

The King's People: Warriors for Peace Part 3

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[0 : 00] We look to you. We need your word. We need you to speak to us. Instruct us. Clearly instruct us so that we can follow as you give us your spirit to do so.

Thank you, Lord, that you are at work at New City Fellowship, that you are doing all your holy will, and that you're bringing glory to your Son among us.

Use us for your glory. Use us for your kingdom. May thy kingdom come and thy will be done among us as we behold your great holiness, trusting in you to supply all that we need according to your riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Use your unworthy servant now to preach your word. Oh, God, may your word go forth with your power. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. Thank you. We're going to start at verse 1, I see. Okay, we'll do that. We are once again turning back to verse 9.

[1 : 11] And amen. Amen. Word of the Lord. Seeing the crowds, he went up on a mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

He opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. For they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

And blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. our passage. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

[2 : 12] That is the word of the Lord. You may be seated. Just so you know, I emphasize certain parts of the reading, because that's what emphasis is.

For they, and they only, is what it means. In our text, blessed are the peacemakers, for they, and they alone, shall be called sons of God.

They alone, by the grace of God. One of my daughters, and I will not name her, does not look alike, look a lot like me physically.

Anyway. When she, my, and my wife is a virtuous woman. Amen. When she was a little girl, she and Sandy were almost identical, at the same ages.

You should saw pictures. It was amazing, how much they look alike. As a teenager, especially when we moved to Miami, people would ask her, if I was her stepfather. I'm not sure they believed, I believe was her biological father.

[3 : 28] And even here, we have a neighbor, who still doesn't believe, she's my biological child. But as she matured, what she, she showed herself, to be my daughter, in her personality, her temperament, her likes and dislikes.

We love the same books, the same movies. You should see us talking movie quotes, back and forth to each other. You see, maturity, revealed, who her daddy is.

The same is true spiritually. When you are first born again, you are just happy to have a new life in Jesus. You're just excited. But to be honest, you still make many of the same mistakes and sins that you did before you were born again.

But what happens? As you grow, as you mature in Jesus, you begin to change. Come on, somebody. You begin to look more like Jesus and therefore more like your spiritual father, the living God.

There's not a perfect likeness. It will be when Jesus comes, but there is a likeness. You're growing up. You're maturing by his grace.

[4 : 51] Spiritual life and maturity reveal who your daddy is and whose kingdom you call home. Peacemakers are called children of God.

So who's your daddy? Who's your daddy? If we were to follow you around for a year, who's your daddy?

Would it be obvious? You see, either your spiritual paternity test is negative or you're not as mature as you think you are.

No matter how much doctrine you know. Maturity is different. It includes, but it's different from knowledge.

This is going to be a very practical message. I'm trying to finish it up today. I really am. But it's going to be very practical. So we're going to take some time, if you allow me, to walk through what the Bible says about peacemaking and conflict resolution.

[6 : 06] This is personal. Amen, people? This is our history. This is where we are. And we're on the other side. Amen. We don't want to go back. Remember, we saw last Lord's Day, fighting for peace is a spiritual warfare.

The enemy of our souls is the one who delights to use our innate sinfulness to encourage war and conflict in the world. But his favorite theater of battle is within the church.

That's where he loves to stir up the most conflict within the body of Christ. Now, allow me to say something just from last week because last week we saw that gossip and slander can be two of the deadliest weaknesses among God's people that the enemy exploits.

You saw that last week, right? But I forgot to tell you one thing. In the area of repentance, when you are repenting of gossip and slander, amen to repentance, y'all.

You should, of course, go to the person whose reputation you have slandered and gossiped about and let them know, forgive me.

[7 : 28] You should do that. That's a good thing to do. That's how you demonstrate repentance. It's not just telling God, it starts there, telling God I've sinned, but if you sinned against somebody and they're still alive and nearby or whatever, you should go to them and beg their forgiveness.

It's okay. It's necessary. But there's something else that's necessary. We talked about that last week. You saw that. The second part of true repentance is then going to those you gossiped with, you slandered with.

Someone reminded me this last week and it was in my mind. I just never got to say it. You see, it's one thing to go to a person and say, hey, I was wrong about how I shouldn't have done that.

But if you have, listen, if you have slandered their good name, if you have harmed their reputation by your words, sins of the tongue, right, then it's your responsibility to go to those folk who you spoke to and typed to and let them know you sinned against the Lord and against your brother or sister.

Forgive me. Forgive me for speaking this way. You see, I mentioned that in the world, they don't, the world doesn't do that. Remember we talked about on social media, no one ever retracts what they say.

[9 : 05] Social media, they will slander you and gossip about you on social media and then when the truth comes out, everybody goes quiet. No, but that's not so in the kingdom of God. We don't go quiet.

We make restitution in the name of Jesus if we are able. Y'all real quiet out there, I know. And if I get far enough today, you'll find out why this is important.

We make restitution in the name of Jesus. Don't be afraid to follow Christ into a difficult situation.

You will find he's there with you. That's how the body gets healed. Now, moving on.

Fighting for peace in the body, therefore, is our first responsibility in the kingdom of God. You see, if we're not warriors for peace in the church, then seeking to be such in the culture becomes a bit hypocritical.

[10 : 15] You see, you can't be a biblical justice warrior in the world yet gossip and slander and speak evilly about your brothers and sisters in the church. That looks weird, don't it?

We out there in the world trying to bring reconciliation and trying to get justice for people in the name of Christ. Amen to that. Do that. But at the same time, you've got to go home to your people, to the body of Christ and be that person, that peace warrior, that warrior for peace within the body first.

First. So how do we make peace when there's friction in the body? This is for any church. If you're listening online and you don't go to New City, you go to other churches, this is for you too.

Let's listen because every church, what did I say? Every church deals with issues of conflict and friction. Here's what I tell couples when I'm doing their premarital counseling.

I tell them to my friend, when you put two sinners together for any length of time in close proximity, you're going to have friction. When you put hundreds of people together for any length of time, Christians, including Christians, at some point, you're going to rub me the wrong way.

[11:49] I'm going to rub you the wrong way. That's called being the body in a sinful world. So how do we, so let's, remember, it's very practical.

Follow me. First of the things, how do we make, how do we do it with friction? First, ask God to check your heart and attitude so that you're coming to a conflict in the attitude of the Beatitudes. Beatitudes. The attitude of the Beatitudes. You see, in context, what we realize here is that all of those previous Beatitudes set us up to become peacemakers.

It's the character of Christ. Poverty of spirit. You recognize, once again, remember, you recognize you have nothing to offer God. You are a sinner trapped in darkness and death.

You have nothing to offer God. There's no reason he should save you. Your resume stinks. All right? That's first. Then, then mourning. You mourn over that fat.

[12:52] You mourn over your sin and the culture's sin. Not just the culture's sin, not just the sin around you, you mourn over yours. Your sin breaks your heart because it is an affront to divine love.

Come on, y'all. We, we, you enter into a state, a period of meekness. In other words, meekness suggests that you submit yourself to God and you're not always demanding your rights.

This is what I deserve. No. If you got what you deserve, you wouldn't like it. Come on. Then, that leads to, therefore, if I'm in this state of mourning over my sin and recognizing my sin, it leads to hungering and thirsting for righteousness.

That's practical righteousness. That's doing the will of God. I realize that I haven't been doing the will of God. I realize that I failed to do the will of God and now I just, I can't wait.

I long to do. I hunger and I thirst to do what's right in God's sight. which drives me to moral purity.

[14:03] Purity. Blessed are the pure in heart. Moral purity. For they will see God because I see Christ, because I see him in his word, because I see him in nature and creation, because my eyes have been opened by the gospel.

My eyes have been opened by God. Because of that, I now seek in every area of my life, in every area, to put off sin and to walk in purity before the Lord.

Moral purity in particular. Which leads to me being a merciful person. If all of that is true of me, if that's what's happening in my life, how can I not be merciful?

How can I not treat you with mercy when you mess up? How can I not? Remember, we saw that forgiveness is part of mercy. How can I not forgive you when I know me?

And I know how much God is forgiving, has forgiven me, and will forgive me, and is forgiving me right now. How can I not show you mercy, compassion?

[15:06] If all of that is happening, and remember, the beatitudes are the mark of God's people. It's what he's doing in you. If you belong to him, he's doing this in you right now.

Your job is to cooperate. When that's happening in us, we'll make peace. We'll be peacemakers.

We'll be those who seek to reconcile with ourselves and with others. Check your character. Check your attitude.

Otherwise, you will not be a peacemaker. you will not seek his kingdom, but you'll be seeking your own.

So first thing to do, check your attitude. When you see your weaknesses, you will see your need for Jesus. And that puts you in the best place to be a peacemaker and a reconciler in the body of Christ.

[16:12] Second thing, don't let a lot of time go by before attempting to reconcile with someone or to help others that you may be called upon to help reconcile.

Don't wait months or years to speak to someone. They don't remember, you really don't remember yourself, and hard hearts have developed over that time.

I'm still in Matthew, still in chapter 5, Matthew 5, 23 and 24. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before

the altar and go.

First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift. I love the fact that it even says that you may recognize, I may recognize that Bill is mad at me.

Not even per se that I'm mad at Bill. I should still go. But I'm realizing, you know something, Bill been giving me the cold shoulder. And Bill's not that kind of guy, by the way, y'all.

[17:18] He's a faithful elder. But if I think that he has something, it says stop worshipping. Leave your gift at the altar.

That's worship. And turn yourself around and go out and find your brother or your sister and say, we need to talk. We gotta get over, we gotta get through this.

Did I have I, what, have I done something? Third, third, remember I said we're gonna look at Matthew 18? Okay, this is that time. So, Matthew 18.

The third is to recognize that Matthew 18 remains the gold standard for our practice. We call this church discipline, but it begins with us, not with the elders.

It begins with the body. First of all, when you look over to Matthew 18, notice verses 21 and 22. Peter came up to Jesus.

[18:19] I guess Peter was feeling magnanimous. He was feeling spiritual. Lord, how often will we, will my brother sin against me and I forgive him? As many as seven times?

Oh, that number seven comes up there. We call it the perfect number, the number of God. Peter was, you know, he's saying, yeah. The rabbis didn't require seven. It was much less than that, but he, he was filling his spiritual oats seven times and Jesus blew him out of the water.

I do not say to you seven times, but 77 times. What? I gotta forgive this joker.

What? blessed are the merciful, remember, for they shall receive mercy. Why?

Because he has shown you mercy in Christ by forgiving your many sins. How can you hold sins against your brother or your sister?

[19:26] Peace begins with forgiveness. forgiveness. That's not, you're not at reconciliation yet. Peace begins when I release someone.

See, when someone sins against you, they now owe you. Peace, forgiveness says, I'm canceling the debt. And family, you may not reconcile because something, some, it takes two to do that, right? But if you will forgive, you set yourself free. Because unforgiveness will drive you insane. It will mess with your mind, your spirit, and your body.

Bitterness will corrupt you. I can speak, I know this for a fact. I used to, I've got, I always know when I'm having trouble forgiving, here's, this is Kevin Smith, I get chest pains.

not severe, but I, I can feel the pressure. And I know, I've been thinking about this too long. I've been ruminating too long. I gotta let it go.

[20:35] Jesus, I gotta give it to you. And once I begin doing that, I know, this is me now, whatever works for you. I know the spirit of God is lifting it off of me.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Then we are, and then, so that's the beginning, but then we are, we are called to prayerful with wisdom and sensitivity to follow the Lord's process of reconciliation.

You know that process. Verses 15 and 17 of Matthew 18. If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you've gained or won your brother.

But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.

If he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and tax collector. Notice the process. Notice the process.

[21:45] Don't go public with your conflict on social media or any other way. If Jeff and I, if I feel that Jeff and I are having a conflict, my calling is not to go and tell Jerry about it and Gabe and get my conclave together and say, you know what Jeff did to me?

It's not my, not to go and get my posse who will pat me on the back and say, oh, how he was so mean to you. That's no, don't you dare. Don't, uh-uh, no, that's gossip and slander.

I go to Jeff and I sit down with Jeff. You see, there's no room for anonymous complaints here behind a computer screen or otherwise.

You go. I can't send somebody else to Jeff and say, and tell Jeff, you hurt somebody, Jeff. No. Kevin Smith got hurt.

Kevin Smith goes to Jeff. And we go, I go alone. And this is much more than confrontation. Drop that word. This is not what's really happening.

[22 : 58] You see, if God is using you in love to go after his wandering sheep, if you truly believe they sinned against you, that's a wandering sheep. God is using you.

And that's the context of Matthew 18, by the way. verses 10 through 14. Jesus is talking about going after wandering sheep. And so the context of this going to somebody and confronting people to make peace with people is about recovery.

It's about not getting your spleen, you know, venting your spleen. It's not about you getting your stuff off and telling them, no. Remember the beatitudes.

It's about reclaiming, winning, winning your brother, gaining your brother. That's what you're trying to do. Not beat them up. You're trying to win them back.

You're a shepherd, as it were. You're trying to win them back. Go get them in the name of Jesus to put your arms around them. As you're going, as you're doing this, think about these things.

[24 : 14] You may need to have more than one one meeting with this person. It's okay. And when you're doing, express what you, what was done and how it impacted you.

Don't assume motive. You know what? Okay. Don't assume you know why they did it. Unless you are the fourth member of the Trinity, you have, you cannot, you do not know hearts, which means you do not know motives.

Unless they tell you. We are good at assuming motives, brothers and sisters. We, when someone hurts you, you are so good at assuming that they meant to do it.

That's because they don't like you or because they hurt. Whoa. Hold your horses. Back up. You have no idea unless they've told you.

Back up. Give the benefit of the doubt. They may not have even known they did something. They may not have known they hurt you.

[25 : 20] If you, if you can let it go, love covers a multitude of sins. If you can cover it, amen. If you can let it go and just move on, amen. That's biblical. But if you can't because it's significant, then this is what you do.

You go to them. And listen, in conflicts today, we put the emphasis on being heard.

It's important to be heard. I believe that. But that isn't where God's word puts the emphasis. Remember James 1, 19 and 20.

Know this, my beloved brothers. Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Where is the emphasis in the word of God in conflict? listening. Slow to speak, right?

[26 : 24] Quick to hear, slow to speak. That means you're not doing a whole lot of talking at this moment. You're listening. You want to understand. You put it out there. Now you back up and let them explain.

And listen, you are listening to understand, not listening to refute. Because if you're listening to refute, you're not listening to understand.

You will miss a whole lot of stuff because you're thinking about how you can respond. And your ears close. Your body is there but your ears are closed.

Husbands and wives, I hope you're listening. We're going to save some marriages this morning. Amen. And you're listening. It's a good idea, right?

Listen, you don't have to agree with their perspective. No one is saying that. You may disagree with them wholeheartedly. But listen, you need to understand their perspective. Repeat their points back to them so they know you listened.

[27 : 30] Otherwise, listen, this is very important. Otherwise, you could end up debating a straw man. Meaning, you're fighting a battle that no one else is fighting.

See, if you were listening to refute, your ears close. Now you didn't hear and understand what they were saying. But you will have an opinion.

You will have an opinion. And you speak and listen to it going, I didn't say that. That's not what I meant. Because you were listening to refute and not to understand.

We're talking about that one-on-one. You're going to the one-on-one. Amen. Amen. You see, if you're listening carefully and can repeat what they're saying back to them, that tells the person that you don't, that you care about what they're saying.

If you mess it up, they will get the impression you don't give a hill of beans about what they're talking to you about. You have made up your mind. You, you all-knowing you, you.
[28 : 34] you. You'll never heal that. Remember, Romans 12, 18, if possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Here is where it depends on you. Listening. Here is where it depends on you. Give it your all in the name of Jesus.

Because your brother or your sister is worth recovering. That fellowship is worth recovering. The second thing he says, if that fails, bring, go back again with two or three witnesses.

Witnesses, if they solve the, if they solve the affront, great. if they didn't, okay too. The witnesses are there to, to monitor your interaction and to hold you both accountable.

They are there to make sure each one of you is being heard. They're there. If they didn't see it happen, they're there to say, okay, hold it now, you're not, you're not speaking kindly to your sister or to your brother.

[29 : 56] They're saying, hold it now, hold it, you're talking over. Hold it now, let him speak and you can, they're there to help you. That's why you need to go get mature Christians and not your cronies.

Practical sermon you're preaching, Pastor Kevin. Well, thank you. I'm trying, I'm trying, I'm trying. They'll make sure there's mutual respect that each person is respecting the other. You see, because our Lord is showing us that peace in his church is important.

Now, here's the thing. Sometimes, step two is step one. Sometimes, Ken Sandy is very helpful here in his book, Peacemaking Pastor, his classic book, The Peacemaker, I commend to you.

He says, we're not speaking in the cases of domestic abuse or the like, I add, or assault.

intermediaries or authorities may need to be called in immediately.

Jesus is not setting up people to get abused over and over again. Sometimes, step two needs to be step one because you're in a situation where either one, one person is being intimidated by the other or the other person is dangerous to the other in some way.

[31 : 25] you don't send someone back into the meat grinder. Trying to be practical here. This is wisdom.

Ken Sandy is right. But there's still this going. Sometimes, the cops need to be called. They're the authorities.

Ladies, you've been abused by your husband and on occasion, sometimes, some men are physically abused by their wives on occasion or girlfriend, whatever. You may need to call the po-po. And if it happened, I'll be there with them to haul the joker out.

We got to protect each other. We got to protect the body. Protect people. And then, we're going down to the jail to witness to the person. To lead them to repentance.

repentance. Sometimes, you may have to just call the elders and say, hey, I need you to come right now because of the situation, because it's that kind of intimidating factor, whatever. Sometimes, we may have to come sooner.

[32 : 33] However, this is the process. Because after this, if this doesn't work, then the church is called in. And in our system, that means the elders will investigate.

Then, as needed, the elders will issue biblical warnings as needed to the guilty partner, calling them to repentance and reconciliation.

Sometimes, it gets even worse. A pastor, I know, just got, he did something he shouldn't have done, got caught being by the police, and now, his presbytery has suspended him from the ministry.

I think he's going to end up being excommunicated, which breaks my heart. because he doesn't, he's resisting the discipline of the church. So this, notice this.

Before the church is called in, before the elders are called in, it is the body's responsibility to make peace. It's your responsibility to make peace with each other.

[33 : 42] That church discipline begins there. is body life. Because you will hurt each other's feelings. You will say something you shouldn't have said.

Or something will be said to you. Things will happen. There will be conflict between families on occasion. Your, somebody's child did something to somebody's child. We don't leave the church because of these things.

Jesus gave us the word of God to show us how to reconcile. We tend to run out the door. That's not biblical. That's not the body of Christ.

That's not the kingdom of God. The kingdom says we, we follow Christ and we seek reconciliation. reconciliation. As much as, as possible, live at peace with all men.

Some people think that by leaving, that brings peace. On extreme situations, that may be true. But mostly, it's not.

[34 : 49] When you have a problem and you disappear at the church and you ghost the elders and you disappear, you're not bringing peace. You just call friction. You just call more friction. Because now, the body does not know why you left.

And what the enemy will start doing is speculations will start, gossip will start running around. Wow, I heard they left, I think they left. All that stuff. You have created a bigger problem.

We are called to be the people of Christ. To love one another. To walk in Christ-like character.

That means we do the hard thing. Not the easy thing. We do the hard thing. And we seek to reconcile.

We follow what Jesus has said in his word. Listen, Galatians 5, 14 and 15. The whole law is fulfilled in one word. You should love your neighbor as yourself.

[35 : 51] But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another. Mutually assured destruction.

When we fail to reconcile, we destroy each other. We're not walking in love here. When we attack one another with criticism, grumbling and complaining, that goes to the Israelites.

Think about the Israelites. Grumbling and complaining. Write this down. Philippians 2, 14. James 4, 11 to 12. And James 5, 9. Those passages warn us about grumbling and complaining.

The New Testament continues to remind us don't be Israelites. grumbling and grumbling That's amazing. But when we attack one another in this way with gossip and slander, harsh words, or as Paul says, or unwholesome or corrupting speech, when we do this, no matter how righteous we believe we are, we're destroying each other.

No matter how just your cause is, no matter how much you're trying to be a warrior for truth, just nip, nip, nip, nip, nip.

[37 : 17] It's like a wild animal he's describing who's just tearing, they're tearing each other apart. They're going head to head, two wolves going head to head over a carcass and they're biting and nipping each other, biting and biting, blood everywhere, biting, biting, screaming and yelling, pain, suffering, biting, biting, until both drop dead.

That's what Paul is warning us about. Alexander Schrock in his book, If You Bite and Devour One Another, says, if grumbling or complaining sin to constructive or, it's, I'm sorry, how did I put it?

I think I missed out a word there. All right. Because I said, that doesn't make any sense. All right.

So, grumbling or complaining is not constructive or edifying to the family of God.

There you go. Like a contagious disease, grumbling generates conflict, confusion, and unhappiness that quickly spread throughout a church body until all are infected with discontent.

COVID. Release this in churches across this country. and it affected bodies until people became discontent.

[38 : 44] It spreads unhappiness, confusion. He quotes from Jay Motyer going on, grumbling is associated with selfish complaining, unbalanced criticism of small matters, impatient towards what is not understood.

I don't understand what's happening. But you become impatient, grudging unwillingness to be helpful. How many churches have been destroyed, split, or just brutalized by these sins because the Lord's people refuse to pick up their cross, put down their pride, and follow Him in resolving conflicts?

I'm going to stop here, but listen, doesn't the gospel give us something better than this? Doesn't Jesus and His kingdom give us something better than what I just read of the grumbling, complaining, and stuff spreading around the church and everybody upset and discontent.

Everybody upset. And some folk won't even know why they upset. They just upset because he's upset. And all that's happening is the enemy is going like a trained seal.

He happy. Because God's people are not following Christ here. They're following their flesh. They're following their own wants.

[40 : 19] They're getting their needs met. They're not looking after each other. Jesus calls us to look after each other.

You are mine and I'm yours. We belong to each other because we say God is our Father. That makes us family.

And family works out its issues. At least my family does. I don't know about your family. I don't know. Come on.

This is so important as we go into this season of politics and elections and what not. It's starting all. It's popping up already. Don't fall for it. Family, listen, please, I'm begging. Don't fall for it. America is not the center of the kingdom of God.

[41 : 29] If America, don't get me wrong, I don't want it to happen, but if America goes down the tubes, the kingdom of God won't even hit a speed ball. I don't want that to happen. Don't get me wrong.

I love my country. But the church is part, is an embassy of the kingdom of God. If we can't work out our issues together, what hope does the world have?

If we get mad each other and leave, I'm just, I'm done. If our marriages keep divorcing and fracturing because we can't work out, what do we, what's going to happen to the world around us? There's no salt and light anymore. How are you going to tell some, I'm getting ahead of myself, we'll come back next time, but how are you going, how can we tell people about the love of Jesus when we can't even work out our own stuff?

You'll see, you'll see that's true. I'm going to show it next time. The good news is that the Prince of Peace has come to give us his peace.

[42 : 40] The gospel is a gospel of peace. God is a God of peace. And because we are in Christ, because Christ is in us, we have all we need to deal with our own conflicts and interpersonal issues.

We have all that we need. no one should ever leave a church in a huff. No one should ever break their vows of membership before God and just disappear.

That's not the Lord. So if you got a problem with Kevin Smith, come talk to me. It's okay. Bring a friend. If you want to bring your friend with you, I don't care.

I don't even care. Just come talk to me. If I got a problem with Freeman, I'm going to talk to Freeman. Because he's my brother. And I love him.

And I will stand with him against the forces of darkness till my last breath because he's my brother. I feel that way about all of you. You're my family.

[43 : 53] Because Jesus made it so. Are we going to be warriors for peace? Are warriors for the flesh? We have all we need.

We have all we need in Christ. To stand together. To forgive each other. To reconcile with one another. To admit I blew it.

We have all we need. Because we are accepted and beloved by the living God. Father, in Jesus' name, help us.

Lord, you help your church. Your church in this country, help us. You see what's happening already on social media.

You see what's happening as the body of Christ even now is dividing over Donald Trump and Joe Biden. Even now, Lord, rebuke us and bring us to repentance so that, Lord, we can demonstrate the love of Christ and the reality of our fellowship as children of God who are peacemakers.

[45 : 14] Forgive us for where we have failed, but don't let us go back. Help us to go forward. For Jesus' sake we pray. Amen.