



Week 5: *BUT WHAT ABOUT...?*

INTRODUCTION – Pacifism Not A Success Strategy

Jesus practiced peace-making, enemy-love toward his adversaries when being arrested, and he still died. Pacifism is not a success strategy; it is a love strategy. Once we fully understand and embrace this, many of our questions about the way of peace will be answered.

DINE IN – Top 21 Objections to Jesus’ Peace Teaching

HISTORICAL OBJECTIONS...

1. But what about Hitler?
2. But what about Dietrich Bonhoeffer & Claus von Stauffenberg?
3. But what about the Munster rebellion?

PHILOSOPHICAL OBJECTIONS...

4. But what about pacifists leaving everyone else to do the dirty work?
5. But what about a country where the majority of people are Christians?
Matthew 7:13-14
6. But what about pacifist legalism? Does “violence” include restraint?
7. But what about violence in our entertainment?

BIBLICAL OBJECTIONS...

8. But what about the violence of the Old Testament?
9. But what about the violent Jesus of Revelation?
Revelation 19:11-21; Mark 15:39; John 20:27-28
10. But what about Jesus saying he came to bring a sword?
Matthew 10:32-39
11. But what about Jesus encouraging the disciples to get swords?
Luke 22:35-38
Matthew 26:52-54 (Luke 22:51; John 18:10-11)
12. But what about John the Baptist encouraging Roman soldiers?
Luke 3:14
13. But what about Jesus and Peter not rebuking Roman soldiers?
Matthew 8:5-13 // Luke 7:1-10; Acts 10
14. But what about Jesus’ violence in the Jerusalem temple?
Matthew 21:12-14 // Mark 11:15-18 // Luke 19:45-46 // John 2:13-17
15. But what about the State bearing the sword?
Romans 12:14-13:7

SITUATIONAL OBJECTIONS...

16. But what about the good we can do *in* government?
17. But what about the good we can do *through* government?
18. But what about being a police officer?
19. But what about situations of sexual or physical abuse?
20. But what about protecting others, especially our own families?
1 Timothy 5:8
21. But what about our instincts to protect our children?

TAKE OUT – Why We Follow Jesus

We should choose to follow Jesus in all ways, including the way of peace, because it is right and good and honours God, not because we think it is the most efficient strategy for overcoming our enemy or preserving lives. Christian pacifism is not right because it is always the best technique to disarm hostile situations or to preserve life. Christian pacifism is right because it is the way taught and modeled by Jesus, our Lord and Master. When we live the way of peace, we are living as the body of Christ in the world today, directed by Jesus as our head. When we live the way of peace, whether we live or die, we are bearing witness to Jesus. (**Romans 12:18; Mark 15:39**)

CONCLUSION – *The Right Kind of Inner Peace*

Romans 7:15-25

For Further Research...

- *Non-Violence: The Invincible Weapon?*, by Ronald J. Sider
- *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience: Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?*, by Ronald J. Sider
- *The Scandal of Evangelical Politics: Why Are Christians Missing the Chance to Really Change the World?*, by Ronald J. Sider
- *What Would You Do? (If a violent person threatened to harm a loved one)*, by John Howard Yoder

For An Alternative Perspective...

- *Between Pacifism and Jihad: Just War and Christian Tradition*, by J. Daryl Charles

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HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

Warming Up...

1. If you are still a non-pacifist, if you would use violence to protect the innocent and the defenceless among us, why would you not use violence against an abortionist?
2. Talk about this quote from a popular evangelical pastor: “Some emergent types want to recast Jesus as a limp-wrist hippie in a dress with a lot of product in his hair, who drank decaf and made pithy Zen statements about life while shopping for the perfect pair of shoes. In Revelation, Jesus is a prize fighter with a tattoo down His leg, a sword in His hand and the commitment to make someone bleed. That is a guy I can worship. I cannot worship the hippie, diaper, halo Christ because I cannot worship a guy I can beat up.”

Look to the Book...

3. Read **Hebrews 11:17-19** and **1 Corinthians 15:17-19**. John Howard Yoder wrote in *What Would You Do?* – “I do not know what I *would* do if some insane or criminal person were to attack my wife or child, sister or mother. But I know that what I *should* do would be illuminated by what God my Father did when his “only begotten Son” was being threatened. Or by what Abraham, my father in the faith, was ready to sacrifice out of obedience; he was ready to give up his son because he believed in the resurrection.” How does our faith in the resurrection influence our priorities when deciding how to respond in a potentially deadly situation?
4. Read **Revelation 19**. Divide into two teams to debate this passage. One team argue for the non-pacifist position and the other team for biblical pacifism, based on **Revelation 19**. (If time permits, repeat the same exercise for **Romans 12:14-13:7**.)

So What?...

5. More people have died of hunger related diseases since WW2 than were butchered by Hitler in the Jewish Holocaust. It’s one thing to debate the morality of killing during war, but perhaps we are passively complicit in large scale death through our intentional blindness, overconsumption, and materialistic greed. Talk about this in relation to how you live your life and possible changes you feel convicted to make.

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