

*Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## *War, Violence and The Christian, Pt 2*

### **Selected Passages**

**Keywords:** War, Violence, End Times, Israel, Prophecy, Sin

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** none

**SermonAudio Blurb:** In light of the massive amount of violence occurring in Israel and the Gaza Strip, we take time to consider the source and causes of war and how does a Christian begin to approach a very complicated subject. Many opinions flow on this subject but not a lot of biblical thinking. We seek to begin to remedy this.

#### **I. Introduction.**

- A. We continue with this brief examination of war, violence and the Christian.
  - 1. In my introduction to this whole subject we focused on the ultimate underlying cause of all war and violence. It is due to sin.
  - 2. This is the critical point to know and we saw this together in my last sermon.
  - 3. Ignored or rejected by non-Christians who then have to create some sort of worldview that tries to explain why bad things happen and why people do bad things.
    - a. But when you fail to understand the presence and power of sin, you end up making a laughingstock of your belief system.
    - b. Deny God and you are left with nothing. No basis of right and wrong other than they just exist some how.
    - c. So in this line of thinking, evil is not a valid reality. But, of course, this works only in theory, for when your son is tortured and killed the word “evil” is what comes to mind.
  - 4. What is sad is the number of believers who keep thinking that this age is supposed to deliver a level of peace, joy and fulfillment, as if sin does not infect everything to the fullest. This cannot be emphasized enough and yet it is often overlooked as if it is only a minor inconvenience.
  - 5. Sin is the great enemy of us all. And therefore sin is one of those keys to understanding life, as we experience it. But it also means that we are not islands to ourselves. We are not captains of our own destinies. We are not basically good people basically doing good things.

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6. But more important is the fact that if there is something that is objectively called sin and evil, then we are accountable in some way for what we are and do. And so it is suppressed, renamed, and ignored. It means that there is Someone who stands above it all declaring something to be good or evil. Sin cannot be in the eye of the beholder.
  - a. Sin brings death to all.
  - b. Sin brings guilt.
  - c. Sin bring shame.
  - d. Sin brings judgment.
  - e. Sin bring enslavement.
  - f. Sin is the tool of Satan.
  - g. Take sin away and you find that death and Satan no longer really matter. This is actually why I use the phrase, Sin, Satan and Death as our enemies. Sin is the supreme one, a tool which Satan can then use to bring us to death.
7. But because sin is the preeminent corrupting power in this world we work hard at calling it everything and anything but sin. And this is how we can look at war with emotionless eyes or excited eyes—because we see it as an expression of something other than sin.
  - B. Yet when talking about war there are many secondary causes for it as well. But all flowing from the fountain called “sin.”
    1. But one stands out as a key reason for war and it can be rather complex as you begin to unravel all of the threads found in any conflict.
    2. The cause I speak of is known as “selfishness.”

## **II. Why War?**

- A. Selfishness.
  1. In the New Testament there is a term used which we translate in different ways but its basic meaning is to strive or contend out of a selfish ambition.
  2. This is so common in our lives that we don’t usually think much of it. In fact in America we tend to praise and promote this sort of thinking but we rename it as being forward thinking, aggressive personality, independent minded and such.

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3. Romans 2:8 uses it to describe the Jew who thinks they are innocent and different from the Gentile.
  - a. They have the Word of God, the temple, the priesthood and the prophets. And as a result they foolishly believe that if God has blessed the nation of Israel, that everyone in that nation is therefore good to go.
  - b. But note what Paul says in vss 5-9.
    - (1) The reality is that they are merely storing up God's wrath that will flow upon them all. They think that the suffering they endure now at the hands of their enemies is the worse it will be, but they are wrong.
    - (2) The doing of evil (9) is merely a reflection of where their heart and love lie.
  - c. We can extrapolate from the individual to the nation or group of people the same situation. Nations, America is no exception, can begin to think that because of their unique position of power and wealth that they are somehow blessed and are exempt from the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
    - (1) And so while one nation condemns another for activities done; and rightly so; there is the reality that every nation is guilty before God.
    - (2) Policies are enacted that are really born out of a selfish ambition that can easily result in violence and war. We see it all the time where a nation will provoke another one into action and then claim they are innocently responding as the aggrieved party.
4. Galatians 5:20.
  - a. Here is a simple listing of how sin works itself out in our lives. Each of us is capable of manifesting any of these but we usually find that certain ones pop up more commonly than others.
  - b. Two different terms very closely related are used here: strife and disputes. Disputes is the same term as Romans 2 where it is translated as selfish ambition.
  - c. Here we see the root of war. Whether it is between two people or two nations, sin in the hearts of mankind is what is pushing it along.

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- d. Almost all of vs 20 is describing the heart of war and violence. In fact another term, “factions” is used by Paul that illustrates how war flows from these things.
  - (1) KJV has it as “heresies” which is actually what the word in Greek says *hireseis*. But usually when we hear that word we think of false teaching that are contrary to the bible.
  - (2) It is a faction or sect. A group of people who hold to a specific teaching that is different from others.
  - (3) Actually it means to have a political preference or group loyalty. This is seen in things like Pharisees and Sadducees. In Islam you have several sects such as Sunni or Shi’a. Or today in Republican and Democrat. Or on a national level, Israel and Palestine.
- 5. Philippians 1:17.
  - a. This selfish ambition drives some to do the right thing for the wrong reason.
  - b. Here Paul speaks of some who are trying to denigrate him and his work while he is imprisoned. They are working on their branding and their own reputation and they do it while seeking to destroy his. So they go preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ but the motives are far from pure.
  - c. Now, for Paul, the answer was simple, as long as the message was right he did not care so much about their motives. Though he is not impressed by them he chooses to rejoice that they proclaim Jesus Christ.
  - d. Nations go to war for many reasons. Often they are seen to be righteous and good reasons on the surface, but then you find out that there were many other motives at work behind decisions to war. But the outcome is good even though the actual motive were not. A wise person can keep those distinctions clear in his mind when analyzing it.
- 6. James 3:13-4:3.
  - a. Twice the term for selfishness is used here, in vs 14 and 16.
  - b. Note how James makes things very simple by saying all of life is life from above or life from below. One flows out from God and one flows out from Satan.

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- c. In 4:1 the members is not talking about parts of your body but of the body of Christ, the Church. He sees these believers as a whole and he says that the problem is that there are battles flowing from selfishness within the church.
  - d. The same is true for Missio Dei Fellowship.
  - e. If you are honest with yourself you can look back on events in which you acted you now know it was out of selfishness. But often not at the moment of the decision. Something did not set well with you and you decided you must act. And words are said, actions are performed and consequences came forth. And this can build and build until a war within a church erupts and a split occurs.
7. Now give this thought when you hear of the Hamas attacking Israel or Russia invading Ukraine or some other situation that you call evil. Look at the Gulf War or the Civil War, what is going on in these tragedies? Strip away all the words and you will find selfishness and sin in general driving them. And it is important to understand it is not a single strand of selfishness but a twisted ball of various strands all wadded p
  8. So often the problem flows from words and ideas that are all drawing from the same polluted source. And this is often missed by us as we think about violence and war.
  9. This is why the bible says that “the mouth of the wicked conceals violence” (Proverbs 10:6). Words are a tool to manipulate and misdirect and foment hatred and anger against others.
    - a. Reading *The Rise and Fall of The Third Reich* and what is both fascinating and worrying is how similar the rise of Hitler is to the various issues taking place in our own nation.
    - b. I have often said that we vote out of selfishness more than out of our faith. We may talk one way but we will almost always vote for things that will keep us safe or comfortable.
    - c. So farmers vote to maintain subsidies. Government employees and people working for the various industries that feed the governments will vote to maintain spending. Politicians know they have the purse-strings and if they give you something you will stick with them even though it costs you many intangibles.
    - d. We give up rights so that we can feel safe.

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- e. There is a reason that when laws and spending packages get voted on that a whole host of unrelated costs for vile and wicked activities are attached to otherwise good legislation. They know you will hold your nose and vote for almost anything as long as you get a piece of it.
  - f. And then, because a nation and people group does not have what it wants or it thinks it deserves, plans are drawn up to go invade. Propaganda goes into high gear to spread a specific message to get the people to agree with a course of action.
  - g. And this is how we go to war.
10. The words of Jeremiah 9:1-9 (turn).
- a. Start at the beginning of the chapter to show the cost of war.
  - b. Vss 2ff show the cost for the righteous in a land of wickedness. In the midst of war, many innocent people are destroyed and suffer. Jeremiah is watching the judgment of God come upon Israel and though as a nation they are guilty, not everyone in that nation is guilty, but they feel the judgment as well.
  - c. Vss 4ff We are not to put our full trust in even our fellow countrymen because sin motivates the best of people towards evil. During the rise of Nazi Germany the government effectively got neighbors to report on one another, resulting in many arrests, imprisonments and deaths. In Communist Russia and China children are taught to inform on their own parents. And the same is now true in America.
  - d. Look how the prophet describes things in vss 8-9.
11. Jeremiah 6:1-16 we see the way words and lies and true desires of the wicked heart bring about words of peace but actually bring about violence.
- a. Here is Israel under the judgment of God and it is brutal to hear. But we learn that God raises up nations to execute a portion of His wrath.
  - b. What happened here in Jeremiah is still going on. Vs 11 speaks of the weariness of God in withholding His judgment. And eventually He unleashed it through the Assyrians, Medo-Persians, Greeks, Romans, Germany, and now the Hamas.
  - c. We see the wicked plans in vss 13ff.

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12. The first world war was said to be the war to end all wars. But this was just foolishness.

a. It only took about 16 years for Germany to begin the process of rebuilding the nation to go into another world war. And if you study it you see it is all out of selfishness on individual and national levels.

b. And those afraid of war are also often driven by selfishness. They don't want to risk losing something, including their lives. So they bargain and bribe and sell out just so that they can survive one more day with their pretty things.

B. Summary and Transition.

1. War exists because sin exists.

2. War exists because nations and people seek to satisfy sinful desires.

**-But-**

3. Does that make any and all war inherently evil?

4. Hear that question carefully (repeat it).

5. Let me rephrase it, "All violence is the result of sin, but does that make all violence sinful?" And it is here that things become a bit sticky for many and differing minds begin to debate.

C. Keeping all of this in mind, what are some possible initial conclusions might a Christian begin to develop regarding war?

1. Some might say that all war, because it is the result of sin, ought to be avoided by Christians.

2. Others might say that though war is evil, it is a fruit of living in a fallen world and therefore it is to be resisted, even to the point of actually taking part in the war to resist it.

3. Others might say that only certain wars should be joined and others avoided, depending on the motive and goals of the war.

4. Regardless, the hard reality is that war does exist in its many forms and you must figure out what to think about it. If you don't, then you will simply be carried along by whatever emotion you feel at the moment and you become very easy to manipulate.

### III. Conclusion.

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- A. We are now ready to look at how various people developed a process to decide if war is the right thing to do. We will consider these next week.
- B. But it is critical to grasp that no matter what we decide on our own that often war is well beyond our control. We find it thrust upon us and we are forced to react.
- C. If you walk away today with the idea that all war is due to the presence of sin in and through our entire existence then you will be far better off than many in this world.
  - 1. The bible tells us clearly that sin is resolved not through our efforts or through laws and policies. Rather, it is always and only through Jesus Christ.
  - 2. The good news that the Christian brings is that there is hope of forgiveness of sin in the here and now through the death and resurrection of Jesus as our sacrifice and substitute.
  - 3. But the good news is also that in God's time, sin will be finally and fully resolved in the return of Jesus Christ.
  - 4. Hosea 2:18, *"In that day I will also make a covenant for them With the beasts of the field, The birds of the sky, And the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, And will make them lie down in safety."*
    - a. This speaks of the time when the promised Messiah comes and reigns on earth. It is commonly known as the millennial kingdom.
    - b. During Jesus' earthly reign war shall be abolished as He shall reign in perfection, supreme over all nations.
  - 5. But the prophets also speak of the fact that God will use war upon Israel as a means of punishment due to its sin and rebellion. And so Amos, the prophet, speaks of when God will cause even the warriors in the land to flee or be destroyed. This has happened over and over since the day of Amos and continues even to this day.
  - 6. Revelation 20:1-15.
    - a. In the end of all things, however, there shall be the final war. Where the nations, under the power of Satan, gather together to destroy Jesus Christ and Israel and it will go poorly for them all.
    - b. In this event you see war from both perspectives. You see the wicked intentions of those empowered by Satan to destroy Israel.



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And you see the righteousness of God devouring them in a moment through fire.

- c. But more importantly you see the end of this age and with it the end of the presence of Sin, Satan and Death.
- 7. Debate war all you wish. But in the end, what matters is Jesus Christ. He is the One who will bring this all to an end. And those whose hope rest solely in Him shall be saved and give the gift of eternal life. Reject Him and nothing else shall matter.

## **Benediction**

**May the God who gave us the Word sanctify us in it so that we might find ourselves strengthened in the truth, humble of heart, able to encourage one another toward love and good deeds, especially as we see the day of our Lord's return drawing nearer. Amen.**