

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Biblical Principles of War, Pt 2

Selected Passages

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PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: Though there are many opinions and approaches to war and violence within the Church-at-large, the opinions do not necessarily reflect all the subtle aspects that come with war. The same is true of Christians and internal conflicts that involve police action. The result too often is a conviction that is not based as much on the bible as the passing, ever-changing cultural climate of the time. Nations obviously exist. Police obviously need to exist. Evil cannot be ignored. And war and violence are part of life. So how does a Christian begin to approach dealing with these realities? Having surveyed the broad causes of war and violence and the common positions Christians take, in this related series we consider the many principles in the bible that relate to war, violence and even law enforcement.

I. Introduction.

- A. We start a new, related series on war and violence and how a Christian ought to view these realities.
- B. So four principles about war and violence for you to consider.
 - 1. #1 War is used by God for His purposes.
 - 2. #2 The Divine purposes in any war are manifold and mysterious.
 - 3. #3 Violence and War are not the way to build a nation.
 - 4. #4 Deadly force is specifically ordained by God.
- C. Today we will consider four more principles to help us cut through the many opinions that are flowing all around us and perhaps within us.

II. Biblical Principles of War.

- A. #5 War and violence are never glorified in the bible.
 - 1. If you recall, over the millennia war was not seen as an evil or something to be avoided. War was the means for so many opportunities to grow, enrich yourself and gain honor. Many slaves would fight and in return be granted freedom and citizenship. The warrior was exalted in most cultures as well.
 - 2. But when you consider the biblical record this mind set is not seen for those who follow and love YHWH.

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3. There is the call to war. There is the need to go to war. There is the acceptance of how brutal it is. But you don't see a consistent exaltation of it.
4. In this age we have war. We have injustice that needs to be resolved and often through violence. We have enemies. And so we must battle them. But the end goal is always peace.
 - a. In Romans 15:33 the blessing, "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."
 - b. The key term in the Old Testament is *shalom* and speaks of wholeness, soundness, safety, prosperity, quietness and tranquility, contentment and even friendship.
 - c. In Psalm 41:9 there is an interesting word choice by David that reflects the ache of this age. The key phrase is ". . . my close friend in whom I trusted. . . ."
 - (1) "even my man of peace turns against me."
 - (2) It is framed in a covenant type language. *Shalom* speaks of the making of peace. The framing of a covenant in which you trust the other to be faithful to it. They become one whom you trust. But of course this breaks down so often in this sinful age.
 - (3) So in Joshua 9:15 we read, "Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live. . . ."
 - (4) But this is also why we must look beyond this age for the peace we desire. We must come to the one true God who has made peace for us and with us.
 - (a) Romans 5:1.
 - (b) Ephesians 2:14-15.
 - (c) Colossians 1:20.
 - (5) And this is why the faithfulness of God is so important to remember. He cannot lie and He will not default on His promises.
 - d. But the fullness of that peace is not to be experienced now.
 - e. Romans 16:20, "*The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*"

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- B. # 6 The bible does not reject the role of soldier or police.
1. Repeatedly we see God call for violence in the Old Testament for both internal justice and toward other nations threatening Israel.
 - a. 2 Samuel 23:8ff and 1 Chronicles 11:10-47.
 - b. Let me draw out a few of these mighty men as examples. They are men praised in Scripture. Men of faith but also men who were terrifying in battle.
 - (1) Jashobeam.
 - (2) Eleazar.
 - (3) Shammah.
 - (4) Abishai.
 - (5) Benaiah.
 - c. There is the awkward story where David wanted to marry a daughter of King Saul's. You can read about it in 1 Samuel 18:20ff.
 2. In the New Testament the focus shifts because as it is not looking at the nation of Israel as much as it is upon the spread of the gospel and life as Christians. However, when you see interactions with soldiers you don't see Christ or the Apostles rejecting them or showing animosity.
 - a. The centurion in Matthew 8 is given extreme praise by Jesus as having high faith.
 - b. Cornelius was a centurion, a military officer of high rank in a battalion of Roman fighting men (Acts 10:1).
 - c. Sergius Paulus was a proconsul in the Roman government in Cyprus (Acts 13:7).
 - d. Erastus (Romans 16:23) was an active city treasurer even after his conversion.

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- e. Zenas (Titus 3:13) was an active Christian lawyer.
 - f. Luke 3:14.
 - g. Luke 22:35-38.
 - h. Hebrews 11:32-34.
3. In addition you have the establishment of governments as a divine act with certain purposes clearly explicated.
- a. Romans 13:1-4.
 - (1) Government, any government, exists because God established it. Note vs 1 the small word at the end, “those,” (that be in
 - (2) Government is to function as God’s avenger to bring wrath
 - (3) Government is to punish evil doers.
 - (4) Government has the sword and is to faithfully use it.
 - (5) The Church functions and exists outside national boundaries
 - b. 1 Peter 2:13.
 - (1) Government is to be supported and submitted to for the Lord’s sake.
 - (2) Government is to avenge wrong.
- C. #7 The New Testament does not speak directly to war.
1. This could mean that war is now something in which God’s people cannot take part.
 2. Or it is simply because the focus is different, looking not at the nation of Israel but with the new entity we call the Church.
 3. In addition it is likely that this is because the Old Testament teaching is sufficient and does not need repeating.
 4. But also it is worth nothing that we see violence connected to Jesus Christ’s words and actions.
 - a. Luke 10:3-4 with 22:35-36.

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b. John 2:13-15; Matthew 21:12-13.

c. Luke 19:11-27.

D. #8 The Christian, in living out his faith, is to take on a meek stance toward the world.

1. The Christian ought to be known as a person full of grace, patience, pursuing peace with all who will allow for it. A belligerent, unpleasant, pugnacious individual is not a proper portrayal of Christ.
2. This is not a position of cowardice, which is seeking to stay away from violence because fear is their lord. This is meekness. And it is something for which every Christian ought to be known.

a. Ephesians 4:1-2.

b. Philippians 4:5.

3. But when we step into the role of police, military, or government leadership we must also exercise violence at times, but only as an instrument of governing authority.

4. I would also argue this is true when we are functioning in our role as an individual citizen as well. This falls under the idea of defending the defenseless.

a. *Open your mouth, judge righteously, And defend the rights of the afflicted and needy.* (Proverbs 31:9)

b. Isaiah 1:2-17.

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5. The Golden Rule of Matthew 7:12 cuts both ways.

III. Conclusion.

- A. So four more principle of war and violence for you to consider.
- B. And I want you to do so. This is not an exercise simply to discuss theoretical things and then go back to your private life. Develop now a theology of war and violence so that when it comes you are prepared to respond wisely rather than out of fear, hatred or anger.
- C. But never forget your calling by God.
 1. *Depart from evil, and do good; Seek peace, and pursue it.* (Ps. 34:14)
 2. *So then let us pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.* (Rom. 14:19)
 3. *Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart* (2 Tim. 2:22)
 4. *Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.* (Heb. 12:14)
 5. *And let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it.* (1 Pet. 3:11)
 6. *If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.* (Rom. 12:18)
- D. And by living and speaking in such a manner you model true faith, trusting in God who promises to make all things right in the end, and you end up adorning the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.

Benediction

May we stand firm against the spiritual powers that press upon us in the strength of the Lord and in His might. May we take up the full armor of God so that we might resist and stand fast in these evil days. May we walk in the peace that comes through the gospel of Jesus Christ and we live in the power of the Spirit to the glory of the Father. Amen.