



Part 9 - Pursuing Peace

Our world is all too familiar with conflict and violence. Can anything be done to make a difference? Jesus suggests a pretty extreme approach.

Scripture: Matthew 5:38-48, Romans 12:17-21

Discussion Questions

1. When you read or watch the news and see violence, war and injustice, how does that make you feel?
2. Read Matthew 5:38-48. What stands out to you about this passage? What are your initial thoughts and feelings about what Jesus teaches here?
3. Based on what Jesus teaches in this passage: What is God's default orientation towards people? How does Jesus suggest we treat people who oppose us (dig into each example and try to tease out the underlying principle in each one). Why does Jesus teach people to respond in these ways?
4. Jesus taught his followers to live non-violently even in the face of violence and oppression. What makes that a difficult ethic to live out? What are some of the objections that you can think of to this kind of approach?
5. Do you think that there are exceptions to Jesus' non-violent teaching? Why do you think so? Are there other passages that you can think of that help us to understand how God views and addresses injustice, war and oppression in our world?
6. Does the life, death and resurrection of Jesus shed any light on how God can use self-sacrifice rather than violence to transform the world?

Moving Forward

What ways can you pursue peace in your life? Are there personal relationships that you need to seek reconciliation in? Are there lifestyle changes that could help you to contribute to a more peaceful world? Are there people that you can pray for who are victims or perpetrators of violence?