

“Blessed Are the Peacemakers”

Matthew 5:9; James 3:17–18

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On December 10, 1980 in Oslo, Norway, in a great hall shining with gold and crystal, a little old lady, wearing a simple white robe and sandals, stood with a king. It was Mother Teresa (マザー・テレサ), humbly receiving the Nobel Peace Prize (ノーベル平和賞) for her decades of selfless work among the poorest of the poor and dying in Calcutta, India.

One of the phrases Mother Teresa repeated over and over when asked about her Christian faith and work with the poor and sick is “love in action.” The Bible says, “God is love” (1 John 4:8, 16), and Mother Teresa insisted that, if we really believe in God, then we must demonstrate it by putting His love for all people into living action. It doesn’t matter how small the action may seem, as long as the motivation for it is sincere love. In fact, Mother Teresa once said, “We can do no great things; only small things with great love.”

After she passed away in 1997, her Catholic “sisters” continued her work, doing “small things with great love” for people of all races and many different religions. Mother Teresa first established her Missionaries of Charity (神の愛の宣教者会) organization in Calcutta in 1950, and now there are 4,500 sisters actively serving in 133 countries around the world.

Mother Teresa was the embodiment of the famous “Peace Prayer” (「平和の祈り」). Though St. Francis of Assisi (アッシジの聖フランシスコ) (1181–1226) didn’t actually write it (it being most likely penned by an anonymous French writer in 1912), there’s little question that his life of love and service to the poor 800 years ago served as the inspiration for it. St. Francis lived the words of “The Peace Prayer,” just as Mother Teresa did centuries later.

Please follow along with me as I read “The Peace Prayer” now. (See below.)

As I read this, I’m struck not only by its wisdom and beauty, but also by one other thing: *it involves action on the part of the person saying the prayer in the helping of others.* “Let me sow love, pardon, faith, hope light, joy. . . . grant that I may seek to console, understand, and love.”

The title of today’s talk is “Blessed Are the Peacemakers,” which comes from Jesus’ words 2,000 years ago in His powerful Sermon on the Mount (山上の説教) in Matthew 5–7 (マタイによる福音書 5–7, pp. 6–12). In one of the eight Beatitudes (八福) at the start of the sermon, Jesus, whom the Seigakuin Choir (聖学院聖大学歌隊) sang about so beautifully a few minutes ago, said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

「平和を実現する人々は、幸いである、その人たちは神の子と呼ばれる。」(マタイによる福音書 5章9節, p. 6)

The word “peacemaker” occurs only here and one other place in the English Bible, in James 3:17-18, which reads, “But the wisdom that comes down from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.”

「上から出た知恵は、何よりもまず、純真で、更に、温和で、優しく、従順なものです。憐れみと良い実に満ちています。偏見はなく、偽善的でもありません。義の実は、平和を実現する人たちによって、平和のうちに蒔かれるのです。」(ヤコブの手紙 3章17~18節, pp. 424-25)

The very word, “peacemaker,” means “one who makes peace” (平和を実現する人). In other words, peace is something we must *do*. When Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount, He said, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and *puts them into practice* is like a wise man who built his house on the rock” (Matthew 7:24).

「そこで、わたしのこれらの言葉を聞いて行う者は皆、岩の上に自分の家を建てた賢い人に似ている。」(マタイによる福音書 7章24節, p. 12)

Please note that there’s a big difference between being a peace lover and a peacemaker. We all love peace, but just saying, “I love peace” or “I want peace,” or even “We’re a peace country,” doesn’t make it happen. Those are just words. Making peace requires *action*.

In fact, as Robert Fulghum points out in his best-selling book, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, “Peace is not something you *wish* for; it’s something you *make*, something you *do*, something you *are*, and something you *give away!*”

Great peacemakers in history, like St. Francis of Assisi and Mother Teresa, didn’t just *wish* for peace, they *made* it, they *did* it, they *were* peace, and they *gave it away*.

Since this week in chapel we’re thinking of The Peace Prayer and the 70th anniversary of the end of World War Two (第二次世界大戦), let me tell you of another peacemaker who made, did, was, and gave away peace. His name is Jacob DeShazer (ジェイコブ・デシェーザー).

Jacob DeShazer is an American who was born in 1931 in West Stayton, a little town in Oregon (オレゴン州), the state where I’m from. He was in the United States Army Air Corps (アメリカ陸軍航空隊) when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor (真珠湾) on December 7, 1941 (December 8th in Japan).

DeShazer hated the Japanese for doing that. On April 18, 1942, he participated in the Doolittle Raid (ドーリットル空襲) on Japan. He was the bombardier of the last of sixteen B-25 bombers (爆撃機) that took off from the aircraft carrier (航空母艦), U.S.S. Hornet. DeShazer’s plane, named “Bat out of Hell,” bombed Nagoya and then flew on to China. The plane ran out of gas and couldn’t make it to the intended destination, though, and he and the all the crew (members) of his plane were captured by the Japanese army.

For the next 40 months, until the end of the war, Jacob DeShazer was in various

prisoner-of-war camps (戦争捕虜収容所) both in Japan and China. For 34 of those months, he was in solitary confinement (kept alone), and he was beaten severely and treated very badly much of the time. Three of his friends were executed (killed) by their Japanese captors, and one died of starvation (飢餓) in the prison camp.

Naturally, he hated the Japanese even more because of this. However, during his imprisonment, DeShazer began to wonder why people of the same human race (人類), American or Japanese, should have such hate (憎しみ) for each other. He had heard about Christianity changing hatred between people into real brotherly love. After that, he was able to get a Bible for three weeks, and he read the whole thing twice during that time.

On June 8, 1944, the words of Romans 10:9 (ローマの信徒への手紙) in the New Testament had such power that he decided to become a Christian right there in his prison cell. He said that after that, “God had given me new spiritual eyes, and that when I looked at the Japanese officers and guards who had starved and beaten me and my companions so cruelly, I found my bitter hatred for them changed to loving pity.”

He realized that his Japanese guards knew nothing of Jesus Christ or the words of the Bible. His attitude toward them changed as he thought of Jesus’ words just before His death on the Cross (十字架), “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

「そのとき、イエスは言われた。「父よ、彼らをお赦してください。自分が何をしているのか知らないのです。」人々はくじを引いて、イエスの服を分け合った。」(ルカによる福音書 23 章 34 節, p. 158)

At the end of the war in August 1945, DeShazer decided to become a missionary (宣教師) to Japan. He was going to be a peacemaker and put God’s love into action. He went back to America and studied to be a missionary at Seattle Pacific College. He returned to Japan with his wife, Florence, in 1948, and they did missions work here for the next thirty years.

Early in his ministry in Japan in 1950, DeShazer wrote a pamphlet entitled, “I Was a Prisoner of Japan” (「私は日本の捕虜であった」). It contained his testimony (証) of how he had been saved by Jesus Christ and how he now wanted to share God’s love, peace, and hope with the people of Japan.

Unknown to DeShazer at the time, one Japanese man who was greatly affected by his testimony as an American prisoner-of-war who became a Christian evangelist (伝道者) to Japan was Mitsuo Fuchida (淵田美津雄). Maybe you’ve heard of him.

Mitsuo Fuchida was the leader of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (真珠湾攻撃隊総隊長) on December 7, 1941! He was an elite pilot out of the Japanese Naval Academy at Eta-jima (海軍兵学校/江田島) and flight leader who flew from the aircraft carrier Akagi (赤城航空母艦), and who’s hero was Hitler.

Fuchida was one of the few pilots from 1941 who survived the war. Actually, he had been in Hiroshima on August 5, 1945, but left before the atomic bomb was dropped on it the next

day. He was against surrendering to America and wanted to fight to the death, but gave up after Emperor Hirohito's announcement on August 15. Still, he was quite bitter against America.

Then one day after he got off the train at Shibuya Station and was walking by Hachiko, he saw an American giving out some pamphlets. The pamphlet was Jacob DeShazer's "I Was a Prisoner of Japan."

DeShazer's testimony of how the Bible had changed him from being an enemy to the Japanese to a friend who wanted to share the peace of Christ with them had a strong impact on Fuchida. He decided to get a Bible and read it for himself.

Like DeShazer, he was deeply impressed by how Jesus could forgive the soldiers who were killing Him on the Cross, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). 「そのとき、イエスは言われた。「父よ、彼らをお赦してください。自分が何をしているのか知らないのです。」人々はくじを引いて、イエスの服を分け合った。」(ルカによる福音書 23 章 34 節, p. 158). Fuchida said, as he read those words, "Right at that moment, I seemed to hear Jesus for the first time." He asked God to forgive him and change him from a hateful person into a loving Christian with purpose in living.

The day he became a Christian, April 14, 1950, he became a new person, and his complete view on life changed. Later that year, he met Jacob DeShazer, and they became good friends, sometimes preaching together at evangelistic meetings in Japan. Fuchida became a full-time Christian evangelist and traveled around Japan, to America and to other countries, telling of God's love and peace until he died in 1976.

These two mortal enemies in World War Two—Jacob DeShazer, the Doolittle Raid bomber and prisoner-of-war, and Mitsuo Fuchida, the pilot who led the attack on Pearl Harbor—are beautiful examples of the power of God and His word, the Bible, to transform (change) people's lives. They became peacemakers, showing us that, if they can do it, anyone can.

It is my great hope that all of us here today will learn from the example of people like St. Francis of Assisi, Mother Teresa, Jacob DeShazer, and Mitsuo Fuchida. May their legacy (遺産) live on in us. May we also become people who live the Peace Prayer. Let us not just wish for peace. Instead, let us *make* peace, *do* peace, *be* peace and *give away* peace. Then we will fully understand the meaning of "blessed are the peacemakers."

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