

8. Peacemakers sometimes cause trouble. Jesus turned over the tables of oppressive money-changers (Jn. 2:13-16). When he says "I come not to bring peace but division (Lk. 12:51), the "peace" of which he speaks merely disguises an order of injustice (see Jer. 6:13-15). It was Jesus' peacemaking mission which landed him on the cross (Col. 1:20).

9. Peacemaking is rooted in grace. In Jesus' prayer, our "debts" are forgiven in the measure to which we forgive others (Mt. 6:12). "Whoever is forgiven little, loves little" (Lk. 7:47). It is grace which frees us from our fear (1 Jn. 4:18) and empowers us to risk our lives for the sake of justice and peace.

10. Peace in Christ and in creation are linked. Not only are divisions in the human community overcome "in Christ" (Galatians 3:28), but also in the whole created order. The knowledge of God and the healing of creation are parallel realities (Is. 11:3-9). The land itself mourns (Is. 33:9). "But ask the beasts . . . and the birds . . . or the plants, and they will teach you" of the ways of the Lord (Job 12:7-10).

11. Peacemaking is not optional. The separation between "preaching the Gospel" and "working for peace and justice" is a perversion of biblical truth. Jesus prayed: "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt. 6:10). We lie if we say we love God yet fail to assist neighbors in need (1 Jn. 4:20). Loving enemies—whether close at hand or far away—is the way to become children of God (Mt. 5:44-45).

12. God's promised future is peace. Though now living as "aliens" in a strange land, peacemakers have caught a glimpse of how the future will finally unfold. Both Isaiah and John's Revelation speak of the coming "new heaven and new earth" (Is. 65:17-22; Rev. 21:1). The day is coming, says Micah, when nations "shall beat their swords into ploughshares . . . and neither shall they learn war any more" (4:3-4). On that day, creation itself—which "has been groaning in travail . . . will be set free from its bondage to decay" (Rom. 8:19-24).

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The Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America gathers, equips and mobilizes Baptists to build a culture of peace rooted in justice. We labour with a wonderful array of peacemakers to change the world.

1. Peace is the will of God. From the first chapter of Scripture, where God pronounced creation "good" (Gen. 1:31), to the very last, in John's vision of a tree "for the healing of the nations" (Rev. 22:2), God pursues peace. Trust in God is contrasted with trust in the instruments of war (Is. 31:1; Ps. 20:7, 33:16-17; Hos. 1:7).

The Bible Speaks About Peace

12 things every Christian should know

2. Peace was the mission of Jesus. His role as "The Prince of Peace" was foretold by Isaiah (9:6). Angels announcing his birth declared "Glory to God" and "peace on earth" (Lk. 2:14). Weeping over Jerusalem, Jesus prayed: "would that you knew the things that make for peace" (Lk. 19:41-42).

3. The fruit of the Spirit is peace (Gal. 5:22). "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord" (Zech. 4:6). Prior to his death, Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you," in reference to the coming presence of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:25-27).

4. Peace was the witness of the early church. The new community created in Christ bore witness by its reconciled fellowship: "And all who believed were together and had all things in common" (Acts 2:44-47; 4:32-37). Paul urged that the church's "feet" be "shod with the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15).

5. Peace is more than the absence of war. Peace—*shalom*—occurs when captives are released (Lk. 4:18); when outcasts are gathered (Zeph. 3:19); when the hungry have plenty to eat (Joel 2:19-26; Lk. 1:53; 1 Sam. 2:1-8).

6. The foundation of peace is justice. "The effect of righteousness [justice] will be peace," predicted Isaiah (32:17). "Righteousness and peace will kiss," wrote the psalmist (85:10). "Sowing justice" will result in peace, said Hosea (10:12-14).

7. Peace, like war, is waged. Peacemakers are not passive, but active. Peter, echoing the psalmist, urges us to "seek peace, and pursue it" (1 Pet. 3:11; Ps. 34:14). Jesus urged worshipers to take the initiative to settle disputes (Mt. 5: 23-24). Peace includes loving and feeding enemies (Lk. 6:27; Rom. 12:20).