

War and Peace

Normative View –

- At the root, what do we need to be thinking about as we approach the topic of war?
 - o Genesis 1:27 - So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
 - Differentiates us from other worldviews
 - Man is special, in God's image
 - If man is just another animal, our conclusions about many issues will be different
 - o Genesis 9:5-7 - And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. And you, be fruitful and multiply, increase greatly on the earth and multiply in it."
 - Even after the Fall, man is still shown as being in God's image
 - b/c man is in God's image; he is to be protected
 - o Mark 12:13-17 - ¹³ And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. ¹⁴ And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" ¹⁵ But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." ¹⁶ And they brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at him.
 - We bear God's image, so we are to render ourselves to God
 - Our actions as humans should be motivated by a desire to reflect God
- Looking at the Law
 - o Exodus 20:13 – You shall not murder
 - Not just any killing – this is killing in a premeditated and unjustified sense
 - Example of lying
 - o Leviticus 19:17-18 - ¹⁷ "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him. ¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD."
 - Our responsibility is of course to love God and to love our neighbor

Is pacifism always the appropriate way to honor the image of God and love neighbor?

- Historically, the pacifist stance has been present since the early church
 - o Early Church - Hippolytus, Tertullian, Lactantius
 - o Reformation onward – Swiss Brethren, Mennonites, Quakers

- Biblical basis
 - o Matthew 5:38-48
 - o Romans 12:17-21
- How are we to take texts like these that seem to espouse a stance of nonresistance?
 - o Is the extremely literal interpretation a pacifist takes correct?
 - If so, what are the implications of these passages?
 - Matthew 5:29-30
 - Luke 14:26
- Is this literal pacifist stance what Jesus actually did?
 - o John 18:22-23
- What about Paul?
 - o Acts 23:1-5
- Did Jesus or the Apostles condemn military service?
 - o Luke 7:9
 - o Acts 10
- Conclusions: Matthew 5 is talking more about a general posture and attitude in the face of persecution
 - o This and other sayings of Jesus like hating your family are hyperbolic to get their point across
 - o Neither Jesus or Paul literally turn the other cheek when struck, they actually answer back
 - o Military service is not discouraged in the New Testament
 - Jesus raises up the Gentile centurion as an example of faith
 - Cornelius is shown to be a man of faith
 - No one is told to cease military service in order to follow Jesus

Is the idea of Just War biblical? Does it honor the image of God and the command to love our neighbor?

- Basic concept: A Christian may participate in war for the sake of the preservation of justice
 - o Some but not all wars are morally justifiable
- Historically found throughout church history in all major branches of Christianity
 - o Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant
 - o Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Calvin,
 - o Also Westminster Confession (23:2)
- Biblical Basis
 - o Hebrews 11:29-34
 - Use of armed force is not inconsistent with true faith
 - The enforcement of justice has a higher priority than nonviolence when these two values conflict
 - o Romans 13:1-7
 - The civil authorities are God's servants
 - They do not bear the sword in vain

- Ultimate example: The Cross
 - God's own vindication of justice at the expense of non-violence

Principles of Just War discussion

- Do you agree or disagree with the following principles?
- Is anything missing that should be there or should any of these be removed?
- Are there wars the US has waged that do not meet all of the criteria?
- Principles of Just War acknowledged today: warfare is just only if all of the following conditions are met:
 - It must be in response to a threat that would bring damage that will be lasting, grave, and certain.
 - It must be the last resort (all non-violent means exhausted or impractical)
 - It must be waged by a legitimate authority
 - It must be fought to redress a wrong suffered (self-defense against armed attack) (=just intention)
 - It must have a reasonable chance of success
 - It must aim to reestablish peace (a peace preferable to the state of war)
 - It must employ violence proportional to the injury suffered.
 - It must use arms that will not produce evils or disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated.
 - It must discriminate between combatants and non-combatants. Deaths of non-combatants are justified only if they are the unavoidable victims of a deliberate attack on a military target.
 - Application to the "War on Terror"

For Next Week: Slavery and Race in America Pre-Study

Scripture:

Philemon

Questions:

1. If we live in a fallen world, do you believe the concept of “institutional racism” is a valid one?
2. Do you believe the church has been leaders, followers, or indifferent in matters of race relations and social justice?
3. How does the Christian “slavery” narrative effect our ability to have compassion for African Americans who still struggle with their slavery story?
4. How should the “image of God” concept inform Christian understandings of equality? Do you think all churches should seek to be multicultural and multiracial?