

Peacemaking and Police/Military Service — Can a Christian Do Both?

SUMMARY – Dr. Timothy Geddert explores whether Christians can faithfully serve in roles such as police or military while following Jesus’ call to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9). He explains that biblical peacemaking is not passive avoidance of conflict but actively working to create peace and respond to evil in redemptive ways. Christians have historically reached different conclusions about participation in violence, and these differences are often shaped by personal background, church tradition, understanding of the church and God’s kingdom, and how Scripture is interpreted.

The central issue, however, is the lordship of Jesus. Followers of Christ must place their allegiance to Jesus above every other loyalty—including country, career, or authority—and must never excuse harmful actions by saying they are simply following orders. While Christians may draw different lines regarding military or police service, they must pursue humility, unity, and faithful peacemaking while looking forward to the day when Christ’s kingdom fully comes and violence is no longer necessary.

Discussion Questions (30–45 Minutes)

1. Understanding Peacemaking

1. Read Matthew 5:9 – “Blessed are the peacemakers.”
 - What do you think Jesus meant by peacemakers?
 - How is actively making peace different from simply avoiding conflict?
2. Tim Geddert said that “*pacifism originally meant actively making peace, but later became defined mostly by what people refuse to do.*”
 - Do you think Christians sometimes confuse passivity with peacemaking? Why or why not?

2. Why Christians Disagree

3. The speaker suggested that our beliefs are shaped by several factors:
 - family tradition
 - church teaching
 - understanding of the church
 - understanding of God’s kingdom
 - interpretation of the Bible
4. Which of these has most influenced your own views about violence, military service, or policing?
5. Can you think of a faithful Christian you respect who holds a different view on this issue? What can we learn from people who follow Jesus but reach different conclusions?

3. The Lordship of Jesus

5. The speaker emphasized that “Jesus is Lord” must be the highest allegiance for Christians. What does it mean practically for Jesus to be Lord over: patriotism? career? government authority? personal safety?

6. Why do you think the speaker says Christians should never say:
“It’s not up to me to think about whether it’s right or wrong—I just do my job.”

4. Living as Peacemakers Today

7. In what situations might Christians be called to respond to evil without becoming violent themselves?

8. What are some practical ways Christians and churches can actively pursue peace and reconciliation in:
 - families
 - communities
 - political or cultural conflicts
 - global conflicts?

5. Unity Despite Differences

9. The speaker said that Christians may draw different lines but must remain united under the lordship of Jesus. Why is it sometimes difficult for Christians to stay united when they disagree on issues like this?

10. How can churches create a culture where people can discuss difficult ethical questions with humility and respect?

Optional Closing Question

11. The Christian police officer in the story said he longed for the day when weapons would no longer be needed. What does this hope teach us about the future kingdom of God and the kind of peace Jesus promises?