



Week 4: JUST WAR
Understanding the Majority View

INTRODUCTION – Why Christians ^{SHOULD!} Make Lousy Soldiers

Just War...

- The belief that, given certain circumstances, God's people can and should join with the state in doing violence. Not found in the Bible.

Holy War...

- Old Testament war commanded, initiated, motivated, and designed by God from start to finish. Usually a form of punishment to an entire people, therefore does not distinguish between combatants and civilians.

Spiritual War...

- The New Testament struggle of believers against Satanic forces as well as false ideas and beliefs. May lead to physical violence *against*, but not by, God's people.

DINE IN – How the Church Embraced Just War

Agreed Christian Criteria For A Just War...

1. LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY (an established government)
2. JUST CAUSE (against intentional enemy aggression)
3. RIGHT INTENTION (defence, not plunder; love, not hatred)
4. LAST RESORT (preceded by warnings and negotiation attempts)
5. PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS (martyrdom is not a value)
6. LEGITIMATE MEANS (distinguishing between combatants and civilians)

RETHINKING JESUS...

- Jesus' teaching is for a select kind of super-Christians called "disciples" or "saints" (Catholics).
- Jesus' teaching is designed to function like the Old Testament law – to show us we can never be good enough and to prepare us for grace (Protestants).
- Jesus' teaching was right for his day, but not meant for ours (Liberals).
- Jesus' teaching was right in principle, but not meant to be taken literally (Evangelicals & Augustine).

THE STATE

Romans 13:1-7

May use violence ("the sword")
 Takes "revenge" on God's behalf
 Represents God's wrath and justice
 Maintains social order
 Demands taxes and obedience

THE CHURCH

Romans 12:14-21

Rejects the way of the sword
 Leaves vengeance to God
 Represents God's infinite compassion
 Spreads radical love for all
 Offers taxes and submission

TAKE OUT – The Way Jesus Fights

Christians are engaged in an ongoing war on behalf of our kingdom, our country. But our country is not of this world and neither is the war we wage. People are not the enemy but victims of the real unseen enemy. Whenever we are faced with aggression, our goal must be to see the situation as Jesus does and act out of that reality.

Hebrews 2:14-15; Ephesians 6:11-12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Mark 8:34-35

CONCLUSION – What If We're Right?

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

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

Warming Up...

1. Talk about this provocative quote from John Howard Yoder's *Christian Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution*: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13); Jesus said that about himself. Many Western war monuments to the dead have that verse on them, as though what a dead soldier went out to do was to lay down his life for his friends. That is not what he went out to do. He went out to kill, and hoped to come home. He went out to lay down somebody else's life. The use of Jesus' cross language is a dramatic pointer to the persistence of the crusade mentality in our culture."
2. How would you respond to these questions: A) What kind of person would it be right for a Christian to kill? B) For what kind of cause would it be right for a Christian to kill? C) Under what circumstances would you be willing to kill? D) Do you think Jesus would kill under the same circumstances? (Alternate approach: a) Do you think it is alright to kill in order to protect an innocent person? b) Do you think it is alright to kill in order to protect an innocent child? c) Do you think it is alright to kill to protect an unborn child? If so, what's holding you back? If not, why not? d) Do you think Jesus would kill to protect any of the above?)

Look to the Book...

3. Read **Ephesians 6:10-20**, in different translations if time permits. A) What verse or idea stands out to you the most? Why? B) Some people are disturbed that the New Testament uses warfare imagery at all. What makes warfare imagery appropriate for the life of a follower of Christ? C) This passage obviously supports the idea of *spiritual* war. In what ways does it also teach against *physical* war? D) For each of the articles of armour, identify what wearing it would look like in your life today. E) Paul is suffering at the hands of his enemies and asks for prayer. What does he ask prayer for? What does he *not* ask prayer for that we might be tempted to pray for if we were in Paul's situation?
4. In **Romans 13** Paul tells Christians to honour and submit to the State, but not obey. What are the practical implications of this?

So What?...

5. Which article of spiritual armour are you a) Strongest in? B) Weakest in? Paul asked for prayer for him in his situation, always with an emphasis on his mission. What would you like prayer for in your life?

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Notes are available online at themeetinghouse.ca/teaching