



Week 1: **THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES** How we got from Enemy Love to Just War

- Week 2: *THE RADICAL REFORMATION* - Introducing the Anabaptists
 Week 3: *WHAT DID JESUS TEACH?* - An Honest Look at a Radical Message
 Week 4: *JUST WAR* - Busting the Myth of Redemptive Violence
 Week 5: *BUT WHAT ABOUT...?* - Responding to a Thousand Objections
 Week 6: *JESUS VS JEHOVAH* - War & Peace in the Old Testament (with Greg Boyd)
 Week 7: *SO WHAT?* - Moving from Basic Training to the Front Lines

INTRODUCTION – Starting With Jesus

Matthew 5:38-48

Clarifying Terms...

- PEACE – A way of living, not just a goal to be fought for.
- PACIFISM – Not being passive, but living the way of peace, reconciliation, and creative non-violence. A commitment to pacify, to peace-making and peace-living.
- JUST WAR – a theory or collection of theories developed by Christians to justify war and selective use of violence. Held by the vast majority of Christians today and ever since Constantine.
- ANABAPTISTS – 16th century radical Christians who called the church back to the way of Jesus. Reflected today in movements like Mennonites, Amish, Quakers, Hutterites, and Brethren In Christ.

DINE IN – How Constantine Changed the Church

- For the first three centuries of Christianity, all Christian leaders, without exception, were pacifists and called all Christians to live the way of peace.
- Military service is seen as wrong for 3 reasons: a) ETHICAL: Violence is not an option for Christians; b) PHILOSOPHICAL: War is based on the State's goal of self-preservation or self-advancement rather than the Christian's goal of self-sacrifice. c) SPIRITUAL: Military service demands too much loyalty, leading to idolatry.
- Early in the fourth century, Constantine declares Christianity a *religio licita* (a legal religion) through the Edict of Milan, immediately reversing any ongoing persecution. Instead, he lavishes gifts upon all Church leaders (e.g., increasing their salary, making them exempt from paying taxes, building church buildings, funding Bible copying, etc.). Crucifixion and gladiatorial games are abolished due to the traumatic connection with Christian victimization. Sunday is declared a weekly holiday for all people. Pagan holidays are absorbed into the Christian calendar. Pagan temples are converted into Church buildings, with statues of Roman gods replaced with statues of the Apostles and other biblical characters. The Church is now friends with the State.
- Augustine (354 – 430 C.E.) & later Aquinas (1225 – 1274 C.E.) develop and defend a "justified war" theory for Christians, based on existing Roman and Greek thought.
- Christians are now encouraged to join the army and be involved in government. Violence is to be used as God's instrument to "punish" evildoers (e.g., **Romans 13:1-7**). Augustine sees punishment as a more justifiable motive than self-defence.
- By 416 C.E., all Roman soldiers are *required* to be Christian. Note: "Pagan" (Latin, *paganus*) means *civilian* as opposed to *soldier*. It now comes to mean *non-Christian* as opposed to *believer*.

TAKE OUT – I'll Have That to Go Please

Today, Christians live in the echo of "the Constantinian shift" (Yoder). We have to work hard to step back, gain perspective, and shake off the influence of centuries of thinking that has eclipsed the plain teaching of Jesus. We invite all Christians to reject Constantinian Christianity. This is not a matter of rejecting one denomination in preference for another, but rejecting a mentality that has gone unchallenged for too long. This may or may not lead to someone becoming a pacifist, but at least we will all be agreeing together that Jesus – and not philosophy, politics, tradition or the impulse toward self-preservation – must be our Lord.

Luke 6:5, 46; Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 12:3

CONCLUSION – Taking the Next Step

John 20:28

- New to The Meeting House? ... Come back.
- On the perimeter of our community? ... Join a Home Church.
- Recognize the truth of Christ? ... Commit to Jesus as Lord.
- Convicted Christian? ... Repent of your allegiance to the wrong kingdom.
- Convinced of the importance of this series? ... Invite your friends. Share the podcast.

For Further Research...

BOOKS

- Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution (John Howard Yoder)
- Christ and Violence (Ron Sider)
- The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics (Stanley Hauerwas)
- Peace Reader (E. Morris Sider & Luke Keefer Jr.)

ONLINE TEACHING

- When Darkness Falls: Investigating Religion's History of Evil (Bruxy Cavey)
- War – What is it Good For? (Bruxy Cavey)
- Does God Condone War / Hot Potato Series (Bruxy Cavey)

Q & Eh? Text 647.330.2789 or email ask@themeetinghouse.ca

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

Warming Up...

1. At the start of this series, let's go on record. Where do you stand on the pacifism versus just war debate? Are there circumstances in which Christians can and should resort to violence?
2. What has been your experience (or lack thereof) of peace teaching in the church?

Look to the Book...

3. Read **Matthew 5:38-48**. A) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? B) In **verses 38-39** Jesus quotes Scripture that represents civil law for Israel and then tells his followers not to participate in that way. What are the implications of this? C) Talk about each of the implications of **verses 40** and **41** and **42** distinctively? D) How should our love be like God's love? What would that look like practically? E) How do **verses 46-47** raise the bar above the culturally championed goal of being fair, or just, or decent to something counter-cultural? F) Jesus teaches on the same themes in **Luke 6:27-38**. What does Luke's version contribute to our understanding of Jesus' teaching on the way of peace?

So What?...

4. Review the TAKE OUT. If you became convinced that Jesus calls us to absolute non-violent, active enemy love, no matter what... would you submit to his call? If you're not convinced already, what issue will this series need to address before you would be convinced?

The Meeting House | Sunday, April 11/18, 2010 | Bruxy Cavey

Notes are available online at themeetinghouse.ca/teaching