



Things that make for peace June 10 - September 2 • 9:45 a.m.

The Peace and Justice Committee is sponsoring a study this summer on issues related to peacemaking. The quotes and Scriptures that follow are intended as a guide to stimulate our thinking over the first four weeks of our study.

During these first four Sundays, we will consider one overarching thought: “What spiritual benefit might be gained by sacrificing security, or the need to defend ourselves, or to take another’s life?”

As one example, consider Philippians 2:5-11:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

How does a commitment to peace and non-violence allow “the same mind” to be in us that was “in Christ Jesus”?

June 10: The importance of *prophetic ministry* in today's church

Some quotes to consider:

- "It is fascinating to me that when I explain my personal commitments and aspirations to peace to other Christians, they look at me when I say, 'I'm a pacifist' as if I've just said, 'I'm a pornographer,' as if they have no idea that this is not only a reasonable, it is a Biblical position to hold. We might wonder whose beliefs are more misguided! (paraphrased from Brian Zahnd, *A Farewell to Mars*).
- Prophetic theology is always partisan theology, always for the moment, always for the concrete community, satisfied to see only a piece of it all and speak out of that at the risk of contradicting the rest of it. The prophet understands that God takes sides; we cannot have things both ways (paraphrased from Walter Brueggeman, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p.24).
- "The task of prophetic ministry is to evoke an alternative community that knows it is about different things in different ways. And that alternative community has a variety of relationships with the dominant community" (Walter Brueggeman, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 110-111).
- "Our active shooter training involved telling children from pre-K to 4th grade to zigzag when they run. Cops told us if we didn't wear our id's we could get shot. I asked what would they do to the 4th graders who were as tall as an adult who didn't have id's. They didn't reply" (Retweeted from Sue @wasukasa, May 29, 2018).
- "The Anabaptist tradition might ask whether lower living standards and reduced security could be at least as conducive to general spiritual growth as listening to sermons, participating in worship services, or visiting retreat centers" (Stuart Murray, *The Naked Anabaptist*, 124).

Some Scripture to ponder:

- The fourth commandment: Deuteronomy 5:13-15
- The people request a king: 1 Samuel 8:11-18
- Leadership in the New Testament Church: Ephesians 4:11-16

June 17: Peace Witness in the Old Testament

Some quotes to consider:

- “Exile (being where we don’t want to be with people we don’t want to be with) forces a decision: Will I focus my attention on what is wrong with the world and feel sorry for myself? Or will I focus my energies on how I can live at my best in this place I find myself? It is always easier to complain about problems than to engage in careers of virtue” (Eugene Peterson, *Run with the Horses*, 153).
- “The prophet engages in futuring fantasy. The prophet does not ask if the vision can be implemented, for questions of implementation are of no consequence until the vision can be imagined. The *imagination* must become before the *implementation*. Of course, we live in a time when we can implement almost anything. Whether or not we can imagine something is altogether a different question” (Walter Brueggeman, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 45).

Some Scripture to ponder:

- 2 Chronicles 7:14
- Jeremiah 29:7
- Micah 4:4
- Isaiah 65:17-25

And one homework assignment...

- Remember a time you talked about peace with someone who thought that war was necessary, even if regrettable. How did that conversation go?

June 24: Peace Witness in the New Testament

Some quotes to consider:

- "For insofar as the church is conformed to the world, and the two communities appear to the onlooker to be merely two versions of the same thing, the church is contradicting its true identity. No comment could be more hurtful to the Christian than the words, 'But you are no different from anybody else'" (John Stott, *The Message of the Sermon on the Mount*, 17).
- "Do you believe that Jesus was smart?" (Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*).
- "It is our conviction, as humble followers of the Christ, that all war is sin. We, therefore, cannot encourage, engage in, or willingly profit from armed conflict at home or abroad. We cannot, in the event of war, accept military service or support military machine in any capacity" (1934 Annual Conference Statement, *Peace and Goodwill*).

Some Scripture to ponder:

- Matthew 5:38-48
- Matthew 22:36-40
- Romans 15:1-7
- Philippians 2:5-11

And one homework assignment...

- What spiritual benefit might be gained by sacrificing security, or the need to defend ourselves, or to take another's life?

July 1: Peace Witness in Christian History

Some quotes to consider:

- “Christians ‘are not to defend themselves before the Lord’s time...they are to keep the precepts of the Lord’” (Cyprian, 3rd century Bishop of Carthage, quoted in Alan Kreider, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church*, 30).
- “The period when the Brethren emerged was thus one of continual warfare. It is not surprising that from the beginning they took a firm stand against war and violence” (Donald Durnbaugh, quoted in Dale Brown, *Another Way of Believing*, 192).
- “Pacifism was not an intellectual option that might be adopted without consequences: those who refused to take up arms were viewed as cowards and traitors” (Stuart Murray, *The Naked Anabaptist*, 125).
- The church pledges its support to the draft-age member facing conscription who chooses open noncooperation with the system of conscription as a conscientious objector. Individuals who follow the lead of their conscience to this position will need the support of the church in many ways. The church will seek to meet these needs, to the extent of its resources, by providing such ministries as legal counsel, financial support, and prison visitation. To demonstrate a sense of community and fellowship with the noncooperator, congregations are encouraged to offer sanctuary and spiritual support. All members of the church who take the position of noncooperation should seek to exhibit a spirit of humility, goodwill, and sincerity in making this type of courageous witness most effective, nonviolent, and Christian (*War: 1970 Church of the Brethren Statement*).

Some Scripture to ponder:

- Hebrews 13:7

And one homework assignment...

- As you consider your own commitments to peace, how much are you influenced by the long faith heritage of the Church of the Brethren, and of many Christians before them?