

Biblical Nonresistance

by Dean Taylor

Dean Taylor's sermon on Biblical Nonresistance emphasizes the essential role of nonviolence in the Christian faith and its historical roots in the Reformation and Anabaptist traditions.

Duration: 1:36:50

Scripture: Matthew 5:38

Topics: "Nonresistance"

Description

In this sermon, Brother Denny emphasizes the importance of understanding the changes brought by Jesus Christ in the way we live and fight for the kingdom of God. He highlights that Jesus did not change the nature of God, but rather the means by which we engage in spiritual warfare. Brother Denny references the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus declares six times that he is bringing a new message, different from what was previously taught. He specifically focuses on Jesus' teaching on non-retaliation, urging listeners to resist evil and turn the other cheek when faced with aggression.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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It's a blessing. Well, everyone here today, it's a blessing seeing all the different faces. This is an amazing gathering.

I found it just to see all the different people and all the different places that we come from, and I praise the Lord for that. I send greetings to you from Living Hope Christian Fellowship. It's a blessing.

And all of you, I don't even know, I think the majority of the people here, and I just want to say it's a blessing to come and worship our Lord Jesus Christ this morning. So if we could bow for a word of prayer, and let's ask the Lord to speak through this man's, through my testimony and through this teaching that He's given to us. Let's pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, we thank You, O God, for Your mercy in our life. And dear Lord, we come to You this morning, O Father, in the name of Jesus Christ and because of His shed blood. And dear Heavenly Father, we ask You, Lord, as we look into these things, that even though I'm going to be speaking on non-resistance, Lord, I do pray, O God, that You would make us soldiers.

Lord, I do ask You, Father, that by Your mercy, even though I'm speaking this morning on non-violence, I do pray, O Father, that each word will be just saturated with the blood of Jesus Christ and that it would put within us a desire to press into You, Lord, with a holy violence. Dear God, I just ask You to have mercy upon me this morning. May You be praised.

May You be glorified. It's in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen.

I'm going to speak today about biblical non-resistance. We've heard a lot this week about the Reformation. We've heard about the radical Reformation.

We've heard about the different things, about the Anabaptists and these forefathers that have done these incredible things, lived a faith that is inspiring us. You know, during the Reformation, it was as if the Holy Spirit was being poured out in a marvelous way. You know, I mean, people were coming alive in several different ways.

People were having some theological reforms. Some people took that theology further and reformed it into their life. Others it affected them with missions.

And for the first time, people were taking the Gospel to far off places. You know, one of these men, although we wanted him to change in some things, but he received something from God. His name was Francis Xavier.

And he received a burden to take the Gospel to places it had never been. And so Francis Xavier, he got in his ships in those days and started sailing around to share the Gospel, to share Jesus Christ and what he was learning there across the oceans in different places. Well, he got off to the coast of Japan.

He got off to Indonesia and places there, and actually a Samurai warrior that was a fugitive came up to Francis Xavier and begged him, could you bring the Gospel to Japan? So he did. So he brought the Gospel to Japan. And there he was sharing what he was learning.

Again, this was early on in the Reformation. He's sharing what he's learning there in Japan. And it starts taking root, and it starts taking root quickly.

Well, it wasn't long though, about 50 years later, a new emperor came on, and actually some brutal persecution happened there for those converts in Japan. And actually the stories say that there was burning crosses, that there was all kinds of persecutions, like the ones that we read in The Martyr's Mirror. It was a horrible amount of persecution.

And they thought, okay, that Christianity had been completely rooted out of Japan. They were convinced that it had. Although hundreds of years later, they found out, 250 years later in the 1850s, Japan was being opened up now for trade purposes.

And it was discovered there that in the catacombs, in hidden places, that there were Christians that were going on baptizing people and living in a catacomb existence for 250 years. And so as they did this, when the emperor started to find out about this, well, he quickly brought in persecution again. But now because of international pressure, the persecution was released, and suddenly Christians started coming out in lots of different ways and lots of different places and lots of different expressions.

Well, a lot of the ones there, as it started to be getting more and more big, we wouldn't have done this, but this is what they did. They started to build this huge cathedral. They called this cathedral.

Some of the baptized Christians there in Japan started building this huge cathedral, and they called the cathedral St. Mary's Cathedral. And this cathedral was in a little town called Nagasaki. And as it was there, it was sort of like a, here we are, Christianity, we proclaim it.

And again, it would be different than some of the things. We wouldn't have wanted them to build that in that way and different things, but all that said, it was as if they were just proclaiming that here we are, that persecution couldn't stop us. Well, that did change.

As the Christians there and all the different kinds of Christians there started to proclaim and said that persecution can't stop the church. Well, on the other side of the world, there were two young American Christians who started off their days of work with prayer. One was a Lutheran and one was a Catholic, and they went to their chaplains that morning for prayer.

And as they met with the chaplains for prayer, after that they started their day's work, which was to climb into their B-29 Superfortress and fly from the island that they had and fly towards Nagasaki. It was 1945. It was August 9th.

As they met with them, they went and it's recorded that one of the very things that these two American Christians were looking at as they looked out of their B-29 Superfortress is St. Mary's Cathedral. When you see the steeple, when you see that cathedral, that's when you drop the bomb. And it became that that place was right in the middle of ground zero where they dropped the atomic bomb in Nagasaki.

And what Satan and his devices with several different ways could not destroy American Christianity brought to an end in 1945. As it's said, I read here, this man who wrote on this, at 11.02am, Nagasaki Christianity was boiled, evaporated and carbonized in a scorching, radioactive fireball. The persecuted, vibrant people here, the surviving center of Japanese Christianity had become ground zero.

Shortly after that, Japan surrendered. And also was bombing on Hiroshima. Japan surrendered.

And even at the surrender ceremony, Douglas MacArthur, the general at the time, went there and made a speech. It's an interesting speech that this man, this worldly general made this speech. And he said this, military alliances, balances of power, League of Nations, all in turn failed.

We had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. And then he said, the problem basically is theological.

Now, we heard about these things, and my burden that I would like to bring to you today is that I do not believe that the doctrines of the two kingdoms of non-resistance is a distinctive of the Anabaptist people. In other words, you know, people have their distinctives. You know, your local church may have some certain distinctives.

Your family may have some certain distinctives. I do not believe that non-resistance is just a distinctive of a particular group of people. I believe that it is intrinsically part of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that Jesus gave to us.

We heard during these sermons about the Anabaptists, Brother Denny brought to us the idea that we don't just believe in a doctrine of Jesus, that the Anabaptists believe that salvation was in the person of Jesus. Now, I don't want you to let that go over your head, because it's a very important point. But, you say, what's the difference? Well, I believe in Jesus.

What's the difference between that and having Jesus? The difference is essential. The difference is this. Instead of just agreeing to some tenant of the faith and saying I agree to this and I agree to that, and so therefore I'm going to just apply this mental assent, the difference is having the very person of Jesus Christ in you, and having those things that He taught within you.

You know, how many of you have ever listened to, not counting going to church, have ever got a tape of a sermon, read a sermon, took a recording of a sermon and played it in your home? How many people have ever done that? It's a lot. God came to earth and preached a sermon. He preached a sermon in the Sermon on the Mount, which is found in Matthew 5, 6, and 7. God came to earth and preached a sermon.

Now you go to that sermon. It is more than just an inspiration of blessed beatitudes that we can put on the wall and paint on plates and put in little ash trays or souvenir trays to trade around. It is a manifesto of the Christian life.

It is Jesus Christ came and He gave the manifesto of the Christian life. And look at what happened here. We've turned the whole thing into just a mental ascent.

I confess to you that I believe it is a form of Gnosticism. It's a form of just looking at things mentally and not allowing it affect our life. Jesus, the Person, everything He is, from the incarnation when He was born to everything He preached, to His life of where He shared, the way that He looked, the way that He talked, the way that He spoke, all the way up in hallelujah to the way that He died on the cross and has shed blood into the resurrection.

It's Jesus within us. We are dead, but alive unto Christ Jesus. I give you a little sign.

Take that sermon on the mount found in Matthew 5, 6, and 7 and do this. Go through every single one of those things. You know, He talks about divorce and remarriage.

He talks about adultery. He talks about war. He talks about laying up treasures on earth.

He talks about prayer and different things. Take every one of those things and form yourself a church on a piece of paper the complete opposite of what Jesus said. You said, love your enemies? Let's have a Christian military.

You said, not lay up against treasures? Let's have Christian finance firms. You said, not to divorce or remarry? You're going to do this blatantly. You said, not to sue? We're going to have Christian lawyers.

Do everything opposite. And I tell you today, it is frightfully like what we see in modern Christianity. God came to earth and preached a sermon.

It is not a distinctive of just the Anabaptist people. I do believe it is the manifesto of the Christian life. These things are not gray.

I challenge us today that we look at these things, that we let these things settle into us, and if you see that... Well, I'd like to take this, by God's grace, beyond just the doctrine of whether or not you're going to go fight in the war, to an entire way. If there's one word that I'm so glad Brother Denny brought out, because I don't have the time to get into it. Brother Melvin already brought it out as well again this morning.

Listen to the sermon on Golosaniite. This is what Jesus taught here in this whole idea. It is a theology of martyrdom.

And there's no way else to look at it. Also, I would say that there's been a lot of distortion about non-resistance. And unfortunately, what many people from my background hear is from a very liberal ideology, humanistic ideology, and frankly, I believe it is nonsense.

I believe that a Christian non-resistance, a biblical non-resistance, is absolutely nonsense unless it's looked at as a cross with a theology of martyrdom. These things are essential. I want to take this out of your mind.

If you're a young person today, you say, yeah, I know our church talks about this non-resistant thing, and it's one of our little things that we do. I would like to change your mind today. I'd like you to see that it is an essential part of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You need to understand these distinctives. And the Didache, which was written as some people say as early as the year 90. The Didache put it this way.

Notice how clear the early church saw things black and white. The Didache says this. This is the very beginning of the Didache.

There are two ways. One of life and one of death. But a great difference between the two ways.

The way of life then is this. First, you shall love God Who made you. Second, your neighbors as yourself.

And all things whatsoever you would, you should not occur to you, do not also to another. And of these sayings, the teachings is this. Bless them that curse you.

And pray for your enemies. And fast for them that persecute you. For what thanks is there if you love them that love you? Do not also the Gentiles do the same.

And they go on to basically repeating the Sermon on the Mount. These are the two ways. The Anabaptists today, are you as clear as that? In 1527, we heard about some of these saints as they've gone about in living a life of no compromise.

They also had an understanding and a distinction like that. The idea of what is black and what is white, what is light and what is darkness was very clear to them. Let me say a little bit here from the Schleidheim Confession written in 1527, months before many of them were killed.

Michael Sattler was killed, I think, within two months there. And his wife, was the story we heard, was drowned later on. A separation shall be made from the evil and from the wickedness which the devil planted in this world in this manner, simply that we shall not have fellowship with them, the wicked, and not run with them in the multitudes of their abominations.

This is the way it is. Since all who do not walk in the obedience of faith and have not united themselves with God so that they wish to do His will are a great abomination before God, it is not possible for anything to grow or issue from them except abominable things. For truly, all creatures are in but two classes.

Good and bad. Believing and unbelieving. Darkness and light.

The world and those who have come out of the world. God's temple and idols. Christ and Belial.

And none can have part with the other. You see, the Kingdom of God has come. And Jesus Christ is calling you to come out of the world and into His Kingdom.

You know, I do believe, as radical as those words are, and it gets a little more radical as it reads on, and then it goes on to talk about the sword, we need another radical reformation. Amen? We need another radical reformation. The word radical, you know what it means.

It means to the roots. A radical reformation. Alright.

I was not raised with these convictions in the slightest bit. I was raised very patriotic. To me, patriotism, God and country, ideology was my religion.

To think of things that were against the country and against the flag to me were more than just unpatriotic. It was sacrilege. The concept of burning the flag and these types of things.

I could not allow the idea of it. I never heard of a Mennonite to my shame or anyone there. I was raised in Texas and never heard of that.

As a matter of fact, when I started reading, the first time that I heard of a Mennonite, I thought it was some sort of tribe of Israel. You know, the Mennonites and the Midianites and these different things, I'd never heard of. Never heard of it.

I never heard of a people that were walking in the ways of God who kept to this sort of thing. But God started opening my eyes and I tell you, it was a blessing. It was a blessing to find out that there has been people.

I first found out about the early church. I later found out that through all times, people who have taken the Word of God seriously have found these two kingdoms to be something they had to be reckoned with. When I started to do these things, it was very hard on my parents.

I've seen my father cry twice in my life. Just twice. One time was when I was seven years old and he told me that his father died in a horrible car accident.

He was crying when he told me. I never saw him again cry until the day that I told him, Dad, Tanya and I are considering leaving the army as a conscientious objector. And he wept.

My testimony, my wife and I, back in the 80's, we grew up together in high school. Later on, we were musicians. We joined the army and we joined the army band.

To my shame, and I'll say this, it is to my shame, we went for the more contemporary type of things and my wife and I started to be in a rock band there in the army band. My wife first came over as a civilian. We thought we'd make a career out of this foolishness.

And so I sent my wife back to basic training. She then went through basic training and met me back in Germany where we started to travel through Europe playing in different officers clubs and different things, this foolish and devilish music. But when my wife joined, we were doubled housing allowance.

We moved to this beautiful apartment with your tax dollars, this beautiful apartment outside the German base. It was on the German civilian area. And there for the first time in my life, because of this valley, I couldn't get the television to work.

It was cut out. I was freed from this distraction. So for the first time in our life, my wife and I, we started to read the Bible.

We started to read in anything. And suddenly these things started to come alive. And I'll never forget the night that I leaned over on our little lopsided pillow and I said, let me read you this one.

Earlier before that, we had first realized that this life of this rock music and this way of life was a total compromise. Even though we were going to church the whole time. The church blessed it.

I mean, it's for the troops. And to our northern Germany, we realized that we were living a compromising life, that we were not living a Christian life. This was not Christianity.

We bowed down our knees in north Germany and said, Lord, we give our lives completely to you. Completely. And the banner that came up over our head when we rose up from our knees that day was no compromise.

No compromise, Lord. We've lived a life of compromise. We want to be real Christians.

We want to be radical Christians. No compromise. So God took us at that.

He said it wasn't long. You don't start long and you're reading the Bible until you get to Matthew. And here it is.

I said, honey, let me read to you this one. Now I speak sometimes at different Mennonite churches and I sometimes said, you know these things so I'm going to skip over some of these verses. A brother came to me and said, Brother, don't skip the verses.

We need to hear it. We need to hear it. So I said, I leaned over and I said, honey, just listen to this.

Alright. So she said, okay. Jesus said, You have heard that it has been said, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

But I say to you that you resist not evil. But whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee and from him that would borrow thee, turn not thou away. You have heard that it has been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you and pray for them and love them that spitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven.

For He maketh His sons arise on the evil and the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans do the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans so. Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven.

So what do you think? Sounds pretty simple. Sounds pretty straightforward, she said. Yeah, it does, but we're in the army.

So how do you love your enemies? How do you pray for those who persecute you when we're in the army? What are you supposed to do with this? And suddenly, that banner of no compromise was being put to the test. What do we do with this? Well, surely the theologians have a good reason for this, right? So we went to the chaplain office and I got a book on non-resistance and the just war theory. And I said, okay, I mean, Christians have been doing this for 2,000 years, right? I mean, they're going to have good reasons that people have been going to war all these years.

And I started to go through that book. And I started to read through that book. And I got to hearing about Augustine and about how he has this just war theory and all these different ones and all that.

And I got to the end of that book and frankly, I was scared. I wasn't so scared when I thought the theologians had a good reason. But when I read their reasons, it frightened me.

I said, okay, this is it. Jesus said something pretty straightforward. You're going to need some pretty good exegetical gymnastics to get away from that.

So what are we going to do with that? I was scared. I started then to say, Lord, what is it? And we started to look into the Scriptures and look at these different things. And you know, the first thing that started to challenge me was I said, okay, what about all those Old Testament wars though? I mean, what do you do with that? I started to get some of the books and some of the books I started to find were from the liberal pacifists.

And the liberal pacifists gave the idea that, well, no, you've got to understand the Old Testament, God had the same type of way as He did in the New Testament. And the only time we had wars was just because men sort of messed things up. Because after all, God is not violent.

God never does violence. He doesn't judge people. He doesn't condemn people.

So I put on the liberal pacifist glasses and I started to try to read the Old Testament like that. Okay. And you get some of that.

You know, you get Abraham trying to leave and not fight over the water wells. You get verses like, Thou shalt not kill. And you say, okay.

But it doesn't take long until you go through the Old Testament and you say, no, it's very clear. God called for war. No, I can't deny this one.

God said, annihilate them. No, I can't deny this. This man was judged because he didn't cut someone to pieces.

I cannot wear these liberal glasses. My understanding of God was in crisis. And here's a very vital point and I don't want you to miss it.

God cannot change. God does not change. And for us to reconcile the Old Testament with the New Testament, one of the biggest things you first have to understand is this, that God cannot change.

And the thing that I had to be reconciled was this. It is found in Exodus 15, verse 3. I'll read it to you. It's a very short verse.

Exodus 15, verse 3. The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is His name. Well, that's Scripture.

Alright. The Lord is a man of war. The Lord is His name.

I believe to understand this doctrine of biblical non-resistance, to understand it, we must understand that God has not called us to passivity. He has not called us to simply go out and not cause any trouble. I believe that this nature of God, this attribute of God has not changed.

God is a God of war. And to understand the New Testament and the Old Testament, we cannot lose sight of that. And I do believe that the liberal ideas of pacifism makes nonsense of this idea.

Yes, Abraham did certain things, and yes, we hear the Scriptures, thou shalt not kill, but the same law that gave us thou shalt not kill also gave us if a man hits an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It was the same law. God has not changed.

Jesus, when He came, though, said some also, though, very strong statements. Six times in the beginning of this Christian manifesto in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said this, I know that it has been said in days of old, but now I say. Six times Jesus says, I know it has been said, but now I say.

Now, we believe that Jesus is the expressed image of the Father. And when He said that, and now I say, He directly made a change. And I don't want you to miss this point either.

It is Jesus Christ who did not change the nature of God. He did not change God's passion and His zeal to see the Kingdom of God to be prospered. What He changed was the means by which we fight.

What He changed was the means by which you live in that Kingdom. And that's something you can't miss. You're too quiet.

I'm going to say it again because I don't think you've got it. God cannot change. Don't try to explain away the Old Testament and the zeal and the passion of God and His desire to glorify His name in a people.

I want to write my name on the people of God. I want a peculiar people. I want a people called after my name.

When the enemy shall come in like the flood, I will raise up a standard against it. That nature and zeal of God has not changed, but Jesus made some very important, complete metamorphosis about how we live in that Kingdom. Don't miss that.

No one else could have made that change. Neither John the Baptist nor anyone else. It was Jesus Christ who said, I know it has been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but now I say, love your enemies.

But when it comes to... Does that mean we're just going to now be saying anything you can to have a peaceful relationship with someone or not make any waves? Not at all. Jesus said in Matthew 10, verse 34, Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I come not to send peace, but a sword.

He went on to explain that. He says, for I come to set a man at variance against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be of his own household. He that loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.

And he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me. How many of you have ever experienced that? It hurts, you know.

It hurts. Do you see what Jesus is saying? It's not that we're just going to be agreeable with everyone and bring in some sort of world ecumenism. No.

It will bring a cutting. It will bring a cutting. There is a promise to that cutting that anyone who has left family or lands or home, that you will find a hundredfold, yes, even on this earth.

And praise God as I look here across this auditorium. A hundredfold. Praise God.

Sometimes it's too much for me to even take in. It's a blessing. This Christian manifesto.

Jesus said, I know it has been said, but I say unto you. The writer of Hebrews tells us in Hebrews 8.6, But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry. Hebrews 8.6 But how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises, for if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

For finding fault with them, He said, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Praise God. And the Gospel came.

The Gospel came. We heard about the Gospel. We've been hearing about the Gospel and the spreading of the Gospel.

You know, but it's also again, the point that I'm making here is that it's very important we understand the completion of that Gospel. Think back in your readings of the New Testament, how many times you hear Jesus constantly talking about the arrival of the Kingdom of God. Here it is.

The Kingdom of God has come. What were they referring to? Look at Isaiah 2. When you look into the early church, one of the frequent things you find them do is that they're talking about the fulfillment of this Old Testament Scripture in the life of the church. Now, they did still believe that there would be a time would come when God would make a new heaven and a new earth and all those sorts of things.

And they still believed in that kind of an idea. But, the fact is, they believed that when Jesus came, that when He came and established His Kingdom, that the followers of His Kingdom, they live in the laws and the ways of that new Kingdom that was prophesied of Jesus to come. In Isaiah 2, verse 1, the word of Isaiah, the son of Amoz, saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, and it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow into it.

And many shall go and say, come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of God, of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His path. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and from the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks.

Nations shall not lift up sword against nations. And it goes on. Micah brings up the same thing in 4, almost quoting the same thing, and there it adds to the verse, we wait for all creation to be fulfilled.

But if there is one message, they bring in there this idea, they bring in this idea in Micah as well, of the lion with the lamb, they talk about being at peace under a tree, and what a blessing we have in seeing those things fulfilled. Isaiah chapter 9. Put it this way. Isaiah chapter 9 verse 1 Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation.

When at the first He lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea beyond Jordan and Galilee of the nations. The people, verse 2, that walked in darkness have seen a great light. They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Verse 3 Thou hast multiplied the nations and not increased the joy, the joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burdens and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian. Listen to this now.

For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise and garments rolled in blood. But this shall be with burning and fuel for fire. In other words, that garments rolled in blood will be what we light our fire with.

For unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given. And the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Don't miss this, of the increase of His government and peace. There shall be no end. Upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Hallelujah. Well, interesting, in Matthew 13, look at that.

What am I saying here? Why am I making such an Isaiah passage? It's because of this. We talk a lot about the Gospel. What's the Gospel? The Gospel is that Jesus Christ came to save them which was lost.

Hallelujah. But also, Him which was lost He said to come out from the world and come in through this life in Jesus. Having the life of Jesus within us.

And that is walking in the kingdom of God. In Matthew 13, listen. Looking at verse 13.

Sorry, I had the wrong place there. Referring to Jesus speaking about the fulfillment of this prophecy. It says, And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast and the borders of Zebulun and Naphtalem.

Verse 14, That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet. Listen to this. He did this.

He walked in this very place that Isaiah 9 could be fulfilled. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet saying the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtalem by the way of the sea beyond Jordan, Galilee and Gentile, the people which sat in darkness saw a great light and to them which sat in the regions and shadows of death light is sprung up. From that time, Jesus began to preach and say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

In fulfillment of Isaiah chapter 9, Jesus said, Repent, come out from the world, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. That's what He said. Do you see the fullness of what Jesus is wanting from us? The fullness of walking in Him.

It's not a mental ascent to something that happened in history. It is a coming in to the person of Jesus Christ and living within His kingdom. Do you get the difference? He said again in Mark chapter 1, right at the beginning there, Mark chapter 1 verse 14, Now after that, John was put in prison.

Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye, and believe the gospel. Believe the gospel.

The gospel of the kingdom of God. Six times in the book of Acts when the gospel is spoken of, it's referred to, guess what? The thought, the doctrine, it's referred to as the way. Because you see, the gospel has an active understanding in it.

It is this. Jesus came up to you and said, Come, follow Me. Come, follow Me.

Not come and listen to these different things and then make... Come and follow Me. Do you get the difference? I'm afraid that we've been so blinded sometimes by just a mental Christianity that you're missing out the grace of God and how it's supposed to work. Yes, we are saved by grace through faith.

Don't let anybody tell you differently. But that works out in our life in come, follow Me. And that's what Jesus asked us to do here.

He said, follow Me. When we see this, the kingdom of God, repent ye, and believe the gospel of the kingdom, we see that separating these two kingdoms on earth. No more place do I think we see those two kingdoms head to head is when Jesus was before Pilate.

Turn your Bibles to John chapter 18. I want you to look at that. John chapter 18.

Here we go. John chapter 18. You see the kings of the world represented, the magistrates of the world represented in Pilate who is acting like he has some kind of authority over Jesus and he's saying to Him, he's challenging Him.

And an interesting thing happens where Jesus makes a statement about the citizens of His kingdom. He says in John chapter 18 verse 33, let's begin. John chapter 18 verse 33.

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again and called Jesus and said unto Him. So he called Jesus in and he said unto Him, Aren't Thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus answered him, And he said unto Him, Saying Thou this thing of Thyself or did others tell it thee of me? Jesus knew that the words that Pilate was saying were very spiritual words like the words that Pilate said. Who do men say that I am? And the profession of faith that Pilate spoke there he knew was not from his heart, but from men.

It can be empty. Thine own nation, Pilate answered, am I a Jew? Why are you asking me? Who told me this? Your own nation and your chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What have you done? Jesus answered, and don't lose this, because His answer, I believe, look through all time, look through all the different facets and different things that have happened to the church.

His answer, look through all the different men that would raise up with all their ideas. His eyes and His vision look through Genghis Khan and Hitler and Stalin and Mussolini and all the different people who had all these great ideas and Napoleon and his eyes and he saw all those things and Jesus answered and said this, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.

That's why they're... That's why they're fighting. That I should not deliver to the Jews. But now is my kingdom not from hence.

But like I often do, and like you often do, you say, oh, okay, it's sort of a spiritual thing, right? So it's not a real kingdom. It's just something... Okay, I see now. I understand now.

It doesn't affect real life. It's just something spiritual, right? I mean, are you a king then? Is it real? I mean, is that a real king? Pilate challenged him. Art thou a king then? And listen to what Jesus said, and don't miss it.

Thou sayest that I am a king. I see Jesus just looking straight up to Pilate. Thou sayest that I am a king.

Here's Jesus that was convicted and condemned and challenged by this worldling. To this end was I born. Did you hear that? Are you a real king then? It's for this end that I was born.

And for this cause I came into the world that everyone, that I should bear witness unto the truth, everyone that is of the truth hears my voice. What do you think it means to hear the voice of Jesus? I mean, I think it can mean a lot of things. I really do.

I think the Holy Spirit guides us and leads us. But I think, wouldn't you agree with me this morning, that at the very least, those who hear His voice should at least hear what He said when He preached? Don't you believe that? I mean, He says, and I've also come into the world that they should hear My voice. Don't you think that we should hear that at the very least? I think we should.

Jesus showed us by example these different things that happen there and these different ways that these kingdoms are set in two different places. He also gave us some different examples. Do you remember in Isaiah, with 2 Kings 1, verse 10, do you remember that, that as Elijah was trying to go through the town there, and as he was there, they were trying to stop him from going.

Do you remember that? And as Elijah was going through the town there, he said, okay, and to be able to keep going, he just called down fire from heaven and consumed them, and he was able to go. Well, the disciples knew the Scripture, so they were wanting to come through Samaria one time, and the Samaritans saw that way. They just want to pass through here.

We're not going to let them come through here. So the disciples said, hey, do you remember the way we did it in the Old Testament? Well, they didn't call it that term. Do you remember the way the Word of God said to do it, Jesus? Let's call fire down and consume them.

And in Luke 9, verse 51, is where we read about that. And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, going to the cross. He steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before his face, and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him.

And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did? As Elijah did. But he turned and rebuked them and said, listen to this, you know not what manner of spirit you are of.

For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives. And they went into another village. The heart of God.

The new way of dealing with these situations. The zeal to save the souls of men, to establish the kingdom of God, has not changed. Did you see it? But the way it was operating, that changed.

Another very pointed example, sorry, is there before the crucifixion, when Jesus told those to get a sword. Do you remember that one? And the first sending out of the apostles, the 70, on their first missionary journey, do you remember that Jesus told them, I don't want you to take anything. I don't want you to take a change of clothes.

I don't want you to take extra food. I just want you to go. But the last time there, when He was giving them another commission, it was as if He was going to give them something for the long haul.

Now I want you to take an extra cloak. I want you to take these different things. He says, when I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything? And they said nothing.

Then He said, but now he who has a money bag, let him take it. And He took the money bag, and He took the sandals, and He took the sandals, and likewise a knapsack. And one of the things, interestingly enough, He told them to get was a sword.

Now people make a lot of debate over this sword. It's the word machaira in Greek, and it's actually, if you look it up in your concordance, it's a dagger-like small sword. Many people make the argument, and I think it's rightfully so, that this was a utility type of thing that He was asking them to use.

It was a small sword. That's the fact that it was. Although, I think I don't want to make too much of that.

Because whatever the case is, the point that we're given by Jesus is that those swords, however big it was, if it was all the way from here to the car, or if it was just a tiny little sword, however big it was, that these apostles, or at least Peter, tried to use this thing to defend Jesus. Do you remember the story? And as He did this to try to save Jesus, then we're given a very good lesson here, and also a very sobering word on what to do with this. Turn your Bible to Luke 22.

Luke 22 there, coming up to 35. So as we know the story, when they came up to take Jesus and Pilate kissed Him and said, this is the one, Peter asked the question, Lord, should we use the sword? Lord,

should we defend You with the sword? And without not even waiting for an answer, Peter took his sword and he hacked off Malchus. Malchus, the high priest's servant, and his ear flopped to the ground.

And you can imagine this violent scene that was going on and all those things. Well, Jesus picked up that ear, miraculously attached it back to the servant, and He said this, Peter, put away your sword. Put away your sword.

And He said, he who lives by the sword... Now, that's not the way they did it in the Old Testament, but that's the way He did it. And that's the way He taught that. And don't lose that little dictum, that little pronouncement there.

He who lives by the sword will die by the sword. We hear it again in the book of Revelation. Don't lose that.

It's a serious indictment. Interesting, Tertullian in the early church has this to say. Asking this question as early as the year 190.

We're talking about 190. He asked, how will a Christian man participate in war? In fact, how will he serve even in peace without a sword? For the Lord has taken the sword away. It is also true that soldiers came to John the Baptist and received the instruction for their conduct.

It is true that the centurion believed. Nevertheless, the Lord afterward, in disarming Peter, disarmed every soldier. What we see in the Scriptures coming out in the Kingdom of God is that the Kingdom of God, where it used to be one geographic place, now has spread as salt and light into all nations.

But this kingdom is to be real. Is it a real kingdom then? We can ask White Pilot. Yes, it is.

Yes, it is. It is a kingdom. I've been to Berlin, Germany, twice.

I went back in 1988 when Tanya was in basic training. And I went with my mother. And it was interesting.

In 1988, you had no hint of communism coming down. And as I was there, you had to go through a lot of intimidating sort of checkpoints. You had to wear your dress uniform.

You had all these Russian soldiers who were protecting East Germany pointing at you with their machine guns. And you had to walk through all these checkpoints. And finally, you made it over to the east side.

And there you were. And I remember one time even walking down the street and this man from the east side spit down at my feet. I guess he didn't like Americans.

He couldn't do anything. I mean, you know, you're there in full uniform and all. But I went to Berlin a second time.

And it was interesting to change. The second time, my wife was with me this time. And we went again as soldiers again.

And we visited Berlin. But this time it was 1989. And this time, as I drove up to the Berlin Wall, the scene was completely different.

As I was there this time, I walked in and there was this orange glow covering this whole scene. And as I looked what used to be this strong wall, now this mass of people were tearing down this wall. And the dust of this wall being destroyed was coming its way up.

I looked over and a group of Germans were taking an old road sign and were banging into this wall and literally breaking this wall. I look over here and I see Russians and Germans crying out. And then I walk over to this man who's looking through the hole in a wall.

And he's a communist soldier. And he's lifting his hand through the hole in the wall. And he's saying, Freedom.

Peace. He's saying, Brotherhood. And I shook his hand.

I kissed him. And I thought about it. And you know what I thought? What changed? What changed? A year ago, I would have been called on.

Sergeant, I want you to shoot that man. And I would have been forced to do it. But now, I was kissing him through a hole in the wall.

These two kingdoms are at odds. The question that I then started to ponder and we started to think about was this. Well, Lord, haven't You already broke down those barrier walls of division? Haven't You said there's no more Scythian Jews or Greek bond or free? That how can I wait for a little group of political leaders to say, Okay, now you can kiss him or now you can shoot him? It was significant to me that the idea was that I was waiting for the kingdoms of this world to determine my enemies.

And I didn't like it. I didn't like what I saw there. In the two kingdoms, Peter talks about it and he speaks to us as if we are strangers, as if we are sojourners, as if we are people that are not part of this earth.

And I'll tell you, if we're just living this flagrant, luxurious life, and saying we don't go to war, it's pretty dishonest, isn't it? The kingdom we are to be sojourners here. In 1 Peter 1, verse 1, he starts his epistle and he says, An apostle of Jesus Christ to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Verse 17 he says, And if ye call on the Father, who without respect to person judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.

And then here's what he said about his people. This was actually a very big Scripture referred to from the radical reformation. Menno Simons quoted it a lot.

Michael Sattler quoted it a lot. Conrad Grebel quoted it. 1 Peter 2.9 Here is the kingdom of God, but you are a chosen generation.

1 Peter 2.9 A royal priesthood. Watch this. A holy nation.

A peculiar people. That means a special choice. Blessed.

Particular people. That you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light, which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God, which have not attained mercy, but now have attained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lust, which war against the soul.

You know, my burden of my message is we take this beyond just the idea of talking you all into becoming conscious objectors and not joining the army. Because I believe what I want you to do is I want to be a recruiter to you this morning. I want to be a recruiter.

I want you. Young person, I want you. I want to be a recruiter this morning because I believe that Jesus Christ and I believe that He is just as zealous for the Kingdom of God today as He ever has been and He needs people in His Kingdom to fight for His Kingdom.

He needs that. And I'm here as a recruiter to you. But I tell you what, if you start to mix these kingdoms together, it's just as perilous as happening if we were in the war.

Let me give you an analogy. If I were to muster up the troops here today and I say, okay, all the young people here line up. All you young men line up.

All right, here's what we're going to do. We're going to go up and we're going to take New Holland. Here we are, the army of white horse, and we're going to take New Holland.

And I take you all to New Holland and we're marching in there and we're blessing the Lord and we're going, but all of a sudden, when we get into New Holland, I say, we're going to attack them. And suddenly, one man starts to say, but you know what, what I'm going to do is I'm going to run for the mayor of New Holland. Or another one says, well, I'd like to start this whole business here in New Holland.

And suddenly, one starts going off this way and one starts going off that way. I say, wait a minute. We're here to fight in New Holland.

Listen to the way Paul puts it in 2 Timothy 2.3. He doesn't mince his words about this army. He says, Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Listen to this.

No man that goes to war entangleth himself with the affairs of this life. Why? That he may please Him who has chosen him to be a soldier. I wouldn't have been pleased if I was the captain of this little brigade and I go out there and I find out that all my troops are all involved with the things of the life in New Holland.

I wouldn't be pleased. But if I was there and I walked up to inspect the troops and they said, We're ready. We're ready.

Now that would please Him who called them to the war. And I'll tell you, I'll tell you an analogy came alive to me. Tonya and I, we lived in Germany.

We were soldiers in the United States Army. But we lived off base in Germany. Now, we oftentimes shopped at a German grocery store.

We paid German money for our German utility bills and all the different things. We lived there and did all those things. But you know what? We spoke English.

I might have known who the president of Germany was at the time, but if I did, it was just by chance. And I certainly wasn't able to run for Burgermeister of Kaiserslautern. I certainly wasn't able to do that.

I was clearly an American living in Germany. I wore an American uniform. In those days, I voted in American elections.

I paid American taxes. I did those things, and I was an American, but yet I lived in Germany. Do you get the picture? You are the kingdom of God.

Don't get mixed up with the kingdom of this world. Let that two ways that you heard in the early church of the Didiche, or you've heard with the Schleidheim, let those two ways become very clear to you again this morning. I challenge you this morning.

Well, now, the kingdom of this world, we had lots of nice weapons. We did. You know, they'd show them off.

Tanya and I, we'd play in these bands and we'd go forward with all this huge... and many times they would just parade their missiles through or all these certain things and talk about these different things, but I tell you what, you have weapons too. Do you believe that? I mean, do you believe it? In Ephesians 6, look at that verse. Ephesians 6. In Ephesians 6, Paul says this, for we wrestle not... I like the sound of pages turning.

In Ephesians 6, Paul says we wrestle not. Now, I'm afraid that many times in our people here, we stop there, don't we? We put a big fat period there. But Paul didn't stop there.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood. Now that should be clear enough with the ways of this world. We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but we do wrestle.

We wrestle against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Do you believe that? I mean, that's significant. He's saying that apparently the world is ran, that we can't see this, but if we could draw back the veil this morning, we would see heavenly principalities and powers and rulers of darkness that are causing you to sin, that are causing this world to go back to the days of Noah and looking at their life like this.

And he's wanting us to see that. That's what we would see. And if you could envision, if we could see then the missiles of prayer, the missiles of a Christian life, the missiles of a holy life and what it does to that kingdom, we do wrestle.

In 2 Corinthians 10, look at this one. Now, I'm going to ask you a question, young man. 2 Corinthians 10, verse 3. Look at that.

While you're turning there, you know history talks a lot about times when people would take over a country and they would march in the prisoners in front of the king. You know, Napoleon would set up there and he would have all these people come back and they would all just be a whole train of prisoners. I believe the Nazis took, if I recall, 9 million Russian prisoners alone.

5 million of them died. The prisoners is a spoil of war. But we have spoils of war too.

Look at 2 Corinthians 10, verse 3. Now listen. For though we walk in the flesh, in other words, he's not saying to be worldly, for though we walk here, this is real. This is not some spiritual head thing.

It's real. For though we keep walking in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. Now, is that clear enough, first of all? Is it clear enough? Although you're walking around here in the flesh, you do not war after the flesh.

I don't know how more clear you can get that. You know, let me stop. If we can somehow take something like love your enemies and turn that into a justification for atomic warfare, then who can blame people for saying the Bible is confusing? I mean, these things are plain.

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh. Reason why? Verse 4. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. In other words, they're not of flesh.

But they're mighty. Through God to the bringing down of strongholds. Now listen.

Young man, listen to this. Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Amen.

Let me ask you something. Don't just not go to war. Do you have... Can I go into your mind this morning? Can I go into your mind, young man, and you can show me the whole line of prisoners, of thoughts that were given to the world that you've held captive? See that one over there? I used to be ruled by lust, but it's a captive and it's in my train.

Every thought captive. Pride. Materialism.

All these things. And you can show me. Do you have captives? Because in this war, we're not to be pacifists.

Every thought that comes against God. Can you show me those thoughts? Can you show me those prisoners? Can you show those to me? So here we go. What about the kingdom of this world? How does the relationship... You know, with all these Scriptures, a lot of times that speak about... All these Scriptures that speak about our being separate from the world and all these different things, if we're not careful, sometimes it can seem as if we're not even to participate in any way.

You know, that the world is going their way and I don't have to worry about their menacing laws. I don't have to worry about their traffic signs. I don't have to worry about their seatbelts.

I don't have to worry about all that stuff. That's for the world. That's not for the kingdom of God.

And Paul gives us some understanding about how we are to relate to this kingdom. But the idea of this kingdom and where this line is separated needs to be very clear to us. It was clear to the early church.

From my background, I think one of the biggest verses that people like to quote is when Jesus was talking to the Pharisees when they challenged Him about paying taxes. They said to Him, well, do you pay taxes to Caesar? And as we know, it's a trap. And most anyone from my background can quote the verse, Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's.

Render unto God the things that are God's. So we're going off to war to kill these people over here because these are the things of Caesar's, but the mental part, the part that's not real, the part that's just in our head, the part that has no meat to it, the part that's not reality, well, those are the things of God. The sentimentalities, the thoughts in our minds.

But Caesar, he gets our bodies. Blasphemy. When you go through these applications to be a conscious objector, you have to go through several hurdles.

And one of the things you have to do, you have to, first of all, submit your request to the commander, which was a challenge. And then from there, you have to fill out some applications and talking about all your different convictions and everything. Later on, you have to go talk to a chaplain.

You then have to go see a psychologist to see if you must have something mentally wrong with you. And then you finally go to a court hearing where they try you and question you with all kinds of things that they could possibly throw at you. Well, I thought the lightest of all those types of things was supposed to be the psychologist, but it wasn't at all.

It wasn't at all. This lady had an agenda. As soon as I walked into the psychologist's office, going through the conscious objection process, as soon as I walked in there, she said, well, come on in, but I don't even know if you're going to be in here long enough to sit down.

I said, ok, what do you mean? I've got you. And I thought, ok, this is going to be a challenge. I didn't know what to think.

Remember, I'm pretty new, converted to all these things, and this lady, the psychologist, which would have been an officer, she pointed at me and said, I've got you. What do you mean you've got me? You're inconsistent. All of you conscientious objectors are inconsistent.

I kind of slowly got in my chair and slowly sat down. What do you mean we're inconsistent? I don't understand. This was the start of this interview.

She said, I'll ask you a couple questions. Alright. I was sweating, you know.

She said, I have two questions for you. You want to get out of the army because you don't believe in supporting the war. Is that correct? And I said, yes, ma'am, that is correct.

I'll ask you the second question. She said, do you pay your taxes? And I said, yes, ma'am, I do pay my taxes. You're done.

See, you're inconsistent. So I sat there and I said, Lord, I need to somehow bring her to you. So I said, well, ma'am, there's something that you may not be able to understand.

But you see, I live by the ways of a book. And this book tells me to love my enemies and to pay my taxes. I don't have to understand it.

I just have to obey it. That's what I said to her. Well, she got pretty indignant.

She went on about some different things. And finally, when I started to give her a reason that I'm just trying to follow in His steps, I said, I just want to be like Jesus. She said, nowhere in the Bible does it say to be like Jesus.

And I said, well, wait a minute. I couldn't have just quoted it. I was trying to think of the verse.

And she said, stop there. Don't you preach to me. Do you realize what I've done? And I said, no, I haven't.

She said, I have taught Sunday school class for 15 years. I have volunteered for several agencies. And she listed off this whole different things of all these different church things that she has done.

And besides all that, and this is what she said. And besides all that, after she finished her litany, she said, I am a card-carrying Methodist. I just sat there and looked at her.

You know, I kind of started feeling sorry for her, actually. She had lost her composure. I shouldn't have done this probably.

I said, could you just repeat all that? She didn't. But then she dismissed me and asked me if I was hard of hearing. I did.

She, though unwittingly, hit upon this concept of the two kingdoms. She understood that these two worlds need to be very distinct from each other. But now, what do we do with this kingdom? If you get to talking with anybody, and if there's anybody here, I'm sorry, if there's any self-respecting evangelical, we'll take you to Romans chapter 13.

Let's go there. Anybody who's worth their salt, anybody who you get in a debate with, anybody who knows their scripture, if they're a God and country kind of Christian, they should take you to Romans chapter 13. So let's go there right now.

Let's go to Romans chapter 13. What's usually argued by our friends that are believing that the kingdoms of God and the kingdoms of the world are wrapped together and that we should defend the country, those who defend this take us to Romans 13 and say, see, now it's really kind of unfair. I'm going to show you here a little bit why it's unfair.

To bring Romans 13 a little bit closer to understanding, let me give you a setting. Let's say now we're just this little group, but now let's bring it a little closer to home. It's World War II.

And you're with a group of Jews, and you're there huddled away after you've been persecuted, and you've seen your father killed last month in an attack, and you're gathered together, and there you are in your synagogue, and you're meeting together, and suddenly the rabbi says, I have a letter that just came from Rabbi Paul in Damascus. And I'm going to read it to you. And he gives us some advice on how to deal with the Roman government.

Oh, good. And you've already been hearing your young friends talk about retaliation and revolution, and you're ready to hear this letter. Suddenly, he begins Romans chapter 12, and he says, I want you to be a living sacrifice.

That's not the answer I wanted to hear from you, Paul. A living sacrifice. He goes on to say, as much as can be within you, I want you to live peaceably with all men.

As a matter of fact, what I want you to do with these people that are killing you and killing your father, I want you to feed them. I want you to do that. And when you do that, you will heap burning coals upon their head.

That's what he said. And then he has the audacity to go into Romans chapter 13 and call Adolf Hitler God's minister. Now, that's Romans 13.

Don't miss the point. Romans 13 wasn't written to an American Baptist from Arkansas. Romans 13 wasn't written about an evangelical from Texas.

Romans 13 was written about Nero, who was one of the worst antichrists ever to come. And Paul had the audacity in Romans chapter 13 to say he is the minister of God. If someone is used of God, is he necessarily blessed of God? If someone is being used of God, and he is clearly being used of God to give about God's purpose, is he then blessed of God? Can you remember a very sobering example? Do you remember when Jesus was before Pilate? Do you remember when He was there? After they beat Him some more, they put a crown of thorns on Him and a purple robe on Him.

They brought Him right up to the edge, just like this, and said, Behold the man. And as they did that, He said to Jesus, as if He wanted to try to... This man has done nothing wrong, and He wanted to let Him go. He said, Do you realize I could let you go if you'll just ask me? Jesus said something very significant.

I don't want you to ever miss it. You have no authority, but that which was given to you from My Father. Now, we know that that's a significant statement.

And what it means is that in a minute, Jesus could put an end to this trifling kingdom of Pilate, right? But that's not the most significant point, is it? The most significant point is that it's true. That the Father gave Pilate the authority to kill Jesus. Do you get it? He was fulfilling a purpose in the prophecy of the Messiah, and Jesus, looking at Him, knew that He was just going to be the one responsible for killing Him, and He knew that that was allowed by the Father.

Pilate was used, but he certainly was not blessed. He certainly was not blessed. So looking at Romans 13, read that passage.

There's some very significant words there. He is a minister of God. The word Scripture says there that He bears not the sword in vain.

The word there, minister, is the word diakonos. It's where we get our word deacon from. If you look through the Scriptures, you'll find that in the Old Testament, I don't have time to go in there, that God uses these ministers of the Old Testament as well.

In Jeremiah 25, He brings out the judgment upon Israel and He talks about Nebuchadnezzar and He calls Nebuchadnezzar, guess what? My servant. My minister. When He brought judgment upon Israel.

And then, three verses later, does that mean that Nebuchadnezzar was blessed? Oh no. Because three verses later He says, now after the 70 years are accomplished, I will, as He put it, He brings rebuke to Nebuchadnezzar and He's going to make that nation a hissing and an abomination. We see Him use the idea with Cyrus.

He calls Cyrus, My shepherd. My bishop. Cyrus, a pagan worshipping king, was used by God for purposes of God and He calls him, My shepherd.

You see, you've got to understand something. In Daniel 4, verse 17, before everybody, before the angels, before men, they wanted to make this very plain. In Daniel 4, verse 17, He says, This matter is by decree of the watchers, the angels, and the demand by the word of the holy ones, to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, listen, and gives it to whomsoever He will, and sets up over it the basest, the lowest of men.

That's the indictment. We know Solomon said very poetically that the hearts of the kings are in His hand. Listen, because God uses something doesn't mean He blesses something.

And don't make that mistake in your life either. It's a big mistake. But all of this is to be understood as a point of doctrine and I believe in this one last point that I would like to make, that all of it is nonsense without this last point.

And this last point, it is the theology of martyrdom. Without Goloshenheit, biblical non-resistance is nonsense. It is nonsense.

When Jesus sent out that first 70 on that missionary journey, wanting to try to encourage them, you know, you think of the famous coaches or the famous CEOs of companies and they want to give motivations. He took His 70 and He says this, here's the idea I want to give you. You're going to go out like a sheep in the midst of wolves.

Now that's an awful picture, isn't it? I mean, if you think about it, that's not something that engenders much confidence. Jesus, you're saying that we're going to go out like a sheep surrounded by a bunch of wolves. You can imagine a sheep there with a bunch of gnarling wolves and everything.

It's not a pretty picture. But that's just the picture that Jesus wanted them to understand. In Romans 8.35, we see this concept given to us and also I believe we see this concept given to us in this theology of martyrdom in a nutshell.

Let's turn to there. I'm coming close to the end, so I want you to pay attention because the rest was a build up to this. If you don't understand this, it just is a bunch of theology.

It's just something in your head that we have this distinctive. If you don't understand this concept, I'm afraid it's not going to make sense to you at all. In Romans 8, we have the Christian atomic bomb.

We do. We have the Christian atomic bomb. We have the Christian atomic bomb.

Because there's nothing that can defeat what we see here. Let's pick it up at verse 35. He says, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Do you love Christ this morning? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? Any of those things? Can those things separate you from the love of Christ? As it is written... Now listen to this.

As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. My brothers, my sisters, that's the theology of martyrdom.

All day long, you are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. That's your state. That's your place.

That's your way. You are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. And if you accept that, nothing can take it away.

No one. No philosophy. No man.

No thing. Losing a job. Nothing can take it away.

And he wants to make that clear, and he goes on. He says, Nay, in all these things. What things, Paul? You remember famine, nakedness, peril, sword.

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life... I am persuaded that neither death nor life... I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Do you believe that? I tell you, you know, it affects you a lot of different ways.

When you take that cross, your life suddenly changes. If you're here today, and what you're trying to do is merely preserve your life, the Bible is not going to make sense to you. Your eye is going to be darkened.

And when it's darkened, you're not going to be able to see clearly. But if you will give your life completely to Christ, even little things start to make a difference. I'll just bring up this one thing.

It's small, I know it, but it made a big difference in my life. I remember years ago, Brother Denny called us to a prayer meeting, three days a week meeting, literally hours before the day started. Our work day started.

And we were there, you know, and I was praying. I was getting so tired. And I thought... I started to look up, okay, you know, maybe the human doesn't need all this much sleep.

I mean, God wouldn't call me something that's hurting me, right? So I started to look up how much sleep you need. And I kept trying to go to sleep earlier, but you know, I have six children, so I was staying up late with them. And going to sleep, I was getting tired and tired.

And I started to think, this is hurting me. And finally, I'll tell you something. It may be a surprise to you, but it was revolutionary in my life.

Brother Mark, Brother Mark Brubaker, he was there with us, and he said, you know what? I think we're all going to die earlier because of this. And as silly as this may sound to you, for me, it was liberating. I just get to die.

That's it. Now don't get me wrong. I believe in staying healthy and getting sleep and all that kind of thing, but sometimes God calls us to something that's just not healthy.

And martyrdom in particular is one of them. And martyrdom is one of them. He calls us to these things.

Not to compromise. We don't need to try to figure out these different systems of the world. Nothing can take that away.

There's an interesting story about this kind of life, about what happens with our loved ones and this type of thing. John Welch, he was a minister in Scotland, and he was taken by the church of England and under persecution. And he was taken down to France, and he was being persecuted down there.

And his lungs were starting to get sick from the weather in France. And his wife, John Welch's wife, went to King James and begged him, can you please let my husband return to England? Please. And he said, sure.

I'll let your husband return to England. As long as you submit to the English bishops, I'll let him return. So there was a choice.

So my husband will be able to come back to England and live as long as I submit to the church of England bishops. You know what she said? She had an apron on that day. And she looked at King James and she lifted up her apron and she said, I would rather have his head in this apron than have him compromise the truth of what he knows.

That's what she said to King James. I know we're running a little bit later here. Just take you real quick to this non-resistance finishing up here in Revelation.

Turn your Bibles to Revelation. In the book of Revelation, we get two things that are significant. And they're significant particularly because of the series that we've been going through of looking at the spirit of

Christ in the early Anabaptists.

In the end times, turn your Bibles to Revelation 13, in the end times, it's going to get pretty bad. Right? Persecution is everywhere. The Bible actually tells us in Revelation there that the Angel Christ for a time was actually let loose upon the church, that it may prevail upon the church just to put them under these kinds of persecutions.

In the end times there, we see these things and we're watching them, but it's interesting that John saw a revelation of how you're going to know who the true church is in the last days. And he gives us three distinct marks on how you're going to know who the church is in the last days. And I think it's significant and I'm adding it on, I'm bringing it in here to this last point because in the series that we're looking at on the spirit of Christ in the Anabaptists, I don't want you to miss this, because he gives some three distinct marks of the church in the last days.

In Revelation 13, verse 9, he cries out, If any man has an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity. He that killeth with a sword must be killed with a sword.

Here is the patience and the faith. All the chaos is happening. All these things Satan has let loose in all these things.

How are we going to know? How are they going to persevere? How are we going to know? One of the marks that we see in the last days is this. That they will look and they live by the principle of how Jesus disarmed Peter and said that he that lives by the sword shall die by the sword. He repeats that mark only one time else in Revelation.

In Revelation 14, chapter 12. Here, Revelation 14, chapter 12, here is the patience, that means the perseverance, of the saints. Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

In the last days, we see three marks of the true church. You see three marks. They have a faith in Jesus.

They are a holy people who are walking the laws of God. And they are a people, number three, that believe in the principle that if you live by the sword, you will die by the sword. John, after he's looking there in heaven, we see this principle worked out in a way that is just profound.

In Revelation chapter 5. And I want you to think hard on this. In Revelation chapter 5, John gets a glimpse of heaven. And in that scene, you remember the scene? That God is sitting on His throne and He wants to open this gigantic book.

And He says that it is sealed. And they cry out in heaven, on earth, who can open the seals of this book? And they look and they search all of heaven, all of earth. I imagine all of time.

And they're thinking who is the strongest and the most worthy, the most righteous, the most holy, the strongest. Who can open that book? And finally, they could find no one. They found no one, either in heaven and no one on earth.

And He says, and I wept much, in verse 4, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither even to look at it. Imagine John in heaven. He's just bellowing over there, crying in heaven.

After all he saw, he's crying in heaven because no one can open this book. And then finally, this angel came up to him. He says, wait a minute.

He says, I want to show you something. And this angel dragged him. And I imagine what was looking in John's eyes as he's looking there and thinking about weeping there.

He says, behold. He says, don't cry. Verse 5, And one of the elders said unto me, Weep not.

Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof. I imagine there's John. And he's looking and all of a sudden, he's being told that don't cry because the Lion of the tribe of Judah... And just imagine what was in his mind's eye when he was imagining this Lion of the tribe of Judah that was able to prevail over this book.

And he says, I looked in the midst of heaven and I saw there a lamb as it had been slain. You know, Sir Kierkegaard said this, We have to remember that the example is a lamb. That alone is a scandal to the modern mind.

That was slain. That is the example that we have before us. The slain lamb.

We are all day led as lambs to the slaughter. All day. If you're here today and you've listened to these different series of messages, and I trust that many of you fathers have gone home and you've talked to your young people and you've said, Did you hear that? Did you listen to that? Did you spend some time before some of these services and thought about some different things? You see, if you become radical Christians today, Again, I stand here as a recruiter to you this morning.

I stand here as a recruiter. I do believe that the gospel is irresistible. Let me tell you a true story.

That trial hearing that we went to, an African American captain from the Justice Department, he questioned us about everything. I mean, Do you ever hunt? Do you own a gun? Have you ever hunted? Have you ever done these types of things? Have you ever killed anything? What about this war? What about that war? And he was drilling all these types of things. As a matter of fact, the Mennonite Central Committee has sent us a little book on how to answer those questions, but I'll tell you this.

I opened that up and I started reading the answers and I said, You know what? The Bible says that when you are brought before magistrates and kings that you shall not prepare beforehand, but the Holy Spirit would give you utterance. We put that book away. My wife went in individually.

I went in individually. Another couple that we started sharing with went in individually. And we just shared.

And every time he asked a question, we shared in the gospel. Well, months and months later, they called us up to that little room and he said, Look what I have here on my desk. I have your applications for conscientious objectors, but let me ask you something.

The war is over now. This was the first Persian Gulf War back in the 90s. It's over now.

Go back. I have the authority to do that. Yes, it'll be embarrassing, but you've got nice careers.

Go back. No, sir. We are convinced that God wants us to do this.

We want to go forward. Wondering, Uh oh. He gave us a way out.

He says, Well, you've all been approved of conscientious objection status. And we celebrated, you know, in a military way. You know, you can't get too excited there.

And as we kind of rejoiced there, and he saw that we were obviously happy, he said, But before you go, he said, He said, There's something I've got to tell you. This is a true story. He said, There's something I've got to tell you.

He says, I too now am getting out of the army for this very same reason. Glory to God. That's what he said.

The ways of the Gospel, the world is looking for people who will truly live the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is irresistible. I am convinced it is irresistible.

It is irresistible. If you are here today, and you've lived a compromising life, like I did. Yes, you've walked an aisle, you've said something, or maybe you've never even done that much.

If you're here today, and you know that you're not the Christian like what you've been hearing here. If you're here today, and you've never said, I want to be that radical Christian for Jesus Christ. I want the Lamb that was slain to cover me with His blood.

And I want to live. I want not to just agree to Him, but I want to follow Him. As if Jesus was saying, follow Me.

If you're here today, then I want to encourage you that I believe that a radical reformation needs to happen again today, and God is looking for a peculiar people, and He's calling you. And He wants you to repent of your sins, repent of all that this world is about, and turn from it, and turn to God. I'll give you one last story, and then we're going to have an altar call.

In 1948, all the way up to 1994, South Africa practiced what the Africans call an apartheid. It was a legal segregation. You had, like we had in the 40's and 50's in America, where you had a black section of town, and you had a white section of town.

But the atrocities that went over there in South Africa were brutal. Absolutely brutal. In 1994, after somewhat of a revolution had happened there, and Nelson Mandela took over the presidency, like they did back in the Nuremberg trials, they started to have a commission that looked into some of these atrocities and found out what exactly was done and bring those people to justice so that punishment could be done on these people that did some of these worst acts.

But one of the very worst things happened, and I'm going to read you some of what happened there. It was called the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Well, there was a man.

At one meeting early in their work, the commission gathered to reach a verdict on a particularly painful case involving an elderly South African woman. At the hearing, a group of white police officers, led by a man by the name of Mr. Van D. Brook, admitted their personal responsibility in the death of her 18-year-old son. They acknowledged and they admitted their guilt of it.

They said, we acknowledge shooting the man at point-blank range, setting his body on fire, and dancing around him, partying and laughing until the body had been reduced to as little more than ashes. If that wasn't enough, eight years later, Van D. Brook and his fellow officers had again came into this woman's life and they took her husband into captivity in some sort of place away from her. But then, sometime later, Van D. Brook came knocking at her door once more, rousing her from the dead in the middle of the night and brought the woman to an isolated setting by a river where her husband lay tied to a pile of wood.

As she watched, he and the officers doused this man with gasoline and took him. This man doused him with gasoline and caught his body on fire. It's a true story.

And what happened there in these court trials there in South Africa? But you know what? That the last thing that woman heard that man say, forgive them. Now at long last, they were here in the trial and those involved had confessed their guilt and their sins and the commission turned to the woman and said, okay, now for the final judgment. You, this elderly black woman who had all these atrocities done, what do you want for an appropriate punishment? She said, okay, here's the appropriate punishment.

She said, I want three things. I want Mr. Van D. Brook to take me to the place where they burned my husband's body. I would just like to gather up the dust and give him a decent burial.

Second, Mr. Van D. Brook took all my family away from me, so I still have a lot of love to give as a mother. Twice a month I require him. I want him.

I would like him to come to my ghetto and spend a day with me where I can be a mother to him. Third, I would like Mr. Van D. Brook to know that he is forgiven by God and that I forgive him too. And I would like someone, if they would, to come and lead me by the hand - she's an elderly lady - to where Mr. Van D. Brook is so that I can embrace him and that he can know that my forgiveness is real.

The elderly woman made her way across the silent courtroom and it's reported that as she came close to that man, that he just passed out over the thought of what was going on. The room sat silent. It sat silent.

And as the room sat silent, finally the silence was broken. As the people looked on to that, the silence in that courtroom was broken and one lady started singing. Amazing grace Join in with me.

How sweet the sound Can you imagine the scene there? That saved a wretch like me Can I get a songbook up here? I once was lost But now am found

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