

A Change of Allegiance - Part 1

by Dean Taylor

Dean Taylor discusses the challenges and responsibilities of Anabaptists in modern society, emphasizing love, community, and non-resistance.

Duration: 40:04

Scripture: Exodus 20:16, Matthew 26:52, Romans 12:2, 1 John 3:16

Topics: "Christian Ethics", "Faith And Action"

Description

This sermon delves into various ethical dilemmas faced by non-resistant Christians, such as the role of deception to protect innocent lives, the ownership of assault rifles, and participation in national holidays. It emphasizes the importance of aligning actions with the teachings of Jesus and trusting in God's guidance in challenging situations.

Transcript

I've found it a tremendous blessing just to have the combined experiences, and I've been blessed with both these brothers. I didn't know either one of them before the conference, and was able to have dinner when we first got here with Verlin's family, and been here with Tony and your family. And I really appreciate all that Wellspring Mennonite Church has done, and to be able to pull this off.

And particularly what I'm blessed with is just a church that has a vision to make an impact and make a difference. And that's what I was talking about a little bit, I think it was last night, of just instead of looking at our churches as just, I don't know, kind of a, well I've heard it said in criticism of our church communities, the idea is we're supposed to be a city on the hill, not a village in the valley. And something like this really helps to make it a city on the hill, and I thank you brothers for that.

So thanks for being here, thanks for doing this. So we asked the different questions, and it was interesting, a lot of them were repeated, some of the different themes that came up. We just put these together this morning, so it was a little bit off the cuff, which I think is the way it's designed to be, a little bit off the cuff, and looking at some of these.

So we just kind of shuffle the deck, and see what comes out here. A lot of questions came up, a lot of people asked about voting, and our involvement in politics. So I went ahead and scrambled this morning and tried to find a few slides that have to deal with voting, and in particular, I wanted just to touch about how the Anabaptist people have responded to voting in the past, and how I think it's hurt us in the past.

And so if you're not an Anabaptist, or come from a Mennonite, or a different Anabaptist here this morning, bear with me. Some of this we're going to be picking on ourselves a little bit, and saying okay, some of these areas that we need to grow in, and some of them we're going to say that we're blessed with the examples that, you know, stories that we've seen, but these are practical questions looking at everyday life, and some of those things we do need to grow in, and all those things. So, alright, any first words you'd like to say, as we look at some of these questions? Let's just take them as they come.

Amen, bless the Lord. Okay, here's the first one. What is the cause or reason that we, as Anabaptists, seem to get along better with our enemies than with other Christians, dividing and theological bickering over minor applications? So brother, your years of pastoring, I'll bring that over to you.

It's a good question, I told you we're going to pick on ourselves right from the start. Well, I think one of the things that enters in there is that the nitty-gritty of being a believer, and doing things Christ's way, become very difficult just in everyday living, and we live with our brothers, and we know them better than other people, and so the thing of familiarity entering into the relationships, and the difficulties, we know each other, we know our faults, and it makes it more difficult, and really does require more grace often I believe. So I think that what happens also is we are, as a people, we have been focused on truth and wanting to do what's right, and possibly we struggle with not remaining humble enough in that equation, and insisting on things being our way.

So I think those are things we need to be aware of. Now I would like to say I very much believe in the authority of the brotherhood, working out how we're going to live together, so there's an element of where we have to be willing to stand for truth and brotherly love, figure out how that works in a brotherhood, that's the challenge that we have to seek for. Why is it easier than enemies? I'm not sure if I necessarily think it is, but I think the familiarity and then also maybe the fewer incidents of dealing with people blatantly opposed to us may be factors that enter in.

Amen. That's good, brother. Tony's next.

I'm not sure I have a whole lot to say, but if you ever went on a family road trip, you understand a little bit what happens when you have close communications and close fellowship. It can get a little pesky sometimes, right? So maybe when we're together a lot like that, it's just different than when you meet somebody out on the street or something. Relationships are a little different there, and that little analogy maybe isn't good, I don't know, but maybe it helps to understand a little bit.

That's good, brother. I appreciate that, and that's a good point, that we're family, and with family we do bump into each other sometimes, but nevertheless, I appreciate also what you're saying, that this love that we need to have for each other and this has to be there. I heard somebody once say, and John 3, 16 tells us how to be a Christian.

First John 3, 16 tells us if we are, and here it says, in 15, whoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him, 16. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. And so this idea of that love for each other is a powerful thing.

I heard an analogy, it's a Peter Rittman analogy, and he says, he said, how does he put it? Love is like fire, and he says that anybody who starts to make a fire, and you start getting your kindling together and all that, they know that when the fire is small, and you're putting your sticks there, that if you put a big stick on

there, it's going to douse it out, it's going to snub it out. But if you let that fire grow and burn, you can throw whole big logs on it, whole houses on it, and nothing will stop it, the same way as our love of the brethren. If our love is small, the easiest little thing can offend us, but if we let our love grow passionately, then we can take just anything that's thrown our way.

It's a good analogy, good. It's good. So, hey man, good question.

Okay, is there a relevant difference between selling raw material to military that you know will be used for making weapons, and selling a minibarn to the military for general storage? I'm going to hand that one over to Tony. Don't mess with the minibarn business. I'm not sure what to say about that exactly, good question, but I know years ago I was in the trucking industry, I did a little truck driving, and I do remember hauling a load one time, in retrospect, not sure it was the right thing to do, but I remember picking up, I believe it was a van trailer, tractor trailer, it was a van trailer, and I believe I was hauling a load, sometimes you don't know what you're picking up in a truck, but I believe I was hauling some kind of military equipment, I'm not sure if it was wheels for rail cars or what it was, but I had to deliver it to a, I'm not sure if it was, I don't think it was a military base, but something to do with the military, and after having done that I thought, you know, here I was a truck driver assisting this machine, this war machine, and I wasn't quite sure how to handle that, I wasn't sure what to do with that, even though I was just a truck driver, maybe I was assisting the wrong thing there, I don't know what you all think of that, but I guess this is kind of a similar question, you know, you're just selling a minibarn.

It's a good point, you know, you look at these things, and a lot of these questions, they're small things that seem to be leading the question to something bigger, and so as we look at that, you know, what's really in that question? And the fact is, I think as Anabaptist people, and as early Christians, and as radical Christians, we have deliberately tried to avoid supporting the war machine in any way, particularly making profit from it, and I appreciate that, and I think it would be my personal practice to not sell to the military to support that war machine, and there's some very nice examples through church history of people who believed in those words of Jesus, of just not taking those things, and I, so yeah, I would think in both cases, I would try to avoid it personally. Again, we can have different thoughts on this or whatever, so, I know we're talking about minibarn, so. So, any other thoughts? I don't have any thoughts.

Yeah, amen. Thank you. Yeah, that's good.

Good question, it's just things here. What do you do with the case where Jesus goes into the temple with a whip? It's a good question, and this comes up a lot in discussions about non-resistance, is the whole scene where Jesus comes into the temple with a whip, and the one thing that I've noticed there is usually, and I wish I'd brought the scriptures up and we could have read it, I could go to them here, is that if you read the details and the way people exaggerate the story, they're very different. I mean, I've seen even like cartoon books written on the story, and they show Jesus almost looking like some sort of Nazi warrior or something there in the temple, and it's very inappropriate.

And if you look at that, what he did, and the zeal that he had, and did he hit some people? Did he do those sorts of things? We don't see that in the word of God, although we do see a man with zeal and with passion, and so, you know, hey, if the military is willing to meet us there, and we just go to Chords of Nine Tales, and maybe we can meet him there, and say that's an okay place to be, usually where the argument, like we say with the other one, is leading, and I've seen it used as a defense for premeditated nuclear warfare. So if Jesus went into the temple and used his whip, then why can't we have premeditated nuclear

warfare? And that is incredibly different. And so I want to look at the words of Jesus and use them as an example, but let's please not add to that story whatever it is, but it also means that we're not just passive sitting there doing nothing, and not caring about anything, and sometimes I think we can be the quiet of the land and turn into that kind of way, and we don't see that spirit in Jesus at all.

Amen. That's right. Yeah, nothing else.

Amen. It's a common thing that comes up in these non-resistance discussions. It went on to say, should we use that idea that the body's a temple of God, and defend the temple of God? I don't personally see that connection, that the idea that, you brought up an idea that he was cleansing something on the inside.

I think if we, the question goes on to ask if that's a fair example of Jesus defending the temple of God, and asking if our body's a temple of God, should we defend that in the same way? I think a better analogy, a maybe more correct analogy, would be to remember what Jesus was doing. He was not defending the temple structure against someone tearing it down. He was cleaning out the corruption that was on the inside, and he was saying, this is to be a house of prayer, a house of worship, and you've made it a den of thieves.

So I think a better analogy would be to say, if my body's a temple of the Holy Ghost, and we want to take whips somewhere, let's go inside and let's clean up our hearts with whatever filth and corruption is there, and drive it out. Yeah, that's very well said, amen. Okay, and this one come up in several different ways, and we'll let this one say it, and then we can develop it here, and this was one of the most commonly repeated questions.

As Christian practicing non-resistance, is it ever permissible to attempt to restrain a person who is attacking and harming someone defenseless? Never fatally harming the attacker, but attempting to stop or divert the attack, like rushing the gunman at a school, or pulling away a man who's beating someone, and those kind of questions. This is a very, it's a good question, the question will come up, what about the innocent person who's there, do we just sit there and do absolutely nothing, again it's the what if question, or do we respond in some way? Yeah, I think, I don't think as Christians we should just stand there and look the other way, obviously, we need to care about the person that's being harmed or potentially going to be harmed, but I think as a Christian I would want to step in and take the harm, and if I had to, I don't think it's, I don't, what I see Jesus talking about in scripture and where he would respond, I don't see him harming the individual, obviously not killing the individual that's going to attack, or possibly going to attack, but just maybe restraining them in a non-violent way, just to try to hold them, but first of all I guess, before all that happens, too often, I know for myself, I forget, I don't cry out to God quick enough, and I think, I think I just need to cry out to God, and God can paralyze people, he can blind people, he can disable people better than I can ever do, and where's my faith? Do I have faith, do I have a big God that's going to just, you know, I'm not saying, I'm not promising, just like the three Hebrew children didn't, they said, we may burn, we may not burn, and this person may get hurt, and they may not get hurt, but we have a big God that can stop, and he can stop it better than I can do it. Amen, well said, well said, yeah, amen, I think of some of the stories you read in mission stories and things like that, like the heavenly man in China, where, you know, the prayer stopped bullets that were, you know, about to fire, or jammed up guns, I think of different examples of things that have affected like that, and people, it seems like, if you're living that faithful life, and you're believing those things, then we're walking in that sort of mindset all the time, I think of the story in, what is it, John chapter four, where Jesus is going into Jerusalem, and this, right before the Lazarus story, they're trying to warn him, you know, you better not go there, things are going to happen to

him, and Jesus says there, if we walk in the day, we have nothing to fear, and I don't think he was just talking about daylight, he was talking about walking in the presence of God and having that appreciation and that belief in what God is doing, you know, thoughts, this one comes up a lot, so.

I think that what you said is exactly right, that our, I would recognize that we probably do not know how we would react in given situations. We tend to be reactionary people, and in the moment, we may do something without thinking. That's very possible.

I think the best way to handle that is to do exactly what Dean was talking about, to focus on, I want to do what Jesus told me to do, and to be asking the Lord to create that kind of a person within me so that when I run up against unexpected situations, my natural reaction or my, or what reaction comes, ends up being more Christ-centered than carnal-centered, and so I think the focus needs to be on being the right person, trusting God to respond properly in those situations. That's good, yeah, amen. If we're not living a Christ-filled life all the other time, when you get into a crisis, chances are you're not going to live a Christ-filled life right at the moment.

Yeah, I appreciate that. Yeah, that's good, and this comes up in lots of different situations in the questions, and again, it's usually asking us, again, a lot of these, a lot of type of questions are leading, so if that's the case, then what about this, and the problem that's deeper inside of all these things, that a lot of these questions come this way, is we're starting with a premeditated thought that the words of Jesus are impractical and not for reality. We need to start with a premeditated thought, the words of Jesus are the word of God, and they're true, and here's the thing, and you brought it up with the Hebrew children, sometimes it doesn't go down that well.

Sometimes it's going to mean us dying, or we're going to see things, but it's unfair to compare it to the worldly ways of warfare and things, and to say that things don't go wrong that way. You can make the argument of different guns in your house, or different things like that, well if you had this, could this have happened, and politicians argue one way or the other, we argue from the way of Christ, taking whatever consequences happen to us. Yeah, I think that's, yeah, good points there, and a great question that comes up in a lot of different ways.

Okay, here's a good one, a little, comes from a different angle. How much is Christian, he put in quotes, radio and TV programming influencing our thinking on non-resistance and the way of peace in a negative way, and then he went on to say, what about video games, and he went on to say, does music have any influence on non-resistance and the way of peace? It's good. You know, with Christian television and that type of thing, I guess one of the things that I've pondered over this a lot, coming from that background more, is most of the time, I will say most of the time, when I listen to the preachers and the different things that come from that background, it's usually not what they say that bothers me.

It's what they continually don't say. Yes. We talk about the grace of God, the holiness of God, the fear of God, how he saves us and how the blood of Jesus does those things, where I listen to that all day, and amen and amen.

But when you continually have a diet that's always talking about this, but never talking about the way of Christ, what Jesus wants us to do with that grace-filled life, and you continually feed an entire American people or whatever with this kind of a diet, I believe that influences us. So even us from our background, now this new background, this new ground, whatever you call it, in the Anabaptist world, or churches that believe in this type of thing, is that if you're feeding yourself with that kind of a diet all the time, it's going to

influence you. I tend to do this, and I don't think I'm doing it in a judgmental way, but I like to look at people's libraries.

And you've got a good library, brother, so I'm going to say it. So, you know, you look at it and it says something about, you know, where a person's coming from, you know, and if all you're feeding on all that, and again, some of it's all good stuff, but if you're, it's, that's what's not said continually, then I think it can sometimes affect us. What do y'all think? Well, you brought up the idea of diet, and that's exactly where my mind went.

What goes in is what comes out. If we're going to feed on, if we're going to, if that's going to be our total diet, that kind of teaching, we're going to be modeled, we're going to be starting to shape our beliefs that way, probably. Yeah, that's right.

Yeah, that's exactly where my mind went. So what about his point there that he said, what about video games? Video games. And another question comes up here a little bit, they said, is it right for Christians to have violent video games? What do y'all think about that? That's a touchy one.

Yeah. But yes, I think that what we deal with when you're talking about especially violent video games is that we end up becoming accustomed to violence, our minds and our consciences become desensitized. And I've seen that even in some games, maybe just a hunting game, where it is so unrealistic that's what's happening.

And you as the hunter are, you're set into the hunting scene where you can be killed by the wild animals. Okay. Well, in real life, you can only die once physically.

But in this game, oh, you just push the reset button. We'll go on another hunt. I didn't survive the first one.

And I think it's that idea that happens even in a violent way. Now, I've never played the violent video games, but I can imagine if you become accustomed to killing people on a video screen, that will impact the way that our minds work and what we become comfortable with. So yes, I think that that does impact who we are, it affects our psyche and the way we think.

Yeah. Yeah. Amen.

Well said. I think, I can't help but personally believe that the violence we see across the nation today in the school shootings, in the places of business, wherever, these random shootings that are happening, I can't help but believe, this is my opinion, but that the video games have got to have had a major role in shaping their mindset. It just desensitizes you to human life.

I agree. And I know people debate that in the public arena a lot, but I was reading a book, I was trying to remember the name, years ago, written by, I believe he was a colonel of the special forces, and he was talking his own concern about the desensitizing of people and comparing that to the way they train people in the military, and I can remember this. I remember standing in a field with 500 men, young men, with an M16 screaming, kill, kill, with cold blue steel, and chanting that, and chanting that.

I remember saying, what is the spirit of the bayonet? Kill. And my wife had the same thing, and when she was there, and at the time, I didn't really think much about it. I was a young guy, would have just gone off to wherever for the rest of that day, but thinking back on it and the way we were shooting the targets and those types of things, doing the bayonet course, all that trained us to, in the time of crisis, to respond that

way, and you can't tell me that playing those sort of video games is not doing that kind of thing to us.

And so, yeah, I think it would be absolutely inappropriate, and furthermore, if we have a draft in the next couple of days or whenever, and we get called to the draft, nowadays the things that we have on that's going to be very easy to track, your internet sites, your Xbox internet sites, and all those sorts of things, I'm telling you, it says emphatically in the Army regulations, the Marine Corps regulations, that you will be looked at in your life in word and deed, it literally says that in the regulations, word and deed, underlined in the Marine Corps regulation. And so I think they have a right to, personally, I think they have a right to, judgment starts in the household of God, but we're going to have a hard time explaining that we don't believe in killing people when you've been sitting there looking at it every day in a video game. So I, yeah, I think it's a good question.

Music influences, you know, I, John D. Martin talks about music a lot, and there's probably fewer things that influence us, and if you're sitting there listening to worldly music, talking about worldly scenes and these types of things, and you're relating to that, and you're hearing that, and you're saying, that's me, you know, even inside of you, I think it's unhealthy. Yeah, I agree. Yeah, it's, okay.

So amen, good questions. And with that, here's the next one. Should a non-resistant Christian play paintball or laser tag? You know, again, just imagine you're on the Before the Conscience Objectors, and you're explaining that, how the difference to them, just imagine explaining that, and maybe that'll answer your own question.

What do y'all think? Yeah, I mean, I believe paintball and those kinds of things, laser tag, I mean, they're war games. They may seem harmless, you're just pinging somebody with a little paintball, but it's a war game, and I agree with you that when they check your background, and if that's in your background, that's your lifestyle, that you're gonna have a hard time convincing them that, I'm a non-resistant person. Yeah.

Yeah, good questions. I'm glad you're bringing some practical things. Okay, what is the connection between living a non-resistant lifestyle and laying down materialism? Oh, that's a tough one.

So I'll start with that, and I'll leave it to you brothers. I want to hear from y'all too. You know, being that I live in a Christian community, sometimes, you know, when I start talking about economics, it makes Mennonites nervous.

And it shouldn't, because we need it more so, or just as much as anybody else. And the truth is, is that the teachings of Jesus, you've got to start from the point that they're for us. And there's nothing in the Bible that commands us to live in a community, and we see both different types of ways of life in the scriptures.

However, what we don't see in the scriptures isn't allowed just to live a materialistic American lifestyle. He's called us to very challenging things. And we look through early Christianity, when we look through the early Anabaptists, and whether you lived in a community or not, the teachings of Jesus and his radical statements on economics are there, and we can't dismiss them.

They've got to be applied somehow. So what do you brothers think? That's always a touchy one, isn't it? Very touchy, very difficult to know exactly how to answer it. And I think in fairness, the way it is lived out among Christians is probably different, and acceptably so.

I would observe that the kingdom of God needs people to give to it and to finance it. This question talks about materialism, which is really a value system and a lifestyle. And so the giving that I'm talking about

there, I'm simply saying that to bring in that people do need to make money.

But what I believe is behind it is, why do we make money? And then what do we do with it? And do we learn to be content? If you go to Timothy, you have instruction to wealthy people, wealthy believers, and what they should do with it. Peter tells us that people shouldn't focus on selfish gain, stealing, he was talking about, I believe. But he says, rather work that they may have to give.

And so I think the root of that deals with what's happening in our hearts. And how does that relate to non-resistance? I think it's a big picture of being kingdom of God oriented or self-oriented. Now there may be a connection y'all can think of and develop further, but as I say, it's an underlying thing of, I'm not looking at the ways of the world, the things of the world, I'm focused on the kingdom of God.

I really don't have anything else to say. I'm not sure how to answer that one myself yet. Amen.

I'm not either. But it is a tough one. And you know, one of the things as we look in the Anabaptist people, we're very concerned about non-swearing and non-resistance and these different things.

And some of these issues that deal with are the way we spend our money, however that's expressed, and it is expressed in different ways, even in the word of God, is still the radical teachings of Jesus. And I remember one time, the first time I went to hear somebody preach on it was John D. Martin, Brother David Rousseau and I went up to there to hear him preach, and I'd never heard that before. And he was preaching on Luke 12 where it says, little children, it is by the heavenly Father's good pleasure to give to you the kingdom.

Give all that you have. And it was directed to the disciples, not to the rich young ruler. And I remember David Rousseau said at the end of that, and I appreciated his response.

He says, I'll be honest, this challenges me and I have to be honest, I'm not there. He said, but I dare not anesthetize the teachings of Jesus to try to make myself comfortable. And that works for us in community too.

I mean, believe me, we've got a long ways to go to put these teachings of Jesus into practical way. But I want, Jesus said, follow me. And so the teachings of Jesus takes us to a step and he shows us something and guess what? I found that he shows us a little more and he wants more for us.

But if we have the mindset that the teachings of Jesus are creating this beautiful thing to be represented, that's just going to come out and it's going to come out in different ways. Our God is a creator God and it's come out in a different ways and it's going to be beautiful if we're not trying to live the American dream in plain clothes, you know what I mean? So yeah, touchy one, good question. So it's part of how is it related? It's because it's all part of the teachings of Jesus for today, which some of them are, all of them are tough.

All of them are. All right. Why did Jesus tell his disciples to bring swords to the garden? Okay, this is a common one that comes up in, in non-resistant debates and it's interesting and there's, there's different ways that people have looked at.

One thing that I want to just say right from the beginning, and I don't want to make too much of a point about this, but sorry about the pun, but the, uh, the, this, the sword that's mentioned there is a dagger. It's a sort of dagger. And the first commission that Jesus is bringing out for the disciples, he said, don't even take a change of shoes, don't take extra, you know, a shirt, nothing, just go out.

The second time he gets them ready for a longer, a longer journey. And in that journey, he tells them to take some of those things and he tells them, uh, you're going to need this little sword. Now the sword is a dagger, um, and with that dagger, um, you know, I think if any of us go camping or if we go to these different places, you're going to have something like that.

And it's amazing again, what the scripture has been turned into, to the, to defend pre-meditated nuclear warfare. Uh, and so, but the point, sorry, but the, the, the, the, the thing with this thing is that is it an object lesson? Because when it comes into the garden, the whole thing's a setup. Peter takes that dagger, hacks off the servant's ear, and Jesus states something there that becomes something that the early Christianity grabbed a hold of.

He who lives by the sword dies by the sword, dies by the sword. We see that in Revelation picked up as even a sign of the true church in the end times that lives by this principle. So I'm thankful that the analogy is there and, uh, it's one of those many arguments of silence that people try to turn Jesus' words into something, uh, of self-defense or something like that.

What are your thoughts on it? If I remember correctly in that story, uh, Jesus asked how many swords are there? The answer was there's two. And Jesus said, it's enough. And so I think the view that you presented as it being an object lesson is right there in the text.

Because if they, Jesus had actually intended for them to defend against, uh, an incoming band of arresting soldiers, they would have needed much more than two swords to be effective. And so, so I think the point, Jesus just, he knew that was going to happen and it was an object lesson where he taught you live by the sword, you die by the sword. Yeah.

Amen. Yeah. Well said.

I agree with you. So, okay. Good questions.

Uh, why did you, okay. Oh, is it? Should non-resistant Christians own assault rifles? This one scares me. No.

Of course not. Uh, and I, we're talking about M16, AK-47s, that kind of thing. No, absolutely not.

And, and, uh, and I have no problem with hunting and things like that when it's not turned into a sport and used, you know, it can, it can be an idol to us. We've seen that. Um, but an assault rifle, unless you brothers have a different thought on that.

I think they're specifically designed for killing human beings, not beer. Yeah. So check in your M16 there and after the end of this, so be careful who you, all right.

Good questions. All right. What is the role of a believer? Okay.

This one comes up a lot. What is the role of a believer in deceiving a perpetrator of evil who is hunting down an innocent person? Is it lawful to outright lie to protect innocent life? An example is providing safety to a victim of sex trade or an abolitionist did to protect a slave. The other one comes up and it's a classic, um, ethics question.

Uh, the Nazi person comes to the door and wants to take the hidden, the hiding Jews and, and, and this comes up several times. We'll address this. It's a, it's a good question.

It's a question that needs to be asked. So yeah. Let's just start with that.

It's a good one. All right. Can you want me to start? Go ahead.

Yeah. Uh, well there's a couple of things there. Uh, one is that first of all, if we're told to not tell the untruth, uh, once again, we start with the basics that are very clear and then we go to what's maybe less clear. So we're told to not tell the untruth in any situation.

So we don't do that. That, that's where we start. I would observe that another thing that may be happening in these situations, not all of them, but in some of them there may be an interest of self preservation as well as much as just self of defending other people.

So I think we have to go back to something Tony said earlier and that is how much do we trust God? We can't control every earthly situation. We live in a world that's full of evil and it is unreasonable for us to think that we can change the course of events in every situation. Somebody said, back up one notch, appreciate what you talked in the session last evening about the theology of martyrdom, the willingness to lay down our life.

I think we have to have that. Somebody said that the secret to success in the Apostle Paul's life was that he did not believe he had to survive. And I think often we have that mentality.

We have to survive when the truth is we don't. And so I think the greater picture is for us to once again prepare our hearts to trust the Lord. And if it requires me compromising biblical principles as in telling an untruth, then I don't do it regardless of the consequences.

Well said. Yeah. I don't.

Yeah. Not much more to say except that it's one of the actual Ten Commandments in the Old Testament as well. Thou shalt not bear false witness.

And I like what you said. We start with that. That's a very undeniable truth.

It's what God says. Don't tell a lie. So that's in black and white.

Don't tell a lie. It's in red and white. That's good.

Yeah, that's well said. I appreciate what you said about the idea of looking at that scenario and Paul was thinking, I don't have to live through this scene. And I think it's that whole, again, those what if questions that we talked about last night and, you know, looking at it, usually, okay, what, let's, let's analyze it first of all, from the start of the Nazi coming to the door.

I mean, so let's imagine the scene. So you're there and he's knocking at the door and the SS soldier comes to you and says, are there any Jews in this house? And you say, nope. And he goes to the next door.

Is that going to happen? It's ridiculous. He's going to say he's not going to care that you lied to him and he's going to come in and search anyway. The other thing is, you know, the idea of saving your life involved in the concept of being silent.

We have the power to bring that attention to ourself that we can die. And the interesting thing is that's the story the way Jesus did. It seems, I don't know if we have the entire dialogue, you know, between Jesus and Pilate, but apparently he was irritating Pilate by his silence.

Why aren't you talking to me? You know, and so we have the right to be able to, when they're, when they're asking us questions that we don't feel that the consequence of me answering this question lawfully will mean the life of somebody else, I can just simply be quiet. And that was Jesus's example. We can be that example at the door that'll probably get us killed, but we won't reveal who's who's there in the house if it comes to that.

So again, where's that, where's that question leading? It's leading as an excuse to say, again, the Jesus of the words of Jesus are impractical, but what we're trying to argue is let's let the words of Jesus create in us a way of life that sometimes for our own particular skin won't come out that way. I appreciate what you said there. That comes up in several different, several different things.

Okay. Here's one. It's a challenging one.

And okay. What should be the level of participation in national holidays, particularly ones like Labor Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, you know, the, does the employers give a paid holiday for that? Businesses shut down, neighborhood gathers to watch it, watching fireworks, watching firework displays or fellowship with friends. And so, ouch.

That one's a hard one, you know, but you're looking at the free fireworks show, participating in that and yeah, what do you think on that? I think that one belongs here. What do you think on that brother? Well, I guess the question I have with this one is just a returning question. I guess, why are those people, why are they gathering? I see them gathering strictly for, in the country we live in, American patriotism.

It's a patriotic celebration, whether it's a parade or a, whatever kind of gathering it is, it's the main focus is patriotism to this country, America, in this case. And so as followers of Jesus Christ and another kingdom, why would we want to be mingling with a crowd where that's their focus? Yeah, it's a good point, brother. It's good.

Yeah, and I have to admit that, you know, with all that I've gone through in my background of patriotism, the songs that I used to sing, that I've been at those things and you feel this, almost like this force of different kingdoms and particularly with the memories that I have growing up and things, there's something there more to it than just some pretty lights flashing in the sky. So I think your brother's got some good points there. So yeah, it's a challenging one and it's a good kind of question.

These are the kind of questions that we as a church, we start asking when you start talking, we're going to live this kingdom, we're going to live out this way of life. We start asking these questions and start responding in a way. And so let's keep thinking down, down that way.

It's good.

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