of a defendant in a courtroom that is guilty but pardoned by a benevolent judge. But mercy is more than that. Mercy is a pursuing love that does not let go. Hesed expresses both God’s loyalty to His covenant and His love for His people along with a faithfulness to keep His promises. “It is not merely love, but loyal love; not merely kindness, but dependable kindness; not merely affection, but affection that has committed itself.” Mercy is not simply feeling compassion but exists when something is done to alleviate distress.

“Jesus, the Blessed Child of God, is merciful. Showing mercy is different from having pity. Pity connotes distance, even looking down upon. When a beggar asks for money and you give him something out of pity, you are not showing mercy. Mercy comes from a compassionate heart; it comes from a desire to be equal. Jesus didn’t want to look down on us. He wanted to become one of us and feel deeply with us.”

Henri Nouwen
UNPACK IT
Read the following scriptures. What do we learn about God’s mercy?

Psalm 103:8
The Lord is compassionate (hesed) and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

Lamentations 3:22-23
Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions (hesed) never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

Hebrews 4:14, 16
Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess…Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Titus 3:4-6
But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, who he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

In what specific areas of your life have you received mercy from God? From others? How did it make you feel? Did it impact the trajectory of your life?
Real life application:

Do you struggle to show mercy to other people? “The religious leadership in Jesus’ day tended toward being judgmental and merciless (“mercy less”) because of their demand for rigorous observance of the law. The Scribes and Pharisees did not receive God’s mercy because they had become so self-satisfied with their own religious attainments that they did not sense their dangerous condition of total spiritual bankruptcy and their desperate need for God’s rich mercy.”

We can all tend toward having a judgmental, performance-oriented mindset, especially when we are not in touch with the depth of mercy that we have received from God. This incredible mercy is available to all of us when we choose to receive it. It isn’t meant to stop with us. As we have freely received God’s mercy, we are called to freely give it to others who are just as undeserving as we were.

What area of your life would be transformed if you had a first-hand encounter with God’s mercy?
William Barclay wrote a possible translation of this Beatitude. Read it and react.

_O the bliss of the man who gets right inside other people until he can see with their eyes, think with their thoughts, feel with their feelings, for he who does that will find others do the same for him and will know that is what God in Jesus Christ has done._

William Barclay

_Blessed are those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy._
Matthew 5:7 (NIV)
BLESSSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY WILL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD.

MATTHEW 5:9 (NIV)

Jesus calls us to be peace “makers” not peace “keepers.” Christians have misinterpreted the idea of what a peacemaker is by attributing a doormat quality to it. “In this beatitude Jesus doesn’t bless those who have a peaceful disposition, as good as that might be. He doesn’t say, “Blessed are those who are peaceful.” The focus is not on the personality but on the action of the person Jesus describes. Those who are blessed are those who “make” peace.”

Much like the beatitude that calls us to be meek, being a peacemaker is a position of strength under control. To be a peacemaker, we need not tip toe around afraid to upset the apple cart or ruffle someone’s feathers. “The way of the Lord’s peacemaker is not a weak-kneed approach, but is the way of Spirit given courage, which is counter to the world’s usual methods of bringing about change.”

[Jesus’] blessing is on the Peace-makers, not necessarily on the peace-lovers. It very often happens that if a person loves peace in the wrong way, he/she succeeds in making trouble and not peace. We may, for instance, allow a threatening and dangerous situation to develop, and our defense is that for peace’s sake we do not want to take any action. There is many a person who thinks that he/she is loving peace, when in fact he is piling up trouble for the future, because he/she refuses to face the situation and to take the action which the situation demands. The peace which the Bible calls blessed does not come from the evasion of issues; it comes from facing them, dealing with them, and conquering them. What this beatitude demands is not the passive acceptance of things because we are afraid of the trouble of doing anything about them, but the active facing of things, and the making of peace, even when the way to peace is through struggle.

How does this definition of peacemaker differ from your previous understandings?
“Peacemaker comes from the Greek word eirenopoios from eirene = peace + poieo = make. Eirene signifies a harmonious relationship and is not merely the absence of war or an uneasy truce. Eirene signifies parties holding differences of opinion who are willing to turn toward each other and embrace one another in spite of their differences.

Eirene is derived from the verb eiro which means to bind or join together that which is broken or divided. The idea is to bring together as one again. So we can expand the definition of “peacemaker” as those who facilitate the binding together of those who were divided, thus setting them as one. Jesus is referring to those who actively intervene to bind together those that are divided. By making peace, kingdom citizens manifest themselves as sons of God.”

The Hebrew word used in the Bible to describe peace and wholeness is SHALOM. We can think of Shalom as having nothing missing and nothing broken.

*For God was pleased … through [Christ] to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through [Christ’s] blood, shed on the cross.*

Colossians 1:19 – 20 (NIV)
“God is ... a peacemaking God. The whole history of redemption, climaxing in the death and resurrection of Jesus, is God’s strategy to bring about a just and lasting peace between rebel man and himself, and then between man and his fellow man. God’s children have the character of their Father. What he loves, they love. What he pursues, they pursue. You can know his children because they are willing to make sacrifices for peace the way God did.

By the sovereign work of God’s grace, rebel human beings are born again, and brought from rebellion to faith, and made into children of God. We were given a new nature, after the image of our heavenly Father. If he is a peacemaker, then his children, who have his nature, will be peacemakers too.”

Christ’s blood shed on the cross makes it possible for each of our relationships to be made right or reconciled -- our relationship with God, our relationships with others, and ultimately even our relationship with ourselves. We are never more like God than when we take the wholeness and completeness that we have into a world that desperately needs it. If we are to be peacemakers, we must follow Christ’s example.

Look at the Scriptures below. What do we learn about peace and peacemaking?

Isaiah 26:12
Isaiah 52:7
Psalm 122:8-9
Matt 5:23-24
I Thess. 5:23
Peace doesn’t just happen; we make peace. In that sense it is a goal—something we desire, something we strive for. But we do not always succeed. We shouldn’t equate peacemaking with peace-achieving. A peacemaker longs for peace, and works for peace, and sacrifices for peace. But the attainment of peace may not come. “As far as it depends on you” means not allowing a rupture in a relationship to be your fault.6

**BE TRANSFORMED**

**Real life application:**

In the passage below, underline the instructions about how to keep peace in your life.

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”

Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.
Romans 12:17-21

Spend a few moments asking God to show if there is someone or some situation where He is calling you to “make peace.”

Pray for that situation specifically asking God how you can be a peacemaker.

**Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.**
Matthew 5:9 (NIV)