TITLE: War & Peace

TEXT: Mt. 5:9; Ro. 12:16-18; Mt. 5:17; Eccl. 3:1-8;

1st Sam. 15:1-3; Deut. 25:17-19; Ex. 17:14-16; Heb. 13:8;

Ro. 12:1-5; Ps. 82:3-4; Ephe. 6:12-18; 2nd Co. 5:21; Ps. 127:1

INTRODUCTION: Over 20 years ago the United States of America declared War, not just on terrorist but on terrorism itself. That war is still being fought today 20 years later.

 Something that I think all Christians struggle with at times is the concept of war. From the aspect of our Christianity, is war ever justified?

 Some feel that war is never justified and that Christianity is synonymous with pacifism.

 **Pac·i·fism** The belief that disputes between nations should and can be settled peacefully. **2.a.** Opposition to war or violence as a means of resolving disputes. **b.** Such opposition demonstrated by refusal to participate in military action.

 To back up this belief’s we may use passages of Scripture such as:

 **Matt 5:9 (NIV) Blessed are the peacemakers,**

**for they will be called sons of God.**

**Roma 12:16 (NIV) Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.**

**17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.**

**18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.**

 Well, it is true that as Christians we are called to be a peace loving people.

 In our personal relationship with others we are not to repay anyone evil for evil or seek revenge for the sake of seeking revenge, but we are to strive to live in harmony with one another.

 These admonitions from Scripture, in their context, refer to our personal relationships with one another. They are meant, I believe, to speak of our civil behavior. They don’t speak to criminal behavior.

 When Jesus said that as Christians that we are to turn the other cheek or go the extra mile He was speaking in the context of civil behavior, of our personal relationships with others. He wasn’t speaking in the context of criminal behavior.

 I don’t believe the Lord intended us to take those admonitions as to when someone intentionally kills or maims someone that we are not to hold them accountable for their crime and bring them to justice.

 The law that God gave man in the Old Testament was very clear on how to handle criminal behavior.

 And Jesus said:

**Matt 5:17 (NIV) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.**

 As Christians we have been called to be a peace loving people. We are called to always strive to live at peace and pursue peace with all men whenever that is possible.

**18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.**

 Well, the sad fact is, in living on this planet that has fallen to sin and where there is a mighty spiritual battle going on over the souls of men every minute of every day, and where much evil is present, war is sometimes, not just justified but it can even be necessary.

 Even for the Christian!

Scripture says: **If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.**

Sadly, sometimes it plain just isn’t possible to live at peace with everyone. Even hellish things such as war have its time and place in our world.

**Eccl 3:1 (NIV) There is a time for everything,**

**and a season for every activity under heaven:**

**2 a time to be born and a time to die,**

**a time to plant and a time to uproot,**

**3 a time to kill and a time to heal,**

**a time to tear down and a time to build,**

**4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,**

**a time to mourn and a time to dance,**

**5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,**

**a time to embrace and a time to refrain,**

**6 a time to search and a time to give up,**

**a time to keep and a time to throw away,**

**7 a time to tear and a time to mend,**

**a time to be silent and a time to speak,**

**8 a time to love and a time to hate,**

**a time for war and a time for peace.**

Solomon, the wisest man, other than the incarnate Son of God, to ever have walked this earth recognized that there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven. Including a time for war.

 I want to look at an example out of Scripture this morning..

 It is in the time of King Saul….

**1Sam 15:1 (NIV) Samuel said to Saul, "I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD.**

2 This is what the LORD Almighty says: `I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt.

**3 Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'"**

 Here we have God Himself commanding His people to go to war.

 He ordered His anointed King over Israel to go and not just wage war, but to totally and utterly destroy a nation.

 Why? Because of a time when the Amalekites waylaid Isreal when they came up out of Egypt.

 We are told of that time and given more specifics in:

**Deut 25:17 (NIV) Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt.**

**18 When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and cut off all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God.**

**19 When the LORD your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!**

 What had happened was that when the Israelites had been delivered by God from their slavery in Egypt and Moses was leading them through the desert that the Amalekites snuck up on them from behind and killed those who were at the rear, the tired, the old, the women and children, those who were the most defenseless and helpless.

 So God tells His servant Moses;

**Exod 17:14 (NIV) "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."**

**15 Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner.**

**16 He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the LORD. The LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation**

And in the time of King Saul God kept His promise and commanded His people to go and do just that--To blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.

 To go and wage war against them and totally and completely destroy them for the cowardly attack that they made on an innocent, and for the most part, defenseless people.

 Some will say that war is never justified-- the Word of God says that sometimes it is.

 Some will say, well that was the God of the Old Testament not the God of the New Testament.

 Church, our God is the God of both the Old and New Testament! And what is more, Scripture assures us that our God is immutable, He doesn’t change!

Jesus Christ is the Earthly incarnation of the God of creation.

**Hebr 13:8 (NIV) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.**

 So how do we balance our New Testament theology with our theology of the Old Testament?

 Where does the New Testament address the sometimes necessity of war?

**Roma 13:1 (NIV) Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.**

2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.

3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you.

**4 For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.**

**5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.**

Folks, **there is no authority except that which God has established.**

**2 Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.**

**3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. --if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.**

 To say that in the world in which we live that there is never a time when a Christian is justified, and even called to go to war, is to say that Christians should have sat it out when our forefathers fought to secure the very Christian liberties that we all enjoy in this nation today..

 It would be to say that Christians should have not gotten involved in the war that raged within our own country to see that all men have equal access to those freedoms regardless of what color their skin may be…

 It would be to say that it would have been ok for Christians to sit out World War 2 and allow Hitler to continue his holocaust of slaughtering a whole race of people—In this case Gods chosen people, the apple of His eye!

 It would be to say that a group of wicked men who target and attack and terrorize, not the armies, but the innocent citizenry of a nation, men women and children who pose no threat to them is ok!

 **Psal 82:3 (NIV) Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed.**

**4 Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.**

 Probably the most tragic and heart wrenching war in the history of our nation was our own civil war.

 It was a war, not of outside aggression, but a war of inside ideologies. A war that put American against American. Many times even brother against brother or father against son.

 Many within our nation struggled with that war!

 Probably no one struggled more during this conflict then president Lincoln..

 During the Civil War President Lincoln overheard someone in the White House state that he hoped that God was on our side in the battle, that being the Union side.

 Lincoln replied:

 “Sir, I am not at all concerned about that, For I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord’s side.”

 Back on September 11th  of 2001 a war was declared upon our nation by a group of Islamic terrorist.

 The then leader of our nation, President Bush and the sitting Congress declared war on, not any one nation or nationality, but declared war on a thing…..an evil ideology---declared war on terrorism and the terrorist that implement that terror!

 America has declared war on those who, because of a hatred that we can’t even comprehend or understand, think it nothing to kill over 3000 unarmed and unprepared people simply because they were Americans!

 And they have made the statement that they will not discriminate between military and civilian targets in the future.

 Where we justified going to war against such things as terrorist and the ideology of terrorism? Go to war against the nations that support the terrorist and their terrorism?

 As Christians, where we justified to go to war and fight against the ideology of slavery in the mid 1800’s?

 As Christians, where we justified to go to war and fight against the ideology of Nazism, or Communism?

 As Christians are we justified to go to war and fight against the ideology of terrorism?

 I believe so but let us not lose sight of where the real battle lies and what our first line of defense really is as a Christian.

The wars that were fought in Iraq and Afghanistan, like allthe wars that we have been called to fight in the past, is first and foremost a spiritual war that needs to be fought, first and foremost with spiritual weapons.

Ephe 6: 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

**13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.**

**14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,**

**15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.**

16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

**17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

**18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.**

 As a Christian this is to be our first line of defense and our first line of offense**--** To be sure that we arm ourselves with the full armor of God…

**with the belt of truth buckled around our waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place,**

**15 and with our feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.**

16 In addition to all this, to take up the shield of faith, with which we can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

**17 to Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**

**18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.**

Why do we need to arm ourselves first and foremost with spiritual weapons? Because the wars that we are engaged in are first and foremost spiritual wars!

 Terrorism comes right out of the arsenal of Satan.

 Terrorism is a hellish evil that finds its real origin in the enemy of mankind! In the heart and mind of the one that Scripture says roams the earth like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour..

 Terrorism in its purest form is a spiritual evil and to fight the most effectively against it will require that we fight it with spiritual weapons..

 With truth and righteousness and the Gospel of Christ!

 With our shield of faith and the helmet of our salvation in place!

 And with prayer and petition and the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God!

 Those who unleashed the terrorist attack on our nation 20 years ago last month should be held accountable for what they did and brought to justice.

 To date many have been including the mastermind of the 911 attacks, Osama Ben Laden.

 There have been many Christians among those who enlisted to fight in that battle.

 And may God continue to go before them and give them courage and keep His hand of protection upon them and grant them success in their missions…

 The recent withdrawal of our troops from Afghanistan is maybe one of the largest military and political blunders in recent history.

 It was very poorly executed and the forces of terrorism we went in to fight took the nation back over in lightning speed. We have left many American and Afghans who supported us there behind.

 It has left many American Veterans who served there wondering if there sacrifice was worth it.

 The answer is a resounding yes it was! They served their country by keeping the battle over there and not here. They saved countless Lives, both Afghans and Americans. They stood up against the spiritual forces of evil here on this planet and we should give them the thanks and honor that they deserve.

 As usual it was the politicians and politics that messed things up.

 But the real war, as with all wars, true origin is spiritual and that is where the real battle needs to be fought..

 And each of us as Christians has been called to fight in that battle and to win that war!

 Freedom is not cheap! It never has been! The freedoms that we enjoy in this nation have been bought with a great price.

 Many have given their lives to secure the freedoms that you and I enjoy today. Many sacrifices have been made so that we could be and remain a free people.

 More sacrifices will most probably have yet to be made to insure we keep that freedom..

 The price of freedom has never been cheap.

 Jesus Himself is the greatest example of the cost of freedom!

 Jesus gave His life to insure that we could be a free people!

 Jesus gave His life so that we could be set free from the bondage and oppression and slavery of sin!

2Cor 5:21 (NIV) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

 The freedom that we enjoy as a nation is only a shadow of the freedom that Jesus provided for us by giving His life on the cross of Calgary.

 The freedom of having our soul delivered from the bondage and oppression of sin and the just judgment of hell!

 As a Christian each of us will have to decide in our own conscience what causes we are willing to go to war for, what causes we are willing to die for..

 War, wherever it is waged and for whatever the cause is always a terrible and tragic thing.

 But unfortunately, tragically, it is sometimes necessary in a world that is fallen to sin.

 In a world where evil men will try to implement their evil desires and evil plans on others.

 As Scripture has said: There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under the sun---including a time for war and a time for peace.

 We live in a world that is not the perfect world that God originally designed. A world where there was no conflict of any kind.

 We live in a world that has fallen to sin. War is a part of this sin filled world in which we live. Sometimes war is not just justified in a sinful world but sometimes it is in fact necessary to hold back the proliferation of evil in this world.

 As Believers we should always be in a posture to pursue peace whenever that is possible….But sometimes the atrocities done by man will make peace impossible until the atrocities have been done away with…. Such as in Hitler’s Germany..

 Sometimes we will have to fight wars in order to attain peace..

 But what we need to always keep at the forefront of our mind is that the battles that rage on this earth, the wars that are fought, are but only a reflection of the real battle that is raging in the Heavenly realms over the souls of men!

 And that is a battle that each of us has been called to fight in.. The battle over lost souls wherever they may be!

 We need to be praying for those in the Moslem world who are separate from Christ! Even for the radicals who use their religion as a cover for their hatred.

 Pray that the Lord would use us to reach them with the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

 That God would cause His Spirit of revival to sweep through their land and set them free from the greatest of bondage and oppression, the bondage and oppression of sin.

 America has declared war on terrorism. Many American Christians may have had the thought---I hope that the Lord is on our side in the battle…

Abraham Lincoln’s reply to that statement I think says it best…

 *“ I am not at all concerned about that, For I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord’s side.”*

 Church, that is the real answer for our Nation today, especially in the perilous times in which we live….

 As King David said in the Psalms…

**Psal 127:1 (NIV) Unless the LORD builds the house,**

**its builders labor in vain.**

**Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.**

*I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord’s side.”*

 The most important question for us is….

Have we placed ourselves on the side of the Lord?

 Have we come to Him for the forgiveness of our sin and made Him the Lord and savior of our life?

 Are we allowing Him to build our house, build our house individually and build our house as a nation?

 If we have, if we are, then we can rest assured that our house will stand because the Lord will make it stand!

 We are to pursue peace whenever that is possible but always be ready to **Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.**

 Always striving to make sure that we are on the Lord’s side of whatever battle we may face in this life….