

Anabaptist History - Part 6

by Walter Beachy

Walter Beachy's sermon explores the ecclesiology of Anabaptism, emphasizing the importance of church authority and discipline within a believer's community.

Duration: 1:19:32

Scripture: Matthew 5:38-48

Topics: "Anabaptist History"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of properly correlating the Old Testament and the New Testament in understanding the word of God. He emphasizes the need for consistency in applying biblical principles in our lives. The speaker shares a story about a four-year-old girl who noticed inconsistencies in her father's preaching and the actions of the church. He also poses a thought-provoking question about whether we, as imperfect individuals, have the right to demand perfect obedience from our children. The sermon encourages listeners to reflect on their own actions and strive for alignment between their beliefs and their behavior.

Transcript

Well, blessings to all of you, and it's a joy again to be here and to share this time with you. It is the last night, isn't it? That happens so quickly in weeks of meetings and partial weeks of meetings like we're doing here. On your outline, we will be wanting to talk about the last two of the four main issues in Anabaptism, and that's our ecclesiology, or our position regarding the Church, and then non-resistance, lastly.

So, we'll want to talk about the Church first. Let's turn to Matthew 18 before we go to the passage, or to the outline, and look at this passage in Matthew 18, which is one of the major passages that our forebears would have turned to, and that we ought to consider when we think about how the Church functions, and the authority of the Church, and so on. 1 Corinthians 5, the whole chapter, would be another passage that has the Apostle Paul doing a good bit of exposition and explanation of the Church's authority to discipline, and so on.

Let's pick it up at verse 18, where Jesus said, Moreover, if your brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault. And let me stop and say that fault is a fairly good translation, because in the Greek language you have about four, but really three very definite words for sin, and they are progressively worse, with the Greek word anomia, anomia being law, anomia being lawless, or is often not consistently,

but often translated iniquity. The lesser word for sin is where you try for the goal, but you fall short.

Then there's another archery term, by the way, that talks about missing the mark to the right, or left, or beyond, and that beyond does not mean that you're actually doing better than the target, it just means you've missed, it's another way to miss. And then you have the one that says, I don't like the target, that's iniquity, that's lawlessness, or iniquity. This is the lesser one, the fall short.

And let me say at the outset that some dismiss this passage for church discipline by saying that it says here, if your brother sinned against you, so he's talking about personal things. However, if that's the case, how do you explain, if that's what is intended as the only way this should be understood or practiced, why does it come to the church? And that's what Jesus himself says, that if one does not hear the private admonition and the small group admonition, why do you take it to the church? And if it's only just between two persons or someone sinning against you, and is it not true? It certainly is in the Old Testament that the sin of one brother in a congregation or sister, women sin too, right? In Pennsylvania, women sin too. Anyway, if a brother or sister sins in the church, and we're talking now about going on in the practice of sin, it definitely affects the brotherhood.

There's a sense in which we do not live alone, as it were unto ourselves, and our lives affect others, especially family and church and so on. So let's go back and read it now. Moreover, if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

And if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. Jesus was a realist, and of course, knew human nature, even fallen human nature.

So he knew that if someone will not hear a sincere admonition one-on-one, that very likely he's going to be looking for fault in the way it was done. Not too long ago, I was involved in a in a tension between members of a pastoral team. And I don't like to get involved in problems like that, especially when I knew all of them.

And I think it's safe to say that the one who blew it the most, I knew the best and was probably the closest friend to. And at one point he was complaining about something that the others did and said, well, I don't disagree so much with what they did, but as to how they did it. And I looked at him and I said, that is a very old saw.

I wouldn't go there. If I were you, if you agree with what they did, but just don't quite agree with how they did it. I said, let's not even go there.

Bottom line is, did they do a biblical or an unbiblical thing? Well, it was biblical. I said, that's all I need to know. It's all you should need to know.

And he thanked me. So I think we're, well, I know we're still friends, but in any case, Jesus said, take one or two with you, a small group now so that every word is established. He can't say, you said this, you said that, that sort of thing.

Then verse 17, if he shall neglect to hear them, the small group, then it says, tell it to the church. Now, the first time that you have Jesus using the word church that it's recorded is in Matthew 16, when he says, I will build my church. And you can say that statement of Jesus.

I think effectively to get all the meaning by saying, I will build my church. I will build my church. I will build my church.

I will build my church. You know, you're going to emphasize each word has a slightly different nuance, but I'm sure it helps us gather the intent of what he's saying. Here is the second time it appears.

And he's saying, if one will not hear the small group admonition, tell it to the church. But if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto you, obviously the church, as a heathen man and a publican. Then he says a very, very controversial thing.

Verily, I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. And whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. And again, I say to you that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my father, which is in heaven for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Now, let me give you just a quick rundown of what the Anabaptists said in the first generation, what they wrote in the first generation of our movement. They said these things about the church. The church is a believer's church, meaning only the regenerate are invited into the fellowship of the congregation.

You don't just take everybody in by infant baptism or by membership drives. There are evangelical churches that do that. They have membership drives.

One of them told me, we hope then if they come to church, they'll hear the gospel and get saved. Ta-da. I mean, that's not what the Bible teaches.

So our Anabaptist forefathers caught that both from scripture and early history, that the church is a believer's church made up of those who are redeemed and who voluntarily join themselves to a local fellowship for accountability and responsibility and so on. And they believed along with what I'm just saying there, that we are in some respects or in a good bit of respects, we are responsible for each other in the local fellowship and accountable to each other. Now, unless you apply that in a local fellowship, it finally has no meaning at all.

I agree with the concept that there is a universal church, meaning all those who are born again are members of the body of Christ. But I can't be accountable to everybody out there. And I can't be responsible for everybody out there.

This is lived at the local level and what's written about what Jesus said and what the apostles wrote was written to churches. And there's where it has to be lived out. So they believe that it's a believer's church and they believe that we are accountable and responsible.

And they believe that the locus of authority, we don't use the word locus a lot. Locus comes from the word we get locale or that sort of thing, the place. Yeah, let's just say it like that.

The place of authority is the gathered church where the Lord Jesus is present, which means then that he honors that presence when we are together in his name as regenerate believers doing our best to be biblical. Then there is authority. And it's amazing.

He used the same words in binding and loosing as what was used of the function of the 70 elders, the Sanhedrin in Israel. I can imagine. I wish I was there, but when we get to heaven, we can ask the apostles.

But my guess is when he said this toward the end of his year of popularity, no, it was even later than that. It was into the third year that he would have said this, that I'm guessing Peter and the other apostles said, what? Binding and loosing. It's not quite accurate, but it's close to say forbidding and allowing, but it goes beyond that.

It means basically you could bind doctrine and you could bind ethics practice. But he's talking about the very same thing as the Sanhedrin, the 70 elders did in Israel. And they were recognized all through the era of the old Testament.

And Jesus never said anything negative about that arrangement that Moses' father-in-law, you know, had told him to do. Reader's Digest version, there I can use it. Reader's Digest version, he said, you're going to kill yourself with busyness.

So why don't you put in judges of hundreds and judges of fifties? And then if they can't take care of it, then they can come to you, Supreme Court, as it were. The Western judicial system is patterned after that. And if you take a case all the way to the Supreme Court and you lose, where do you go from there? Home.

There's nowhere else to go. And they're sometimes wrong, right? They sure were wrong about Roe versus Wade. They've been wrong about some other things.

They are mere mortals, but their word is law. He's talking about something very similar to that, although we all know this is the final authority, right here, is the word of God. But, well, turn with me to Matthew 23.

I just want to point that out yet real quick, and then I'll take you through the outline rather fast. In Matthew 23, just a few chapters back, Jesus said to his disciples, verse 1, and to the multitude, he turned to them and he said this, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Now, these are the people that he had often rebuked.

He was hard on them. But notice what he says next. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not you after their works, for they say and do not.

And he goes on to say they're a pack of hypocrites, but they are your authority. Obey them. And that was true until Pentecost.

And then, when Peter and John were in front of the Sanhedrin, and they flogged them and said, don't preach in the name of Jesus. Peter said, you judge whether we'll listen to you or we'll listen to God. Jesus said, go everywhere and preach.

So he was saying, your authority has ended. And it did, obviously did. But the authority of Jesus is still present in the earth, and its locus is the believer's church, where Jesus is present, and people are Bible believing and trying hard to be biblical.

Now, let me just ask a question. I'm trying to think about how to do this best to make it clear without a lot of time being used to do so. Let me illustrate it this way.

Should your children obey you as parents? Are they duty bound by Scripture to obey you? That's not hard to believe. But let me ask you, do you have perfect judgment? Are all your commands absolutely right? We had a curfew for our teenagers, and especially one of them, who was most like me, she would challenge me by saying, so and so don't have a curfew. She made it sound like about the only young

people in the youth group that have a curfew is them.

I said, isn't it too bad you weren't born in some other family? Or I would say, so, but we are your parents. Now, where in the Bible did we read that young people should be home by 11 o'clock? That was Saturday night, 12 o'clock other nights young. Midnight was the last they should be home.

Now the question I ask young people, if our children just deliberately blew that, and that was before cell phones, so sometimes we knew ahead of time it may be hard for them to make it, but we were usually up or at least awake until they were home. Saturday nights it was 11. We read that in Hezekiah.

Did you know that? Does your Bible have that book? Well, we wrote one. But we were doing what we thought was for their good, and I still believe it was. And I ask young people, if our children would deliberately break that rule, were they guilty before God of sin? And without almost no exceptions, they would say yes.

And you could kind of tell by looking at a class which ones had a curfew and had broken them, because it was like a big flag went up, I'm guilty, you know. But it is wrong to disobey parents unless parents would ask you to disobey God. And so God delegated authority to parents.

Is it shocking that he's delegated authority to churches? I debated a good long while about being baptized in the Amish church, though I didn't agree with them. I then already had the conviction in my heart as a young Christian that if I joined the Amish church, I would obey its rules. I think I'm right.

I don't agree with all their disciplines. But I think rather than, just like Jesus talked about the scribes and Pharisees, he didn't agree with their disciplines either. Did you know that right at the time he said that one of their rules was that you couldn't plow on the Sabbath? And because most of their homes had dirt floors, they went on to say, don't move your chairs on the Sabbath.

And if you have to move a chair, pick it up very carefully and then set it down very carefully, because if you pull it, you've plowed. It's absurd. But, well, I'll just leave that.

The authority of Jesus is present in the local church that is made up of born-again Christians, honestly trying hard to be biblical. I think we need to be concerned about that. Now, if you want to follow me, I'll just make a quick comparison between the free church and the sacral church or the state church, the official church.

And this is what was happening very definitely in the 16th century. On the left there, you have the free church and some things about it. And to the right, you have the opposite then under sacralism.

Believers only versus all in society. Our volunteerism is over against coercion. And being evangelical, meaning believing in salvation by grace through faith, is over against being sacramental.

The reformed church did, however, move away from that. So they were still sacral, but not sacramental. Then responsibility and accountability can be put together as one.

But in the sacral church, you're simply associated there and you have a lot of liberty for individualism. And I'm not going to knock megachurches, and they vary. Some are better than others, I'm sure.

And I'm sure there are people who get saved in megachurches that we would be uncomfortable in. But megachurches, one of their attractions in this period of time is that there's very little accountability. It's a

matter of association.

And it's a matter of, I can do what I want to do. I can attend when I want to and not when I don't want to. And I can do what I want to do.

Nobody will bother me. That's the association individualism that was happening except for attendance and that sort of thing back in the 16th century. Now, comparisons of emphasis.

For our purposes tonight, we will not take time to talk about pietism. That would be good for an hour, but we just don't have the time. So let's just look at the Catholic, the Protestant evangelical, and the Anabaptist emphases.

And this is, I think, well, I know this is yet fair to be said of most Protestants, most Catholics, and Bible-believing Anabaptist Mennonites. It's sad, but I have to identify today Bible-believing Mennonites, because we have, like I said last night, we have Mennonites who have a very different Bible from what you and I have. The Catholic Church sees the Church as an institution capable of conveying God's grace to man through the sacraments.

And that is not an unfair, exaggerated view of the Catholic Church. I've had many, in fact, we currently have former Catholics at United Bethel. But over the years, I have shared on this subject, and even at Bible school with former Catholics present, and they agree that's essentially, that's kind of at the core of how they see the Church.

Protestants go beyond that, and they see the Church as an institution for the proclamation or the preaching of the Word, and the observance of the sacraments. Very little discipline happens in many, even most, of the Protestant evangelical congregations or denominations. But they do have preaching.

The Catholic Church essentially gave up on preaching in the 7th century, the late 600s. Very little preaching happened. And it was mostly liturgy and formality and some singing after Pope Gregory of what are called the Gregorian chants.

And up until 1962, all the services everywhere in the world, including the liturgy that the congregation memorized, was done in Latin. And then in 62, they decided to go with the language of the people, with the vernacular. And so now in America, it's done in English.

But very little preaching happened from about 700 to 1540, 1550. But when the Catholic Church was really losing members to both the Protestants and the Anabaptists, they began to do a little teaching, little homilies, little preaching exercises, teaching exercises in the mass so as to counter the influence of the Reformation, the other groups that were emerging. To this day, their sermons are about 10, 12, at the most 15 minutes long, called homilies.

They don't even call them sermons. Catholicism and Protestantism went much better than that. And they had long sermons, a lot of preaching.

And the congregation went to singing in the Catholic Church until 1962. Only the professionals sang. Because way back, the popes had decided that the common people, without education in music, cannot sing well enough to be worthy of worshiping God.

So when I went to Catholic Mass back in the 50s, then they had someone coming out from Columbus to sing the Gregorian chants. Because the congregation didn't sing a bit, nothing, for centuries, for over a millennium probably, that they didn't sing at all. And then they started in 1962.

Now, note the difference, the additional factor in Anabaptism. Anabaptism sees the Church as a brotherhood of the regenerate, where the Word is preached, and now I borrow from Menna Simons, sustained by the means of grace. Actually, you could put the quotations in front of sustained there.

Sustained by the means of grace is a reference to Church discipline, where we call each other to obedience, in brotherly love we admonish each other, we discipline each other, and we bear whatever cross, inwardly or objectively with our world around us. But the preaching is sustained by the discipline of the Church. Let me tell you a little story that just really says this well.

I have heard, we used to sing, I used to sing in a male quartet before I was married and then even until a while after I was ordained. And we would sing in Protestant evangelical churches, like in revival meetings and so on. And I've heard some really good sermons.

It wasn't in a church, but it was in another setting that I heard one of the most vehement denunciations of women using eye shadow, eye makeup, to make their eyebrows bushy and to look like they were living in a dank basement with mold in the top of their eyes here. That's the kind of thing he talked about. He just creamed the women for that.

And there were women sitting in the congregation that were living in basements and looked like it. And yet he just really nailed them. But the Church never did anything about it.

And in Christianity Today, some years ago, probably 25, an article caught my eye. Whatever happened to church discipline? Written by a Baptist pastor. And he sounded like a strict Mennonite.

He really did. Now the issues were different, but he was calling for church discipline. He said the church he grew up in, he can't remember there ever being any public discipline.

And preachers would cry out against sin, but sin went right on and nobody paid much heed to it. And then he gave this illustration. I hope you'll remember it.

He said a friend of his, who's also a pastor, had a little girl of about four, who one Sunday morning when he was preaching, and he and his wife had the agreement that mama got the children, two children ready for church, so he could be in the study Sunday morning, doing the last minute touch-ups on his sermon and praying and all that. Well, anyway, on the way to church, mama was telling how Susie was bad that morning, didn't cooperate. So daddy, she was sitting in the back seat.

Daddy lectured Susie vehemently from the front seat. And after he finished, before they quite got to church, it was quiet for a little bit. And then Susie from the back seat said, daddy, were you preaching at me or did you mean it? And he went on to say, you know, that little four-year-old Susie observed more than some of our adults do, that her daddy would decry things she saw in church.

But the church did nothing about it. It's an amazing thing. The summary of the Anabaptist view there is the church is comprised of those who are truly converted or regenerate, committed to brotherly discipline and voluntarily join the fellowship.

And the circle of membership in the visible church is the same as the circle of the invisible church. Now I would hasten to say no church can absolutely always know, but we should intend that if we draw a circle and say, this is the membership here at Anabaptist Fellowship, that that circle of membership would be the same as the circle that would circle those who are truly regenerate. When I first shared that in a CMC ministers meeting, by request, and I was young and didn't know how well this would be received.

Most received it well, but there were several older men who gave me a hard way to go. One of them said to me right at break time, we had a break in the sessions, and he came up to me and he said, why did you leave the Amish? I said, what do you mean? He said, what you're teaching on church discipline is just Amish. I said, it's so different from the Amish.

You were never Amish, obviously. I said, some of the things are the same because at least they have church discipline. But I said, it's very different from what I experienced in the Amish church and observed there.

And I don't have time to go into that and I don't want to disparage the Amish. But the point is, he went on to say at one point, and another pastor agreed with him, you've got to be realistic and we've got to make peace with the fact that we will have some of the world in the church. Well, I'm sorry, I pastored for 32 years and I never made peace with it.

And I felt it was a, it was a serious responsibility on the part of the leadership team, leadership team's responsibility to the church to discuss the commitments of people, examine them. And before we recommended them for fellowship, membership, not fellowship, that could happen before, but membership that we could do so with confidence that they are born again Christians. I think that's what God intends.

That's what our Anabaptist forefathers said. There's an account, it's probably third generation because it was about a hundred years after the movement began and there was still serious persecution, but not much martyrdom anymore. I don't think maybe any.

And two young men came to an Anabaptist pastor at night. Their first meeting and told him that they are Christian and are not satisfied with whatever church, I don't know, was it Catholic or Protestant and they wanted to be baptized as believers and come into the fellowship. Now it is true that at that point yet the Anabaptists were very careful because some people faked coming into the church to get all the information they could, and then they'd turn them in to the authorities.

So they were very careful for that. But that account that I read went on to say after several hours of talking at night, this pastor said to these two young men, go home, read and study the scriptures and seek the Lord because I'm not ready to baptize you yet. I do not intentionally bury live people.

You get what he was saying? Baptism is a symbol of death to self. And he said, I detect too much life of self. We need a good dose of that, I think, in today's Mennonite circles.

Now, if we had a full week, I would have tried last night to give you an assignment there on the next page at the top. Well, I'm not sure how it is in your outline though. But where there's a list called the Scriptural Imperative for Church Discipline, have you got that list? There is the list of scriptures that directly deal with the subject.

I would have asked you to read them, and then we'll talk briefly about them. I just don't have time for that. But I would say that Matthew 16 and Matthew 18 and Matthew 23, which I read tonight, Matthew 18, 23,

plus 1 Corinthians 5, the first two listed there, are the most important and the most detailed ones.

But all of them address the subject. Now, just a few more things, and then we're going to have to quit for this particular subject. The Anabaptists saw the authority of the church as being for instructive discipline and for corrective discipline.

And you have moral discernment besides preaching and teaching and counsel that's mentioned there in Ephesians 4, the goal being till we all come to the unity of the faith. Then you have moral discernment, Philippians 1, 9, and 10. Paul says there that he prays for the Christians at Philippi that they would have sound judgment.

Christians ought to individually but then also collectively move beyond just deciding between black, what's wrong, and white, what's okay. We should graduate to look at things as good, better, best. Was it Montgomery Ward or Sears who used to advertise like that? They have the good stuff, they didn't have any poor.

Good, better, best. Well, there are lots of moral questions that are based on that sort of issue rather than just, is it definitely wrong or is it okay? That sort of thing. But discernment of that nature needs to happen and brotherly admonition which is what fraternal admonition means there.

Now, corrective discipline is where the word is interpreted and application is made. Have you ever heard the statement, we don't need any kind of disciplines, we don't need any kind of applications. And I would say in a small church you may not need any written ones, but what's wrong with having some written ones? But you certainly need some understood ones because when people say, we'll just go by the Bible.

If you would ask the leadership of the Episcopalian church in America, do you go by the Bible? They would say, why of course we go by the Bible. But they just ordained the second bishop that is an active gay bishop. The first was a man and when they ordained him, the man he was living with in a homosexual relationship and his ex-wife and daughter from that wife were a part of the ceremony of his ordination.

And just a few weeks ago, I read in the news, it's now a couple months old, it was kind of kept quiet, but they ordained a woman bishop who lives in a homosexual relationship. Do they go by the Bible? They would say yes. They don't really, but they would say yes just like a lot of Mennonites would say yes today because they think they can find the word of God in the scriptures where we're just so simple-minded that we're taking the scriptures very literally and not digging in for what is really the word of God.

So you have to finally say, would there be any Christians anywhere with any level of maturity who would disagree with the statement that the Bible teaches that we should be modest in our dress? Everybody would agree with that, right? But what's modest? And I remember back in the 60s and into the 70s when the miniskirts were in, and the miniskirt was initially designed by a gay woman, no, it was a gay man. I think the same French or English, I think maybe now English man who did the bell-bottom trousers, remember those? They had a brief comeback recently. Yeah, I've lived long enough to see the bell-bottom trousers come and go and then come again.

But you know what the intent was, the bell-bottom trousers was to make men look like women. This is what he wanted to see. He was homosexual.

Shouldn't we know something about things like that? Shouldn't we give some heed to them? Does the church not have the right to say? I remember when one of our students was a student at Eastern

Mennonite College way back in the late 60s, early 70s, and I was on the board of trustees. I was there for a trustees meeting when Martha told me, the student, that Myron Augsburg had begged the women in chapel not to go for the miniskirts. And he made this statement.

I don't see how any woman can claim to cover her nakedness unless her skirt falls over her knees while she is seated. Because if she's opposite a man and her skirt is above her knees, at best she hides her nakedness. Can you imagine that being said in chapel at Eastern Mennonite College today? I'm afraid you can't imagine having Myron Augsburg even say it today.

I'm not sure, but I don't think he would. Now let's go on with that list of things I have there. Private admonition, small group admonition, public admonition, and then either exclusion or forgiveness.

In a church must be willing to be a forgiving church. I summarize there at the bottom the ability of a congregation, and I have some other lists in there we don't have time for, but at the end of this discussion in your outline, the ability of a congregation to discipline rests in her willingness to, number one, be a discerning brotherhood, an admonishing brotherhood. It's not only the preachers that admonish, right? Right? Amen? It's kind of weak.

And to be a forgiving brotherhood or to be willing to exclude the unrepentant. Let me close this section with just a quick story. One day a brother came to me with a heavy heart and he said to me, I just heard something in town at one of the shops where a Methodist deacon had a mechanic shop and another guy worked with him who was not a professed Christian.

But the Methodist deacon was a professed Christian, but he was a town gossip. And he said he named a brother in our church, a young man with a wife and two children, I think, at that point, and said that he was seen at night, late at night, on the porch of a lewd woman that was known to be a prostitute in our area there. And he said, I don't know what to do with it.

And I said, well, you really should go talk to the man. And when we looked at Freundschaft, blood relationships and all of that, I finally let him off the hook and I said, I will go talk with him. I frankly did not believe it.

But I called the brother and I made an appointment. He was a builder, he had an office, he had a good business. And so he set a time for me to come and it was after supper and we went into his office and I said, I'm here just to check something out with you.

I said, a report has come to me, not in a gossipy way from within the church, but it's being gossiped in town that you were seen at such and such a place on such and such a time. And I expected him to say, that's absurd. To my surprise, he broke down and wept.

When he gained his composure, he said, I thank God she did not answer the door. But he said, my wickedness is still there because, and they were having problems in their marriage, some health related and otherwise. But anyway, he said, I went there with the intention to sin, but she did not answer.

So I left, went home. And I thank God that it didn't happen. But he said, I was probably seen there because I was there.

So we talked about it. He prayed and then he asked if I would stay and have him call, he wanted to call his wife in and share it with her. To make a long story short, we had a really redemptive time there, a sad one,

but a redemptive one.

And then the kind of thing that preachers love to hear, I was thinking, this is being talked about in town. What do we do with it now? And before I could say anything, he said, I think I would like, I ought to make a confession in church. Now that's easy pastoring.

And he did, he got up and made confession in church. I then made clear that actual adultery had not happened, but we prayed for him. We forgave him.

And there was accountability set up and then some counseling arranged for their marriage problems. And some while later, I had some work to do on the car and I don't get into electrical things at all. So I took it into the Methodist deacon.

He just got a good start buried under the hood. When he said, Walter, you're still pastoring out here at the church on the edge of town? I said, yeah. Well, he said, have you heard about, and then he named this brother and I wanted to make sure he's talking about the same thing.

So I said, heard what? So he started to tell me and I said, Jay, just stop right there. I said, I know all about that. And he made public confession and we have forgiven him.

God has forgiven him. His wife has forgiven him. They're working on their marriage.

And I said, it is wrong for you to talk about that anymore. Well, he came up out of the hood real fast when I said he made public confession and he looked at me and he said, you mean to tell me he stood in front of your church and confess that? And it just hit me. And as a prophet, I just told him, I said, yes, with, with you telling it all around town, he might as well tell it himself.

And then I said, and if you tell it again, I think your sin, it'll be worse than his. He fixed my car fast. He didn't want to talk about that anymore.

That is effective church discipline, Matthew 18, and it worked. We didn't have to have the small group. Didn't have to urge him to make confession.

The church forgave. He's still in the church and doing well. His family's grown.

Well, why don't you stand up and take just a quick little break and wiggle your toes and bless one or two people around you, your kid's wife or somebody. Then we'll go back to the last subject. Oh my.

Well, you don't need any instruction on non-resistance, I don't suppose, but we don't have much time. I got too long winded there. All right.

If you're ready to sit down or if you want to stand a while longer, let's do this. Let's go to Matthew five. Cause I think one of the most important things is just to note something that initially, when I saw this, oh, many years ago was extremely important in my development of really strong convictions about non-resistance.

Matthew five, verse 38 through 48, that's the passage. It's not the only one. And you have in your outline there, the biblical basis for the Anabaptist position would be the example of Jesus, the ethic of Jesus, Matthew five, 38 to 48, the teaching and practice of the apostles.

And you could add the early church then. And third or fourth, the proper correlation of the testaments on that last one, before we read the passage in Matthew five, let me just illustrate what we mean there by a proper correlation of the two testaments, the old Testament and the New Testament. I was sitting with my boss in ER in the Catholic hospital, a very troubled Catholic nun with a very short fuse on a temper.

And she was in a fairly good mood, except that she made it known that she did not like conscientious objectors. She thought we're a bunch of yellow bellied CEOs. But anyway, she said to me one time, when we were sitting there working at bandages or something, she said, Walter, I have a question for you.

Do you think you are better than King David? I figured I knew where she was going, but I just looked at her and I said, why do you ask that? Well, the Bible says he was a man after God's own heart and yet he was a man of war. So you think you're better than David? I said, I'm not saying I'm better than David. I'm saying I have a different relationship with God than David did.

And I'm living in a different covenant than David did. But even back then the Lord told him he can't build the temple because he was a man of war. But I said, you can't go by the Old Testament.

The arrangement then was that Israel was a theocracy, a governing theocracy over the people. And they did use force to restrain evil in nations and within their own nation. And then I quoted her this.

I said, Jesus said, I asked her then, I said, do you believe that we should obey what Jesus taught in the New Testament? And of course she was caught on that one. And she said, well, yes, of course. I said, well, he said, you've heard it said by them of old time, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

Where was that said? I'm not asking for reference, but whereabouts was that said? That's in the law. It appears several times. What that is, is the intention on God's part to limit the justice system, individual and national, to where they could only do justice, not vengeance.

And so what happens in our carnal hearts, even as Christians, like I would say in class sometimes, if I would just walk down the hall here and on a scale of one to 10, 10 being the hardest, I would hit you at a seven. What would your first impulsive response be? How bad would you want to hit me back? And one time one of the girls said 15 and I wouldn't have hit her. She was big and she looked like the kind that could do it.

And of course she smiled when she said it, but she was true to form. We want more than justice. We want vengeance.

That's a carnal human way to do it. In the Muslim concept of jihad, even in the smaller context, not nationally or that sort of thing, if someone does something bad to you or your family, your loved ones, a man especially is seen as being a wimpish if he doesn't get vengeance. Vengeance.

That means more than justice. Vengeance. Well, the teaching in the law was only justice.

If one eye is lost in a fight or whatever, only one eye can be taken. If there's a death between families and one family has a death as a result of their scrap, then they can only take one death over here, you know, in the other family, that sort of thing. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

But note the next words. But I say unto you that you resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue you at the law and take away your coat,

give him your cloak also.

And whosoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him too, and give to him that asks you, and from him that would borrow from you, turn not away. And you've heard it said that you shall love your neighbor and hate your 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 which despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your father which is in heaven.

For he makes his sun to shine on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust. And goes on to say, if you love those who love you, what more do you than the Pharisees or the hypocrites? I quoted a section of that to Sister Seraphica. And she said, that doesn't make sense.

That isn't practical. Well, she didn't know enough theology to get rid of it like Pat Robertson does. He just says, that's a kingdom ethic and can't be lived in a fallen world.

A lot of evangelicals would say that and would dismiss it just that way. And one of our men who worked with a very militaristic Protestant evangelical, who he said gave a lot of evidence of being Christian, but just kept bugging him about non-resistance. They worked together in a setting where they were at computers most of the day.

But at their breaks and so on, he would bug him about this. And one time he said, you know, this thing of being non-resistant and not resisting evil, what if everybody did it? And Ray said, well, if everybody didn't, wouldn't that be a pretty nice world? Well, he said, look, if all of the Americans did it, what would the Russians do? And Ray thought of that passage, and I think it's one of the Proverbs, if a man's ways please the Lord, he will make even his enemies to be at peace with him. And the other thing is, all they could do is kill us.

You know, Jesus even said it like that. They can only kill the body. They can't touch what really matters in the final analysis in eternity.

And the man just finally said, that is just so impractical. And Ray said, yeah, it really is impractical. Because if Jesus would have taken your position and your practice, he wouldn't have had to die.

He even said, and I ask you, could he have done it? He told Peter, I could call 12 legions of angels. If he was using Roman terminology, it would be 12,000 angels. And one angel killed 385,000 Syrians in one night.

And this motley little band that came out to arrest Jesus, he said to Peter, put up your sword. They that take it die by it. I could call 12 legions of angels.

If he couldn't have done it, Jesus was lying, and he wasn't lying. He chose not to do it. And it could even be that there were angels ready to come.

You know, I don't know. Angels now aren't carnal, but in any case, Ray said he never raised the subject of non-resistance after that. He just let it lie.

I personally believe that this is one of those areas that much of Christendom missed in the Reformation and since. But happily people pick up on it today. Yasser Maki with his Muslim background picked up on it quickly.

He did, I think the first term he had at Rosedale, he had Anabaptist history and theology in my class, and he came and just said how revolutionary that is and how it doesn't fit with his view of Western Christians whom he thought of as being militaristic. And I said, well, many of them are. And he ate it up when he went back and people were starting to be added to the church by baptism and they formed churches and the first church.

Now they're into two and going to three. He taught them non-resistance Muslims with their jihadist views. But I sat with a young man who we later than baptized, who said when he was with the resistance over in Darfur, where he lived, where they were fighting against the government supported militia.

He said the militia was terrible to the people, but the militia is Arabic and they were fighting the African, but they were all Muslim, Muslims fighting Muslims, killing, raping, burning out Muslims. But anyway, so he joined the resistance to fight against this evil. And then he said, I learned how evil and hateful and terribly vicious the resistance was.

And in my heart, he said, I knew it was wrong. And yet he was catechized Muslim, but in his heart of hearts, he knew it was wrong. I think a lot of Christians who go into the military and then get into a case of actual combat where they have to put a target, whether it's a man or a vehicle with men in it, in their sights and blow them away.

They find it terribly hard to do. In fact, during the Korean war in which I was drafted, there were about 30% of the people that the soldiers, 30%, not of all the soldiers, but 30% of those who went to evangelical Sunday schools. So they were exposed to the new Testament.

30% or more of them would not shoot to kill. And when we first started our school and we used AC materials, got to know Dr. Oh, what was his name? Forget now, but the head of that. And he was so proud of having been in the Marines.

And about the second year that we were in the program, he asked to have a supper appointment at a convention thing with Don Showalter, who was principal at that time and myself. And he sat across from us and he was asking what we think of the material by now. And I said, academically, you're doing quite well, we think, but we just wish somehow you could get rid of some of that strong God and country stuff.

You would think that God is an American Democrat and probably even a Marine. And he just kind of looked at me. I said, I've got a question.

Are you aware of the fact that many evangelical soldiers would not shoot to kill? That was true in the civil war. It was true in World War I. It was true in World War II. It was true in the Korean War.

I said, are you aware of that? He said, yeah, I'm aware of the problem. He didn't know what the percentages were, but I quoted an article where there was a good bit of research done for a thesis. And then he said, I said to him, did you get into combat? No, he said, I thank God I didn't have to face that.

I said, but a lot of your Baptist brothers did. He and I were contemporaries, drafted about the same time. I said, if you had been in battle, would you have been able to shoot to kill? Well, I thank God I didn't have to face that.

I said, but I'm asking you a question. Would you have shot to kill? I thank God I didn't have to face that. Three times he said that.

I looked at him and I said, why can't I think of his name? Dr. blank, because I'm drawing a blank. I said, I get the distinct impression you weren't a very good Marine. He looked at me and he said, you know how to hit below the belt.

I said, I asked you an honest question and you avoided it. You were taught to kill. And some of your pastors, at least in radio preachers said, killing communists does God's service because they're the enemies of God.

You should have been tickled to kill the enemies of God. Well, he said, again, I'm just glad I didn't have to face that. And then he made a statement.

He said, when, when the first Mennonites asked for our materials, I told my wife and staff, I am not selling our material to yellow bellied CEOs. And he said, my staff talked me out of it. And Menno Beachy from mountain view, mountain district, anyway, well from mountain anthems, but anyway, the school there, that was the first Mennonite school, Beachy Amish actually.

And he said, I was planning to flunk him so they couldn't use our material when he came as a principal to be trained. And so he said, the day came, these principals were all coming into their big learning center there in Texas. And he said, I was looking for this Mennonite and all of a sudden I saw him, the only guy without a tie and he had a beard.

And he said, his countenance was so, well, he said, he looked like a cross between Moses and Jesus. And he said, already I lost some of my fight. And then of all things, he was the first one to finish his paces.

And I went through him with a fine tooth comb and he got about everything right. I couldn't flunk him. He said, I came to love him.

And he said, I want you to know I am not where you are, but I respect your position so highly that I would die to defend your position. I said, thanks, but no thanks. We'll do our own dying.

And he just kind of shook his head. I think we were friends after that, but we dare not be afraid or ashamed of articulating our position. Not at all.

Yasser said before that first, no, this last war in Iraq. He said, if Bush goes in there, it's because he does not understand the Muslim worldview. He'll never get out in his presidency.

He was right. And it hasn't helped. It's probably made it worse.

I don't know, but the point is Yasser says now we Anabaptists have an inside route to the mind of the Muslim. When he tells them that he ran into Christians in America who take the teachings of Jesus seriously and literally, and they will die before they kill. And I am associated with them.

He said that gets their attention and in their heart of hearts, they know that that's right. Don't ever apologize for your non-resistance. And it works in all human relationships, even in marriage.

There were times early on when I'd get disgusted with Mary Jane about something and I wanted to fight, but she was non-resistant. She was born non-resistant, I think. Wouldn't fight.

It works. It just works. Well, I'm finished.

Do you have a question? Yes. I had a question last night about how was it for the Mennonites and Amish in America during the time of the War of Independence, during our independence from England back in the late 1700s. I've read through all of that.

It was not a part of what I would regularly teach, so I've forgotten some of that. But I do know this that, and I can't recall the term that was used for those Americans who sided with the king and did not go along with rebelling against the king, but there was a particular name that they were given. The Anabaptists, Mennonite and Amish, were grouped in with them because when people would ask, they would say, it's not right to rebel against our authorities, which was the King of England.

If I'd have lived back there at that time, I'd have probably said the same thing. And you realize that Canada never went through a rebellion against the King of England and they got their liberty. We could have gotten ours without killing.

It just would have taken a little longer. And when people ask me sometimes, doesn't it bother you to live in a free land that you know those freedoms were bought with the blood of other people who don't believe what you do? I said, I appreciate that. I appreciate the freedoms, but we would not kill, we would not use the sword, we would not maim other people, hurt other people for those freedoms.

We would lose them before we would fight to keep them. That usually kind of settles that particular argument. There's another thing that isn't as well known and that is the Anabaptists would say way back in the 16th century that the government should not coerce people in religious matters.

Church and state should be separate and religion and politics should be separate. Well, that wasn't heard back then in Europe and still isn't very well heard except in France, maybe. But in America then, William Penn with his Quaker background, which was very strongly influenced by Anabaptists across the channel into England, the Quakers, though William Penn was not a practicing Quaker, he appreciated the fact that the Quakers had that same view.

And then he saw in eastern Pennsylvania, Franconia and the eastern parts of the settlements there early on, that you had different kinds of people living in the same areas and they were getting along. They simply left each other alone on the questions of their particular religious persuasions. So he went to the King of England at one point and asked that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, I think almost exactly the same borders as is now your state, that that be there for a holy experiment.

And this part is a quote, he said, where one's religion or the lack thereof has nothing to do with his freedom or dignity. End of quote. And the king granted that.

Well, it worked so well that even though when people initially came from Europe, fleeing their persecutors in Europe, they would gather in areas where the people had the same denominational beliefs as they did in associations, like the Reformed settled in New York. And the more radical people from England and Holland would be in New England. And then the Catholics were in Virginia and just a lot of places where people would gather in their denominational enclaves.

But eastern Pennsylvania was different. And when we finally did get our freedom and hammered out our constitution and Bill of Rights, they said they want to pattern the whole country after the holy experiment of Pennsylvania. It clearly has, was contributed to substantially by the worldview of the Anabaptist movement way before its time.

Any other question? I'm going to have to quit. It's after eight now. But if you have a question, I'll try to answer one or two before we close up.

All right, you're all warm and want to go home without asking questions. Okay. God bless you.

Really good. I have thoroughly enjoyed the time with you. And you're either good actors or you have been interested.

You have looked interested. God bless you. Good.

I'll turn it back to you. Okay. All of the sessions, I believe, except for one are recorded.

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