

Note: The Rev. Caleb Kim will deliver the sermon below on Sunday, April 19, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at St. Andrew's, Fenelon Falls and via Zoom.

Title: Beatitude 6—Repairing Relationships (The Relationship Choice)

– The Road to Recovery Sermon Series

For those of you who are new to our sermon series, over the past five Sundays, we have been studying the Road to Recovery, based on Alcoholics Anonymous' Twelve-Step program and Jesus' Eight Beatitudes. Over the years, A.A. has emphasized that alcoholism is a disease and has provided guidance and alternative treatment to help those affected. Through following A.A.'s twelve recovery steps, many people who have struggled with alcohol have found sobriety and overcome their addictions.

Before we move on to today's principles, let me briefly review the first seven steps of A.A.: The first step is admitting that we are powerless over our addictions. Second is to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. The third is making a decision to turn our wills and our lives over to the care of God. Fourth is taking a thorough moral inventory of ourselves. Fifth is confessing the nature of our wrongs to God, to ourselves, and to another human being. The sixth and seventh is becoming entirely ready to have God remove our defects of character and humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings.

Today we focus on the eighth and ninth steps. Step eight says: "[We] made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all." This can be summarized in one word: Love. Step nine states: "[We] made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others." This can be summarized in one word: Responsibility.

These two steps are crucial to the recovery process. They are challenging because they call us to face the people we have harmed and, whenever possible, to make direct amends. Spiritual recovery, as we have discussed, is essentially a spiritual renovation project. To renovate our faith journey, we must reconcile not only with God but also with others. Last Sunday, we learned the first part of this renovation: reconciling with God by humbly asking Him to forgive our shortcomings. Today, the eighth and ninth steps teach us the next part of the journey: reconciling with others for the harm we have caused.

In the last few months, we have explored five beautiful attitudes toward God and learned about His blessings upon those who are poor in spirit, pure in heart, meek, those who mourn, and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. When we seek to embody these sacred principles in our faith journey, God blesses us with His divine joy and happiness, His reward, presence, comfort, and satisfaction in the present, and He promises us a place in His kingdom in the future.

This morning, along with A.A.'s eighth and ninth steps, we turn our attention to the sixth beatitude of Christ: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Today, I want us to reflect on all of our relationships and consider

what this beatitude means for us in the context of these A.A. steps and our spiritual journey. I also want us, as Christ's peacemakers, to offer forgiveness to those who have hurt us and to make amends for the harm we have caused others—except when doing so would cause further harm.

Now, let us examine in detail what A.A.'s eighth and ninth steps means for our spiritual recovery. The first part of this reconciliation process is to make a list of those we have harmed, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

To illustrate, on Sunday evenings, I often make a list of tasks for the coming week. In the mornings, I sometimes write down, on a sticky note, everything I need to accomplish during the day and place it on my computer monitor. With great satisfaction, I cross off each task as I complete it, whether at the end of the day or the week. Many of us do similar things in our daily lives—grocery lists, to-do lists, medical appointment reminders. Lists help us remember what needs to be done and keep our lives in order. In the same way, making a list of those we have harmed helps us bring order and clarity to our spiritual lives. It is the first step toward reconciliation, accountability, and ultimately peace.

In our gospel for today, Jesus talks about our spiritual reconciliation with others. "...If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift" (Matthew 5:23-24). Two key phrases stand out in this scripture: "remember... your brother or sister" and "be reconciled to them." The first verb, "remember," can be understood as "making a list of our wrongdoings to others" in the context of A.A.s' eighth step. The second, "reconcile," can be interpreted as "making direct amends to them," as described in the ninth step of A.A.

According to this Gospel, before we fully reconcile with God for our shortcomings, we need to remember the actions that require amends. Notice that that we are asked to make a list of those we have harmed, not a list of those who have hurt us. Many of us naturally have a list of people who have caused us pain. Some of those memories may still feel very difficult to face. But have we ever made a list of those we have wounded? Making this kind of list is not easy—it requires honesty, courage, and the willingness to take responsibility for our actions.

Sometimes I hear people say, "I have made mistakes before God, but I have not hurt anyone because of my addiction." We need to remember that harm almost always affects those around us. Even when addiction seems private, it touches family, friends, and sometimes the wider community. Addiction is never just an individual issue—it affects the entire family, and ultimately, society as a whole. Many of us have seen or heard stories of innocent victims of a loved one's addiction.

Before we move on to the ninth step, I invite you to take a moment to think of someone who has been hurt by us. If someone comes to mind, write down their name without excusing your harmful actions. Try to consider their feelings or thoughts in response to what you have done.

Throughout our sermon series, The Road to Recovery, I have emphasized that this spiritual freedom is not just for those in recovery—it is for all of us. We are all sinners, and we all carry some form of brokenness of addictive behaviours that needs healing.

While making my own amends list, I have often asked myself: “If God has forgiven all my sins, isn’t that enough? Why do I need to face this shameful list of those I have wronged?” The answer I have received from the Holy Spirit is simple: “Making an amends list is not just about our past; it is about our future.” When we make this list, we may experience two different feelings: guilt and shame. Though these two may seem similar, they are not the same. Someone has said: “Shame and guilt have the same source—sin. Where shame is mobile and moves us forward, guilt gets us stuck and keeps us from acting.” The feeling of shame can be a sign that our conscience is alive and awake. When we do wrong, shame can prompt us to repent and seek forgiveness. Sadly, the Bible reminds us that some people’s consciences have been “seared as with a hot iron” (1 Timothy 4:2). Their consciences are so damaged that they may feel no shame for the terrible things they have done. But for those whose consciences are alive, spiritual shame or godly mourning is a blessing. As the Apostle Paul says, “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regrets” (2 Corinthians 7:10). When we earnestly address our past broken relationships, God can lift the burdens of guilt and pain from our hearts. He can transform our relationships with others, bringing reconciliation, peace, and healing.

Now, let us move on to the next step after making a list of the people we have harmed. In our Old Testament story for today, we find a powerful example in Jacob, who sought to make amends with his twin brother, Esau. When Jacob was young, he deceived his dad, Isaac, in order to take Esau’s birthright and blessing. When Esau discovered this, he became furious. Rebekah, their mother, helped Jacob flee immediately to her brother Laban. After twenty years of God’s guidance and training, Jacob decided to return home. On the night before his arrival, in a moment of deep desperation, he prayed earnestly to God. It was then that God changed his name from Jacob, which means “deceiver” or “cheater,” to Israel, which means “He struggles with God” (Genesis 32:27-28). Over the years, he had pursued power, possessions, and personal gain, even at the expense of his family. But now, through God’s transforming presence, he had come to recognize the harm he had caused, especially, his brother.

After that incident, Jacob also resolved to make amends with his brother. When he approached Esau, he went ahead of his family, servants, and possessions, and bowed down to the ground seven times (Genesis 33:1-3). Each group under Jacob’s direction bowed before Esau. I believe that this act of bowing was a profound sign of reconciliation. Jacob further offered gifts from his flocks and herds as a gesture of restoration. When Esau recognized Jacob’s sincere efforts to apologize, he forgave him, embracing him and kissing him (Genesis 33:4). Esau accepted not only the gifts but also Jacob as his loving brother. What an extraordinary example of reunion and reconciliation (Genesis 33:1-11)!

All of us here this morning in this sanctuary or joining via Zoom have experienced some form of brokenness—either in our relationship with God because of our shortcomings or in

our relationships with others because of our wrongdoings. Broken relationships often carry consequences far greater than we might imagine. Consider the impact of a broken marriage: not only are the couple affected, but their children, parents, and friends may also feel the pain. Have you ever lost contact with close friends because of your wrongdoing—or theirs? Unresolved issues in relationships can steal our peace, not only with God but also within ourselves.

As I mentioned before, making amends is a challenging process. Reflecting on how we have hurt others is painful, and many of us may wish to avoid confronting those on our list. Careless or poorly timed attempts at apology can sometimes cause more pain than healing. In some situations, legal restrictions may prevent direct contact, and in other cases, the severity of the harm may require a longer period before reconciliation is possible. This is why A.A.s' ninth step wisely states: "wherever possible."

The essence of this step is twofold: first, to humbly acknowledge the harm we have caused, and second, to make our best effort at restoration through sincere apology. Because this step is so central to our spiritual recovery, we must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our Wonderful Counsellor, and carefully follow His direction. When we humbly make amends to others, we can experience the same joy and peace that Jacob and Esau felt in their reconciliation.

Before I conclude this sermon, I would like to share with you a personal story of reconciliation—about my parents and my father's relationship with God... Experiencing such reconciliation in my own family reminds me of the power of being a peacemaker. Friends, if you have been praying for God's reconciliation between your loved ones—or between yourself and someone you deeply care about—I pray that God will continue His work of healing and restoration in your life. I also pray that God will help each of us become peacemakers in difficult circumstances and witness His mighty and merciful intervention in our relationships.

As we follow the eighth and ninth steps, let us reflect on what it means to reconcile with those we have negatively influenced through our spiritual bondage. Remember the entire process of reconciliation is only possible through the grace of the Lord. Without His grace, we cannot truly make amends, because forgiveness—both giving and receiving—comes from Him. Sometimes, even when we sincerely attempt to reconcile, others may not forgive us. Yet we can trust that God is in control of every step of the process. Reconciliation is ultimately in His hands.

Have we ever made a list of those we have harmed through our spiritual bondage? It is tempting to avoid taking this spiritual inventory or to hide what we have done wrong toward God and others. But with the Lord's help, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ, we can courageously evaluate our past and present relationships. Let us ask God to help us make amends, taking action at His perfect timing and in His perfect way. Let us also pray for strength to offer forgiveness to those who have hurt us.

To conclude, let us ask the question that has guided us throughout the Beatitudes sermon series: “Why should this divine principle matter in our faith journey? Why does the Beatitude of being a peacemaker matter to us?” Jesus gives us the answer today: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God” (Matthew 5:9). Being a peacemaker carries a divine blessing—it reflects our identity as God’s children.

In today’s Epistle, the Apostle Paul describes two different states of being. Before we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour, we were like foreigners and strangers in the world, living without God’s peace. But through the ultimate peace offering—Jesus’s blood shed on the cross—our spiritual status is transformed. We become a new creation, called “fellow citizens with God’s people” (Ephesians 2:19). As children of God, we are all called to make peace with others, using the peace He has placed in our hearts. This is not only God’s purpose for our lives but also one of the good works He desires from us. When we strive to be peacemakers, others may say, "I can see your Heavenly Father in you."

When we are at peace with God and others, we experience true joy. In this way, the Kingdom of Heaven can be expanded in an unpeaceful world through each of us who seeks to reflect the Lord Jesus Christ, our Prince of Peace.

**In preparing this sermon series, I have drawn on materials and insights from various ministers, particularly those related to the Twelve Steps of A.A. as well as the “Life’s Healing Choices” series prepared by Rick Warren and his team, based on Genesis 33:1-12; Matthew 5:23-24; Ephesians 2:14-22; Matthew 5:9.*