



Hard Sayings Part 3

July 23, 2023

The Gospel of Saint Luke 22:35-38, **“³⁵ And he said to them, “When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?” They said, “Nothing.”³⁶ He said to them, “But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. ³⁷ For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors.’ For what is written about me has its fulfillment.” ³⁸ And they said, “Look, Lord, here are two swords.” And he said to them, “It is enough.”** May the Lord add His Blessing to the Reading and the Hearing of His Word today, in Jesus Name! Amen!

Today's message is going to be a bit different than the norm because I am going to discuss a topic that is going to be a bit controversial but also conflicting for many. With this in mind, let us read together again the opening few verses of this passage of text..., ³⁵ "And he said to them, "When I sent you out with no moneybag or knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing."³⁶ He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one." Sell your cloak and buy a sword... This is not only a hard saying for some but a conflicting saying for others.

As I shared last Sunday, how do we balance the fact that the Prince of Peace, the Messiah of Mankind, states emphatically that He did not come to bring peace but rather a sword in the Gospel of Saint Matthew 10:34, ³⁴ "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." This is a hard saying!

And to further drive this point home, in regards to our primary text which we opened with, how do we as Christians balance the fact that Jesus tells His Disciples to sell their cloaks and buy a sword but then in The Gospel of Saint Matthew 5:38-39, ³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also."

According to this passage of text, it is recorded that Jesus is teaching the principle of turning the other cheek? Is this contradiction? Obviously, this is a hard saying but how do we seem to balance these two opposing views that are seemingly taught but the same person? In my discourse of study on this topic, I came across a few very important questions/points that I feel will be very important for us as followers of Christ to know and understand.

Now, with all of this in mind, how do we reconcile a few points of the Texts? Namely, the command of Christ to buy a sword if one did not own one in tandem with the teaching of loving our neighbor as ourselves. How do we balance the Ten Commandments when it commands us to not Murder? What about taking the life of someone else in self-defense? What about the Just War Theory?

The following is an excerpt from an article found at thinkingfaith.org addressing the frame work of the Just War Theory, *“The way we think about the legitimacy of war has its origins in the thought of St Augustine. He believed that the Kingdom of Peace cannot be realized within human history, only beyond, therefore we have to reckon with the reality of sin, including violence, and the possibility of war. Yet despite this reality, he had a deep abhorrence of war and so he wanted to develop a tool to assess the morality of wars in order to limit their number and brutality, and to protect the moral order of the world. This tool took the form of a*

set of conditions to be satisfied for a war to be considered just – what we have come to know as Just War Theory. This theory remains the primary moral framework for questions of military intervention by States, both for Christians and more generally. For example, when an international commission was asked to define the ‘Responsibility to Protect’ and set out the conditions for humanitarian military intervention, it used the criteria set out in traditional Just War Theory.” So with this explanation in mind... Point #1...

1) How do we balance the Just War Theory as Disciples of Christ?

- a) Some may not have been aware of this theory that I am making reference to but the question must be asked... As Disciples of Christ, do we have a moral and Biblical duty to protect the innocent, the guard the defenseless and to stand toe to toe in front of evil to protect humanity from the evils of our fallen nature.
- b) Did we have a moral and Biblical duty to support and even engage ourselves in the waging of war to stop the destruction of peoples and nations? I would state emphatically that not only is that a yes to our responsibility to protect but we have a duty to do so.
- c) Friends, the world we live in is evil; and the horrors of sin and evil continue to propagate. It has been said that the only way for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing and this is absolutely true.

- d) “But pastor, war causes death and all life is precious.” Yes, I agree completely that all life is precious but not all taking of life is murder; sadly, when man gives himself over to the deceit of power, control, and lust then such a man is primed to do horrible things to accomplish said goals.
- e) Consider the following for example of men who embraced evil and rose to power: Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Pol-Pot, Heinrich Himmler, Saddam Hussein, and Mao Zedong. Each of these men committed crimes against humanity and it took righteous men to stand against them to stop their reigns of terror. As Christians, do we support their actions? No. As Christians, do we have a moral and Biblical duty to stand against such men at all cost? Yes.
- f) Do I believe that the Just War Theory is a Biblical Theory? Yes. Is there a proper time to draw our swords to fight back against evil? Yes. Thus, point #2...

2) How do we balance the Ten Commandments when it commands us to not Murder?

- a) First off, murder or to be a murderer versus taking a life in self-defense are two different things. If they were not, then how do we justify the Scripture noting God’s instruction to Moses or Joshua or David to destroy armies and tribes of people if the taking of a life is prohibited completely without exception?

- b) Let's let the Scripture define our perimeters of consideration on this matter... Note that in The Book of Exodus 20:13, "You shall not murder." But in The Book of Exodus 22:2, "If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him..."
- c) The word used for Murder in Exodus 20:13 is the Hebrew word "Ratsach" - (raw-tsakh') Strong's Hebrew 7523 which interprets to mean "to murder, slay". The word used for "is struck so that he dies" in Exodus 22:2 is the Hebrew Word is two words: "nakah" (naw-kaw') Strong's Hebrew 5221 which interprets to mean "to smite" and "muth" Strong's Hebrew 4191 which interprets to mean "to die". Note the differences in Hebrew word and definition here. According to the Scripture there is a clear delineation between Murder and self-defense/protection of one's self or property.
- d) So how do we balance taking the life of someone else in self-defense from a Scriptural standpoint?
- e) Friends, the Bible never forbids us from self-defense, the protection of our property nor the protection of our family or loved ones. Scripturally, Believers are allowed to defend themselves and their families from evil intent of others who would seek to do us harm.

- f) I heard Missionary David Hogan state the following many years ago and I agree completely, “I do not mind dying as a Martyr however I am not going to die at the hands of stupid people.”
- g) Allow me to further my thought on this matter with a familiar verse of Text found in Paul’s Letter to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:7-8,
“⁷ Command these things as well, so that they may be without reproach. ⁸ But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.”
- h) Friends, allow me to make it personal for a moment. As the husband and head of my home, I have a Biblical expectation to provide for my family.
- i) I provide finances, leadership, food, a home... I am expected to provide as is the responsibility of my position but this provision includes security for my family as well.
- j) I have a moral and Biblical duty and expectation to provide for and guard my family at all cost to ensure that are provided for, protected, and have security. And if I refuse to do so, I am one who lives as one who has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. But I refuse to either and will provide in all manners as I should that includes security and protection. Period.
- k) Thus in closing, point #3...

3) How do we balance the command of Christ to buy a sword if one did not own one in tandem with the teaching of loving our neighbor as ourselves?

- a) Note the words of Theologians J.P. Moreland and Norman Geisler, *“...to permit murder when one could have prevented it is morally wrong. To allow a rape when one could have hindered it is an evil. To watch an act of cruelty to children without trying to intervene is morally inexcusable. In brief, not resisting evil is an evil of omission, and an evil of omission can be just as evil as an evil of commission. Any man who refuses to protect his wife and children against a violent intruder fails them morally.”*
- b) Church, we are commanded to love others but we are also expected to protect others, including those of our own household, from the evil that is present in this age.
- c) In conclusion, A Christian with love in his heart for everyone which includes one's neighbor and one's enemy should employ sound biblical judgment and exercise restraint in any situation that could be life threatening or conflicting. From a Biblical standpoint, as your pastor I would like to state clearly that I believe we are justified to fight for the lives of others because we are commanded to love them as we love ourselves.

d) It is hard to justify in my mind that I declare that I love my neighbor as myself and yet I would not be willing to guard them or myself from one who would seek to do either of us harm. If I love my family, I will protect them. If I love my neighbor then I will protect them. If I love myself then I will protect myself. Hard Sayings demand hard conversations and hard thoughts to navigate; thus may it be said of us that we love, we lead, and we guard.