

Practical Questions About Nonresistance

by Dean Taylor

The sermon emphasizes the importance of considering alternative options beyond yes or no answers, and the power of prayer in responding to evil, as seen in the example of early Christianity and the life of Bishop Cyril of Bulgaria.

Duration: 53:46

Scripture: Matthew 16:24, John 15:13, Romans 8:35, Romans 8:37, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Ephesians 6:12, 2 Timothy 3:10, Revelation 5:5-6, Revelation 14:12

Topics: "Non Resistance", "Christian Persecution"

Description

This sermon delves deep into the concept of non-resistance in the face of challenges and persecution, exploring various 'what if' scenarios that often arise when discussing biblical teachings. It emphasizes the need to trust in God's love and power, to be willing to sacrifice for the faith, and to live out the teachings of Jesus in a practical and transformative way.

Transcript

The name of this next sermon is going to be What If, or the next teaching session. And again, I'll just remind you that I'm covering a lot of materials, and we're making a DVD of this, and it's made primarily for a teaching DVD. So I'm hitting a lot of verses, some scriptures, and some quotes that maybe if I was just preaching the message, I'd be a little lighter on.

And I'm really trying to lay a groundwork that's deep, that it's not just skimming through just a few verses on top, but I'm getting through some of the things from a historical perspective and things that I had to deal with when I embraced these teachings. So okay, so the name of this is What If. Now here's the thing that I noticed as I began to discuss the biblical non-resistance and what we read in the words of Jesus.

And here's the thing, is that no matter what the Bible says when you're talking to people and you're discussing these things with them, it usually comes down to these everyday, well, what if types of questions. And I find that sort of, you know, sort of amazing. I remember when I was in the army and I began to talk to my different Christian friends and everything, the things that you would hear are things like, you know, do you realize what would happen if everybody did that? And I always thought that was kind of a funny question.

If everybody became a conscious objector, if everybody believed in non-resistance, do you realize what would happen? And my response would always be, yeah, that'd be great. We will have this one day, or one of the ones people said, well, what would you think would happen if every Christian left the army? And these practical things. And critics are usually, if you give them the scriptures, if you show the word of God, and people who feel challenged by it, they're not so concerned with what the scriptures are saying, if you notice, the basis of the arguments, but rather they're attempting to make a case to show why the scriptures simply can't be saying what they are obviously saying.

And the truth is, it's because a lot of these things are hard, they're difficult. And as I'm going to end with this message today, sometimes it means us dying. And when you're trying to read the scriptures, and if you're looking at it as trying to have your American way of life, or the American dream, or something, these things aren't going to make sense, and it's going to seem confusing.

But if you look at the word of God just very plainly, and simply, and not try to save our own life, then they make sense, it's just still hard. I appreciate, when I was over there in Germany, one of the books that I ran across, that dealt specifically with these issues, was a book by John Howard Yoder, entitled What Would You Do? And it kind of touched on this whole topic of these scenarios. And this is the area that's going to hit you when you're at work, when you're talking to somebody, and they're really not going to hit you with the scriptures, but they're going to frame some sort of an argument that puts you in a situation where you've got to make a decision.

And I'd like to look at that whole decision making, these whole types of scenario, and John Howard Yoder put it in this way. He says, how do we answer these types of questions? He said, we must note, first of all, that the questionnaire wants us to answer simply yes or no. So in other words, it's always, you're going to do this, or you're going to do that.

And that's the way the questions are framed to us. For most questioners, the only choices which the question offers are defense, which always means killing somebody in those scenarios, or non-defense, which is sure to permit the worst to happen. But this is a wildly illogical way to pose the problem.

And he's looking at this thing, is that these hypothetical situations, hypothetical questions, it's good for us when we discuss these things and get into these things, is to break down the reality of these hypothetical questions. He says, in real life, Christians have found several possibilities other than the limited ones offered in these hypothetical scenarios, such as putting themselves in harm's way, fleeing the scene, or even prayer. And another trap is the setting itself.

Often the setting is unrealistic, or places the Christian in a situation that he probably could have or should have avoided in the first place. For instance, what if you're in this scene or that scene, and sometimes the scenes are not that great of a place to be. And so he makes the argument that it's often these other options that is the Christian response.

Just doing nothing or killing someone are two ways of maybe the world would look at things, but God is giving us, as the people of God, some interesting ways to respond as the way Christ would respond. Now, getting ready for this message, talking to Brother Tony, I don't know who had the idea either, you or I did, Brother Tony, of the idea of having someone act out the skit. In my book, I go through one of these hypothetical scenarios of how it kind of, it happens.

In John Howard Yoder's book, he gives this little, this is where I took it from in my book, of this little play back and forth between someone who's challenging a non-resistant person with one of these scenario questions, and it gets a bit ridiculous. And the whole point of the message is to show that some of these things get ridiculous. And I really appreciate you two young guys that were able to put this together.

And I have the skit here recorded, and hopefully it's gonna work with sound and everything, but give your attention for about two minutes, and they're gonna go through this scenario videotaped beforehand about one of these hypothetical situations turned ridiculous. Here it is. Okay, so you're a pacifist.

What would you do if, say, someone were attacking your grandmother? Attacking my grandma. Yeah, say you're in a room with her, and this man walks in, and he starts attacking her. What would you do? I would yell, three cheers for grandma, and leave the room.

No, seriously. What would you really do, say if you had a gun, and was about to shoot her? Would you shoot him first? So I have a gun? Yeah. Okay, am I a good shot? Yes.

I would shoot the gun out of his hand. Well, no, let's say you're not a good shot then. Well, then I definitely wouldn't shoot because I might kill my grandmother.

Well, let's take another example then. Let's say you're driving down the road. It's a narrow road, and there's a cliff on one side, and there's a little girl in the middle of the road, and you're going too fast to stop.

What would you do? Well, I'm actually not sure. What would you do? I'm asking you. You're the pacifist.

Yeah, I guess I am. Okay, am I in control of the truck? Yeah. Okay, well, then I would honk the horn, so she could get out of the way.

No, she's too young to walk, and your horn does not work. Well, then I would swerve around to the left, since she's not going anywhere. No, there's been a landslide on your left, and there's a cliff on your right.

Okay, I would drive off the cliff. Well, let's say there's someone else in the truck with you. Then what? What's that have to do with me being a pacifist? Well, there's two people in the truck, and only one little girl.

Someone once said, if you have the choice between a real evil and a hypothetical evil, always choose the hypothetical evil. Huh? What I'm saying is, why are you so anxious to kill off all the pacifists? I'm not. I just wanna know what you would do.

Okay, so what you're saying is, if I'm driving down a road with a friend, very fast, and it's very narrow, and I'm approaching a dangerous impasse, and there's a 10-month-old girl in the middle of the road with a landslide on one side and a cliff on the other, what would I do? That's right. I would slam on the brakes, sending my friend through the windshield, skid into the landslide, and then run over the little girl, and then plunge over the cliff to my own death. No doubt, I would land on my grandmother's house, and the truck would crash through her roof and explode in her living room where she's getting attacked for the first and last time.

You're not even answering my question. You're just trying to get out of this. No, what I'm saying is a couple of things.

The first is that nobody, I mean nobody, knows what they'll do in a moment of crisis, and the second is that hypothetical questions will get you hypothetical answers, and I'm also suggesting that what you're trying to do is paint me in a corner to where no matter what I do or say, somebody gets killed off, and you see then you'll just say pacifism is a good idea, but it doesn't really work. So the situation that that brings out is that, and sometimes it's just hard, and it's gonna be hard for anybody. What I found always ironic when the questions were being given to me, particularly as a soldier, was, okay, it's not like people don't get hurt and die in the army, or even innocent people.

We have a name in the military, they call it collateral damage of what you just term people who get killed accidentally. The fact is, in war or in martyrdom, people get hurt, people die, and sometimes these things are tough. Well, in the book, *The Kingdom That Turned the World Upside Down*, David Brisseau, I really felt did a nice job of turning this question the other way, and making us realize that there's some times that you're given a question that's just hard to answer for anybody, whether they're non-resistant or not, and here's the question that he brings out in his book, *The Kingdom That Turned the World Upside Down*, and I think it's a very good way to look at these hypothetical scenarios.

He asked this question in his book. Okay, what if a foreign government ordered me to drop a bomb on a United States city, or to assassinate the American president, or else they would harm my wife and children? What would you do? So some terrorist group has caught you, and they said, okay, you're a pilot, and you're flying over the White House, and we want you to bomb the president, or we're gonna kill your family. What would you do? Wow, and he says, he goes on, he says, I think most Americans would allow their wives and children, as terrible as it may seem, to be harmed or even killed before they would betray their country and kill their president.

That would be unthinkable. So how is this situation, David says, any different when it concerns loyalty to Jesus? Jesus' teaching on non-resistance are quite clear. They are, let's be honest.

They are. It's a matter of either denying him or denying my family. To be sure, that's a very difficult choice, but I already made that choice when I gave my life to Christ.

It's a very good answer, very good question. He goes on, does that mean I would do nothing to protect my family? Are you just gonna sit there and do nothing, which is always given to us in this scenario? Of course not. I have already done the best thing I could possibly do to ensure their safety.

I have entrusted my home and family to the care and protection of Jesus. And that idea that you're sitting there and doing nothing, and that's just the thing that these questions give to us, and it responds to all parts of our life. I mean, seriously, do we believe in the power of prayer? You know, the Bible says that if we're going to pray, if we're gonna believe, we have to believe that God is and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

And the concept of these things that we do in these things, in these times, is what makes the biggest difference. There's an interesting quote in the early Christian by Origen. This is all the way up into around 250, 250 years after Christ.

And the emperors and the people are starting to say, well, you Christians, you don't do anything. And Origen gives a very good response to the emperor, and it's a really good look into the early Christian way of thinking. Listen to this quote, it's a very good one.

He says, this response that we don't do anything, to this our answer is that we do give help to kings when needed, we do. But this is, so to speak, a divine help, putting on the whole armor of God, and we do this in obedience to the commandment of the apostle who said, I exhort therefore that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all men, for kings, and for who are in authority. And so he goes on.

So the more anyone excels in godliness, the more effective the help is that he renders to kings. This is a greater help than what is given by soldiers who go forth to fight and kill as many of the enemy as they can. Our prayers, listen to this, and I think he meant this with conviction, our prayers defeat all demons who stir up war.

Those demons who lead persons to violate their oaths and to disturb the peace. Accordingly, in this way, we are much more helpful to the kings than those who go into the field to fight for them. And we do take our part in public affairs when we join self-denying exercises to our righteous prayers and meditations, which teach us to despise pleasures and not to be led away by them.

So none fight better for the king than we do. Indeed, we do not fight under him even if he demands it. Yet we fight on his behalf, forming a special army, an army of godliness by offering our prayers to God.

Wow, amen. Origen had some strange things, but that was a good one. So that power of prayer is something that I think early Christianity stood for.

And when we're in these what-if crises, honestly, it's times like this when we ask these questions, do we believe in those powers of prayer? Tertullian, I have to give you another one that's just so powerful, so rich about early Christianity. Tertullian spoke on the power given to the church through prayer and says, this is what prayer, it's to transform the weak, to restore the sick, to purge the possessed, to open prison bars, to loose the bonds of the innocent. Likewise, prayer washes away faults, amen, repels temptations, extinguishes persecutions, consoles the faint-spirited, cheers the high-spirited, escorts travelers, appeases waves, makes robbers stand aghast, nourishes the poor, governs the rich, uprises the fallen, arrests the falling, confirms the standing.

Prayer is the wall of faith, her arm and missiles against the foe who keeps watch over us on all sides. And so never walk we unarmed. By day, be we mindful of station.

And station was, they would have this, it's a military word that the early Christians had that would meet at different times of the day. By day, be we mindful of stations. By night, a vigil.

Under the arms of prayer, guard we the standard of our general. Await we in prayer the angels trump. Praise God.

These guys had this understanding of prayer and what this did. And that's something that we can do during these hypothetical scenarios. The other thing that Yoda brings out, and I appreciate this, is the idea of getting in the way of the evil.

And this is powerful. And this is something that's beginning to happen, I see in the Christians these days, I see it in our Anabaptist people, and it's really inspiring me. There's an interesting story that happened in World War II.

In World War II, there was the Bishop of Bulgaria, his name was Cyril, Bishop Cyril of Bulgaria. And when he was there, Bulgaria had sort of this league with Nazi Germany. And as they had this league with Nazi Germany, it came to a time where they were gonna gather up all the Jews and send them to Auschwitz.

I heard this story through Tony Campolo, I watched this and it was an interesting story. And as they went there, they heard about these things and the government of Bulgaria was in league with the Nazis and they were coming to get all the Jews of Bulgaria, but the Orthodox Church, the Christian people of Bulgaria wanted to do something about it. They didn't have the arms, they didn't have a defense, but they decided to take the Jesus approach to this.

And this approach is incredible, it's a historical fact. And so the night they heard rumors, somehow they heard it, that this is the night that the Nazis are gonna come in on the train and take the Jews off to Auschwitz. And so the church got together and the scene was this, it's recorded like this.

Apparently this bishop was over seven feet tall and he had this huge white beard, looked like somebody from Tennessee I guess, this huge white beard and he had this big hat on and he was walking and he had about some of the resources, say 500 to 1,000 of these people behind him. And as they're walking in there on the scene, there where the train is coming in to get all these Jewish people that they're taking off to Auschwitz, they took him and he just pushed the machine guns away, they knew they weren't gonna stop them and he stood there in front of all that scene that all these crying and the misery of these people about to be taken away. They knew what was gonna happen to them.

And the story says that as he was there, he raised up his hand and said this verse. Where you go, I will go. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God.

And there the Bishop of Bulgaria stood with 1,000 of these Christians behind him, stood there and we're gonna die with them. One of the accounts I read said he actually then went and put himself in the way of the train to prevent it from going. The Nazis finally gave up and they went home and all the Jewish people of Bulgaria was saved that day.

And that is the way of Christ. That's the other thing. Are you gonna shoot them or do nothing? No, I'm going to stand in the way of evil.

Coppola goes and he says we are not going to kill the enemy but we are going to identify with the suffering. And that's the way of Jesus. And we will suffer with them and this is the way.

And I love that response. And when we look at these different scenarios of somebody will break in and the scene is there. If we are willing to take that martyrdom life, that life of giving yourself up, that's a powerful way.

And historically it's made a tremendous difference. Ephesians tells us this scripture, we wrestle not. And I stopped it right there on purpose because it doesn't stop there.

And sometimes I think particularly us from our background here, sometimes we wanna be the quiet of the land and we put a period there, we wrestle not and we just end there. But that's not what it goes on to say, is it? The Bible tells us that we are in a fight in these scenarios but he puts it this way. Paul says in Ephesians 6, 12, for we wrestle not against flesh and blood.

That's pretty simple. We don't fight in the carnal way in flesh and blood but we do fight. We fight in every scenario and we fight this way but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

And that's the way we fight. It's a powerful, powerful way. And I've appreciated, just recently I was just thinking and forgive me for some of the different great ministries, I was just right before this jotted down a few of these that I've recently, just recently seen of ministries that are going forth into troubled areas stopping the evil before.

I just came across Plain Compassion Crisis Response. Anybody heard of the ministry? Neat ministry. Yeah, our film crew went there to this area.

Going there in the place of crisis, right when people would say, why in the world would you go to Iraq right now? They're going there. And they're going there to deal with the evil right there. Christian Aid Ministries sending into some of the worst places and I'm just amazed when I find out some of the places that Cam gets into.

Followers of the Way from friends of mine in Boston going right into the inner city area of Boston taking the faith there. I've been really blessed. Jay Fox, how many of you people know Jay Fox? I was in Lancaster County.

That brother is a blessing. His whole life ministry there in inner city Redding going to where the evil is. I appreciate that kind of response.

Hosanna Inner City School in Winnipeg. Anybody heard of that ministry? Another very impressive where groups of young people are just living sacrificially in the school building in Manitoba ministering to refugees that are coming to the Winnipeg area. Incredible ministry.

All Nations Bible Translators planning. I've talked to these young people that are studying years of Greek and Hebrew to be able to go into ridiculous areas to translate the Bible. Raymond Burkholder with IGO.

I remember when he was, anybody heard of this ministry? Yeah, I remember when he was first talking to me and now I get these newsletters from Thailand and I'm just impressed. Going right into the prostitutes, right into the area and those types of things. And that blesses me.

That's the response. Not doing nothing. What would you do in these scenarios? What do you do? Is that we take that evil and we fight it but we fight it with the church and a living example.

On the airplane, believe it or not, just coming up to the seminar, I read this great article by Charles Moore from the Plough Publishing. And it was interesting. I'm gonna read this to you because it was so well put.

And it's the way we're supposed to represent and fight this evil in the world. And Charles Moore put it this way. He said a prophetic church does not focus first on engaging in politics.

In other words, we don't just try to cure this with politics but on demonstrating a better way. In your churches, are you doing that? Are in your mind you're thinking we're gonna demonstrate a better way to this world? In actuality, it actually practices the truth it proclaims. The faithful church will indeed confront the broader culture but not primarily by pouncing on certain social evils or public policies.

If, he asks, we are concerned about society's moral decline, we will concentrate our efforts on doing God's will and holding each other accountable to it. If we are concerned about the breakdown of the family or the demise of marriage, we will demonstrate that in Christ, husbands and wives can remain faithful and that children are most happy when welcomed and nurtured in families. If it is the vulnerability of the unborn that outrages us, then we will surround expectant mothers and their babies with the kind of support that affords them a truly meaningful life.

If racial divisions or injustice upsets us, then we in our congregations will repent of our own complicity and find ways to demonstrate that black and white, rich and poor can indeed live and work together as brothers and sisters in Christ, amen. I just told you that I was reading that just on the airplane coming here and I thought, wow, that's a great quote, I gotta get that in. Modeling the cure.

So evil comes, what would you do? We're gonna show you a better way, we're gonna pray, we're gonna get in the way of that and those are all different responses. But in some way, even when I give all those to you, sometimes the people keep pushing the question. Okay, yeah, but then what? Okay, but then what? And here's the thing it comes down to.

Finally, one of the scenarios that are given is the scenario that you die. And when you can release yourself to that, when you can release yourself that I am going to be faithful to Christ and my family is going to be faithful to Christ no matter what, there is such a freedom that comes over you. A freedom.

And as in my journey, when I begin to study this, yes, prayer is great, yes, different things we could do, and I wrote here in my book, I said, the more I studied the life of Christ and the testimony of the saints who have gone on before us, the more I realized that the Christian's most ultimate weapon, his most formidable instrument of force, his most indestructible garrison against all attacks, and his most fierce arsenal against all enemies is the cross. It's the cross. And this theology of martyrdom, of just being dead to yourself and alive to Christ Jesus.

In 1 Corinthians 1.18, it puts this so well, and Paul goes on to talk about what this power does, even to these evil powers that's attacking our countries, attacking our families, and what this power of the cross does, what it did to the early church, what it can do again today. In 1 Corinthians 1.18, he says, for the message of the cross is foolishness to those that are perishing. You try to go talk to someone who's not born today, born again, who doesn't believe in Christ, and so you're saying the end of the scenario is you die.

That's foolish. You say, no it's not. The message of the cross is foolishness to those that are perishing.

But to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. Because it's written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? Sometimes you die.

But what about someone in your family? What if they die? There's an interesting story. Interesting story that I picked up in church history by a man by the name of John Welch, who was, in the early Reformation times, was a dissenter, was with a group that they were not part of the Church of England. He married John Knox's daughter.

And he was eventually captured for preaching without a license and wouldn't submit to the Bishop of England and went into prison and taken down to be in France. When he was in France, he quickly learned French and began to preach and convert people in the prisons in France. But he was in a real damp prison and eventually it began to get to him and he was dying of some sort of respiratory infection.

And finally his wife, who was John Knox's daughter, his wife, went to King James and begged him, can you please let my husband at least come to England? Can you at least come to England? And when that happened, the King James said to him, oh, no problem, we'll let your husband come back to England under one situation. You let him, he must confess that the King of England is the head of the Church and he must submit to the English bishops. You know what she did? She sat there and she lifted up her apron, lifted up her apron and replied, I would rather have his head cut off and placed in my apron than have him betray the truth.

Well, she loved her husband, she loved him. But she knew that the reward of Christ for her husband was far greater than compromise. And that kind of commitment, the man and the wife, the family completely devoted to Christ is the kind of thing that will turn the world upside down again.

You know the military, we can talk of this about Christianity and early Christianity, radical Christianity, the military knows this. You know, in Napoleon, I've been reading, when he was going through different places and liberating the French and going to Austria, when he got to Italy, it's interesting, he could not feel that he could liberate the Italian people. And the reason he said he couldn't do it, he said because Italians don't know how to die.

They didn't love their freedom enough, in his way of thinking of it, to die for it. General Patton, during one of the worst battles, the worst battle, the Battle of the Bulge, and there was a supply line that the truckers were having difficulty being scared because they kept getting killed, they kept getting shot. And so he had to give them some encouraging words to be able to go down the supply line and just to get the job done.

And so this is what he said, something to this effect, he said, okay, God, men, get into your truck, drive down the road until somebody blows you up. And it worked, they got in. And there's something about that even in the army, there's something about it we must regain in the Christian church, that we are willing to go and trust Christ without the concern of death.

Because here's the thing, the lost person who's doing this vain thing doesn't have the promise of eternal life, and you do. You're promised these things, that you'll have eternal life. I remember the scariest thing in basic training they're telling you about is what to do if you're in an ambush.

So you're coming to a, you're walking down the trail, and all of a sudden there's an ambush. It's the worst place, the most likely chance you're gonna die, you're surrounded by people that are shooting at you, and they were waiting for you. They tell you there's only one way to survive that.

You know what it is? You charge them, shooting, that's the only way. Giving up your life, I'm gonna die anyway, and just going. And if we have that, as Satan is firing upon the church, all these things coming against us, if we have that kind of an attitude for the church, being soldiers of Jesus Christ, any of these scenarios that come to us, we're gonna be able to come against.

The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives the ending of that beautiful section on the beatitudes, the blessing, with this one. He said, blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all

manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

I remember this very topic came up in my trial when we were going to become the conscientious objector trial we talked about. And I remember, because there were some things that they were doing, they were posting some things about our counselors and different, those tiny little, I hate to even call them persecutions, harassments that they were doing. And I remember the officer at my trial said, so, what do you feel about that? And I said, I rejoice in it.

I said that during this court trial. And he said, what do you have, a martyrdom complex? Or he said something like that. And I opened up the word of God and I read him this.

And he said, oh, so, it's a beautiful way to look at your life and those scenarios that come to us. It puts things in the right perspective. The early Christian understood this principle.

Again, Tertullian, riding on the subject, put it this way. He said, the Lord will save those in that day, even his people like sheep. He says, no one gives the name of sheep to those who fall in battle with arms in hand or those who are killed while repelling force with force, rather it is given to those who are slain, yielding themselves up in their own place of duty and with patience, rather than fighting in self-defense.

And this is what we must have, again, in all of these scenarios. And sometimes, when somebody breaks into your house, when sometimes some evil comes, it means that we're going to have to give up our life. But God is in control.

God is in control. Do you know what, in the early Anabaptists, do you know what the survival rate of a missionary was in 1527? Okay, Anabaptists started, the Anabaptist revival started in 1525. Three guys, okay.

And as they started that, they had this fervor to take the words of Jesus everywhere. And as they did that, in 1527, they met in Augsburg, Germany to have a meeting there where they were gonna strategically look at the parts of Europe and decide who's gonna go to these different missionary areas. And they had 60 ministers show up for this meeting, which now has been called the Martyrs' Synod.

And out of those 60 ministers who were there, deciding which way they should go to evangelize, do you know how many were left five years later? Two. And that's why they call it the Martyrs' Synod. And can we listen to those kinds of stories? So here's the survival rate.

Well, 95% death, 5% chance of going to live. Did that stop them? No, they went forward. And in 1527, remember, it started in 1525.

This kind of persecution was going on. In 1527, Moravia opened itself up. Count Liechtenstein opened up Moravia for the Anabaptists to come into his country.

And from 1525 to 1527, 12,500 people gave up their lands and their possessions and all that and moved to Moravia to be free of religious persecution in Switzerland and South Germany. 12,500 during that time of persecution because they were not afraid to die. I think that's incredible.

There's something about this. This is why this is the deep end of non-resistance. And where I'm about to take you now is even deeper.

There's something that's powerful about all these things that goes in a way that it's not just I'm gonna blindly not join the army, I won't do this, but it's a whole way of life, it's a whole way of seeing, it's a whole way of being active as a church. And I really encourage churches these days, I believe in having right doctrine, I'm big on that. I wouldn't join a church that wouldn't have the normal doctrines and that type of thing.

But if our church is not based around ministries, so I was blessed with those ministries that I was showing you. Churches based upon some active way of serving the kingdom is really inspiring me and I think it's one thing that we really need to look at more as a people. But non-resistance comes up even in the last days.

I caught this when I was looking through the Revelation when I was in Germany, and it's interesting. The book of Revelation, it mentions two times when things are crazy and there's persecution and the Antichrist is going and everything, two times it takes a moment and says, listen what the Spirit is saying to the church. This is what real faith is gonna look like in the end.

It's said two times in the book of Revelation. Here in Revelation 14, 11, it says one of them, and it gives you the timing, it says, and the smoke of their torment ascended up forever and ever, and they had no rest day or night who worshiped the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. And then here's the break.

Here is the patience, or in Greek, the perseverance. Here is the patience of the saint. Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

So being holy people, obeying to God, following the faith of Jesus are two marks of the end times church that he considers part of the perseverance. He says it for another one. And it was in Revelation 13, seven, and it was given him to make war with the saints.

This is before the other one. And to overcome them. And power was given him over all kindred and tongues and nations, and all that dwell on the earth to worship him.

All this power was given unto the Antichrist during this time, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And then he says, if anyone has an ear, let him hear. So war with the Antichrist is coming on against the church.

How are we gonna know who the true church is? If any man has an ear, let him hear. He that leads into captivity shall go into captivity. He that kills with the sword must be killed with the sword.

Here is the patience and faith of the saints. The very thing that Jesus told Peter, to put away your sword, he who lives by the sword, dies by the sword, is repeated in Revelation and is given as a mark of the church and the end times. Wow, interesting.

And then he says this, one of my favorite passages. So this is how we win. And I've already said this, but I'll say it again.

And they overcame him, who the Antichrist, and all the wickedness, and all that could come on us, the what if of what war will happen in the future here. And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb. Are you covered with the blood of the lamb this evening? And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony.

And they loved not their life, even to the death. So in other words, they didn't love their life. They didn't try to save their life.

They were willing to go forth, to come against the evil, to come against all that what if wickedness that will come on us and all the news media that throws in all these different terrible things about ISIS and all these wicked foes that are coming against us. But no, this is how we'll win the battle. This is how we'll know the end time church.

This is how we will defeat the Antichrist by not loving our life, even into the death, being covered by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and having a testimony to share. Praise God. The motto, is it the motto of Paul? For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.

If you can get there, what can stop you? What can stop you? In 2 Timothy 3.10, giving instructions to Timothy, a young minister, he says, okay, I know you've been copying me. You've been following me. I want you to follow like this.

He says, now you followed my teaching. I conduct purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and suffering, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium in Lystris. What persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me indeed.

Now listen to this. Do you believe the word of God? All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. How do we respond to the real issues facing us today? You know what I finally donned on me sometimes? You know, it's one of the biggest things that burdens us dads, us fathers, is the fear of losing our young people.

Amen? You know, you're just concerned about that. We wanna be good dads. We wanna give faith to them.

And even as church, as ministers in the church, that burdens us. But you know, I begin to wonder, as I watch churches now in my 25 years or so of conversion, I wonder if the church is destined to lose some young people. But the question is, we're gonna lose them in one or two ways.

Either to worldliness or to martyrdom. And if we just sat and be a do-nothing church, we just sat around and just living the American dream, perhaps it's then that we're gonna lose people to worldliness. But if we would take this sort of fervor that our own forefathers had, that the early Christians had, and take this, to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain, maybe then we'd start losing some young people, maybe lose some old people too.

But it'd be a totally different way and they would receive a crown. How do we respond? How do we fight that new covenant way? How do we respond when somebody breaks into our house? When the enemy attack us? And I gave this slide earlier, but it's a good one. Jesus said, behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.

Now imagine that scene. If you were the CEO of a company and your job or a coach and your job was to try to motivate everybody to do something that they didn't wanna do, I don't think you'd try to draw up a scene, okay, here's a scene. You're a sheep and in front of you is a whole bunch of wolves that are about to just rip you apart and kill you.

Now go. And that's the kind of response that he gave to his disciples, his apostles. That's the commission he gave them.

And every one of them died. Here's an ancient painting. Every one of them died in terrible ways.

Their skins were ripped off, they were boiled, they were hung upside down. They were all kinds of terrible ways of death. And he knew that.

He knew that when he led them and told them these things. But they lived and they experienced those beautiful things of Christ. Now I have to say, I think one of my absolute favorite verses in the Bible, turn your Bibles to what I call the center of the universe.

I don't know if it's the center of the universe. I call it the center of the universe, Revelation chapter five. And Revelation chapter five is my favorite passage.

This scene I think about all the time. When I go to pray, this is the scene that I have ahead of me in my mind. And in the scene, do you remember, is where they were opening the seals and seeing who was worthy in heaven to open them.

In Revelation five, too, it says, and I saw a strong angel. This is John speaking, and he saw this revelation. And he said, I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice.

Who is worthy to open the book and to loose the seals thereof? And he listened. And no man in heaven nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much.

It's quite a touching scene if you think of this in heaven. Because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. But wait.

And one of the elders said unto me, weep not. And this is so good, weep not. Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, has prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof.

So imagine the scene now. John is there crying and weeping that no one, this strong angel, is now shaking him and saying, don't worry, the lion of the tribe of Judah is strong enough, powerful enough, and worthy enough to open the seal. So what's going through John's mind? So he looks up thinking he's going to see this lion of the tribe of Judah.

And what does he see? And behold, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain. And that was a roaring lamb, praise God. A slain lamb.

And there's something in that scene that defines all of Christianity for me. The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the roaring lamb, the lion of the tribe of Judah, which he looks and is a slaughtered lamb. Later on in Revelation it says when the water comes down, we get to drink our water from the throne and from the side of the lamb.

I love that scene. And that is the theology of the martyrdom and the power of what this whole crucified life is able to do on this earth and into eternity. What a scene, I love that.

So here's the thing, no matter what the Bible says, it usually comes down to what if, the what if. But now we take all this, and I want you to do something now. You've heard the news and all the things that are coming on.

So what if Hitler would never have been stopped? That's one that comes up. What if another Hitler comes? What if ISIS is out of control? What if we have domestic terrorists? What if Islam gets out of control? What if communism makes a comeback? What if somebody hits you first? What if somebody shoots your grandfather? What if somebody attacks your family? What if somebody kicks your dog? What if you get killed on the mission field? What if a snake bites you? What if you lose your job? What if your family rejects you? What if you go bankrupt? What if all those things? If you think of anything, and I want you to imagine any possible scenario you possibly can think of, we have a defense that's greater than that, and I call it the Christian nuclear weapon. It brings up all these things together that we're talking about.

And if you look in your Bible, it's found in Romans chapter eight, verse 35. Romans chapter eight, verse 35. Now, in your mind, think of every what if.

Think of every possible scenario. And this is what Paul said. He said, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, or sword, any of these things, as it is written, for thy sake, listen to this, we are killed all the day long.

We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Wow. Nay, but in all these things, we are more than conquerors.

What things? You know, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword, being accounted as a sheep for the slaughter. In all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. How, Paul? For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities or 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, amen.

Now, did Paul leave anything out? The fear of death, the fear of life, the swords, the famine, the nakedness, everything, nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. That's the answer to every possible what if. All right, in closing, how do we fight these things? Can I bring it down to you in a personal and a spiritual level this evening? Paul told us in 2 Corinthians 10, verse three, about this kind of a warfare, and he says, for though we walk in the flesh, you're here every day in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh.

Well, that should be simple enough for non-resistance, but I used to say it's so confusing. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, watch this, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imagination 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 put it into practical things with you.

Are you winning that victory? You know, when they look at the, become conscious objectors, and we could have a draft easy, within a month we could have a draft, and it says plainly in the army regulations, it says that mere association with a historic peace church does not grant you the right to be a conscientious objector. That it says, and the Marine Corps regulations actually underline, they will look into your life and word and deed. Are we living this crucified life today? This image that Paul is giving here is the image that when emperors used to take prisoners, they would have a whole, take a city, they would have a whole line of prisoners that they would march through the city on their way back and showing what they've done.

He's giving us this analogy that you are casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God. Are you living that kind of a life? Young men, are you being able to have,

can you show the victories of your conquest over lust, pornography, and the things that are attacking us today on the internet and these things? Young ladies, are you able to take your, you can show a long prisoners of being defeat, the gods of vanity and the gods of things that get young ladies. Middle-aged people, now that I've realized that I'm pushing 50 next year, that there's a whole new line of temptations that we have.

Are we able to look at those things and the pride of life and those things and show them that we have defeated them by the power of God living in Christ Jesus? Let's break it real. If you're here tonight and you, like I was, had a superficial conversion, a sinner's prayer, a just a decision to call yourself a Christian or just to join the church, but you never really took Jesus Christ seriously, I challenge you tonight, the name of Jesus Christ, to repent and receive the kingdom, to receive Jesus Christ, to wash away these sins and these things that are vexing you down and to be alive in Christ Jesus and let the blood of Jesus wash away your sins and then to be renewed in the spirit of God. Come forth and live the way in the teachings of Jesus as a new humanity born again.

Is that your testimony? Or perhaps you're here and you had a true conversion in your life, but your life is just deteriorating down into just a mediocrity and the whole Bible just seems like nonsense to you. I plead with you tonight, allow Jesus Christ to be real, to be very present with you and allow these teachings begin to come out. You and your churches here today, are you just debating over different things and vain things and listen, when was the last time your last brother's meeting took out the words of Jesus and said, are these the things that we're gonna make sure we're doing? Let's stop just fighting over petty things that Jesus doesn't even talk about and allow his word, his ways be directing our churches.

Oh, let's let God do it again in our generation. All right, my last quote, it's a quote I use in the debate, I think it's a good one. Napoleon at the end of his life, he was captured and then put away on an island and he was defeated and he had spent a lot of time riding and being discouraged.

And as he was there defeated on this little island, he wrote something that was very interesting for an emperor, world-class emperor to write. And this is what he said. He says, I know men and I tell you that Jesus Christ is no mere man.

Between him and every person in the world, there is no possible term of comparison. Alexander the Great, Caesar, Charlemagne and I founded empires, but on what did we rest the creation of our genius upon force? Jesus Christ founded his empires upon love. And at this hour, millions of people would die for him.

Are you one of them?

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