

S. no. - Jan 28, 1973 P.M. WXRJ

ATTITUDES ON VIETNAM PEACE

Luke 19:41-44

The word of This Hour is PEACE - Church Bells - Services - wives anxious to hear of Prisoners, some like Truman N.Y. - 1/2 hr Bells, Harms, fights on etc.

But they came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to cry. Eternal peace was within your reach, and you turned it down. He wept. And now it is too late -- your enemies will pile up earth against your walls and encircle you, and close in on you. And crush your children to the ground, and your children within you. Your enemies will not leave one stone upon another -- for you have rejected the opportunity God offered you.

Last Tuesday evening, January 23, 1973, President Nixon told the nation that an agreement had been reached to end the Vietnam War. This was the longest war in this nation's history. It has left nearly 350,000 Americans killed, or wounded, and brought great up heavel here at home. The President announced the major points of the agreement. There would be first, an internationally supervised cease-fire to go into effect at 7 P. M. Saturday. That was yesterday. Second, the release of all American held prisoners of war throughout Indo-China within a 60 days period. Third, the withdrawal of the remaining 24,000 U. S. forces in South Vietnam within the same time limit. Fourth, the fullest possible accounting for all those who are missing in action. Fifth, a guarantee that the people of South Vietnam would have the right to determine their own future without outside interference.

The President closed his remarks with the challenge that American and all other nations must help in building the peace. That all parties should have a part in obtaining lasting peace.

Vietnam War lasted officially 12 yrs 26 Days - Jan 1, 1961 - Jan 27, 1973 Supposed Revolutionary War
war - April 18, 1775 Lexington Sept. 3, 1783 (8 yrs. 4 months 16 Days) - World War II most costly 292,131 died.
" " I 53,513 killed

According to the records available - there were 45,938 Americans killed in action. And 303,616 wounded. In addition to 587 Americans known to be prisoners

Civil War - 214, 938 died - Union & Confederate.

plus 1,355 listed as missing.

^{2 1/2 million}
The war has taken heavy toll. A 162,000 South Vietnamese have been killed. 922,000 Communists reported killed in action. This is the longest war in the history of America which began while John F. Kennedy was in the White House. It deepened during L. B. Johnson's term. And when Nixon took office, there were about 550,000 U. S. troops in the land of war.

It all started back in 1961 when the U. S. had about 685 advisors in Vietnam and John Kennedy dispatched some especially trained men to fight in the jungle.

In 1962, we had a total of 4,000 in the country. In 1963, it was hoped that it would probably be completed by the end of 1965.

In 1964, President Johnson noted that there was need for more power and the troops strength made a rise to 19,500.

In 1965, we increased the money as well as the men.

And in 1966, we had more than one million men under arms for the Allies including 308,000 Americans in that area.

1967 Johnson was trying to work out an agreement by halting the bombing. He sent about 475,000 troops and another 25,000 nearby.

In 1968 he halted the bombing and hoped to get some talks underway. But these ended in dead-lock.

In 1969 President Nixon began the troop withdrawal of 50,000 men at a time. And this continued in 1970. And in 1971 - and in 1972 some serious negotiating got underway. And you know where we are today. We have a peace that has been announced. And now as to the working out of this -- the problems are still before us.

I. HOW DOES THIS APPEAR TO YOU TODAY?

How do you see this peace? As we think of the pursuit of peace among nations of the world - until 1914 wars among nations may have seen big. Compared to the wars we have had in our day. They were just play conflicts. They were usually confined to two or three nations. And the effect of establishing peace might have had more success than they actually did, it seems.

At any rate the world was highly optimistic that peace was here to stay.

In 1909 at a layman's national missionary convention, sponsored by the YMCA - a missionary from China, a Methodist Bishop, one of the speakers explored the efforts of world peace and its advantages for mission world. To emphasize his message he said, "I saw in San Francisco, a few days ago my first airplane. As I watched it fly, I said to a friend, war is annihilated. And he believed it was and so did the rest of the people who were there at the convention and those who had seen their first airplane fly back in 1909.

A few years later, in 1912, President David Starr Jordan, of Stanford University made a speech and he declared war is impossible. He believed it. And so did the people who listened to him in 1912. But two years later, World War I broke the peace of the world.

AND then we felt that the world was going to be secure. And (World War II) came along to end all wars.

Today, in this day in January, 1973, we are still striving for peace. And we are told that it must be a peace by the deterring power of the mightiest armaments. In spite of this, we have to hope and think that the best is yet to be.

I boarded a plane the other day in a snow storm heading for New York. After a swift run down the field, we climbed up into the air. We said "Goodbye" to the Norfolk Airport. And headed out across the water, across Virginia. And we ran into some head winds which blew fiercely against the plane. I looked out of the window at the mighty wings of the plane--I thought of the great air pressures against these wings. It seemed that at any minute they might snap off. But yet they kept on going forward with the plane. The power of the wind was great. But the power of the plane was greater. And finally, we arrived at our destination. And so it is, I think, in life and in America. There are many things that have been against us. There have been many forces that have hurt us during these war days. But we must believe that God is with us. And if we follow him, America will go through, and we will land at last at a happy destination.

The text I am using tonight -- Jesus said eternal peace was within your reach. And you turned it down. He was speaking about the tragic ruin that was to come to Jerusalem in 40 years - Rome came and utterly demonished the city. Not one stone left upon another. They were on a collision course. They could have had peace. They did not recognize it. They did not learn the things that made for peace.

What a revelation of God. He reminds us that we are dust. And he works to bring us peace. And we need peace with our fellowman. And we are going to have to maintain this peace. Peace is a Bible word. It is one of Christianity's most important words. And it is not just a dream. From the beginning of recorded history, people have entered into armed conflicts with each other. There have been wars. Satan and his forces have kept the human beings at each other's throats throughout the years. And Satan enjoys war.

Now the issue of war is very much alive today and peace has been as a butterfly. Five million people died in World War I. Fifty million people in World War II. And it is been well over a million or so that have died in this Vietnam War. And it has been estimated that 500 million would die if we had another big war. So the current situation is critical and tragic. It is important for us to bring Christian values to bear and the people of God must not compromise. Sometimes people use the Bible to justify war. We saw that Jesus observed that at the end of time, there would be wars and rumors of wars, Matt. 24:6. Or we say render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. Matt. 22:21. And that war is a simple instrument of the state. And we remember that Eichmann used that argument to excuse his part in the Nazi murder of 6 million Jews. To say that it was morally alright to have war. That it was purely up to the state. I saw the prison camp where he was confined while in the land of Israel.

What can Christians in our warring world do to promote peace? Can we keep alive the great goal of peace? The good news of the prince of peace.

Let us realize that basically our concern is doing His will. And accepting our responsibility as Christians. These eternal certainties which have bearing upon peace, human life, the love of God, justice and mercy, human relationships. We must find our involvement as Christian citizens, in the pressure of things

that exist today. Peace with justice is truly a major goal for Christians. And I believe that Christians through the years of this war have been united and have been praying for peace to come.

Let me refer again to this word "peace" - that it is an important word. It is a Biblical word. And it has the hope of (Shalom.)

This is a Biblical greeting of peace. Peace is far more than the ~~cessations~~ of hostilities. It is more than the armed truce. It is more than the treaty that is being signed at this time.

It is the peace of nature transformed, of human nature that has been changed, by the world made over again by the healing presence of God. That is a hope in which it is right to believe.

It is more than just to say peace is worth living for. It is more than to say that it is worth a struggle, or worth a sacrifice. In this warring world, we know about war and about the arms race and about the destruction. Men die in battle and in struggle. Isaiah spoke of this in his time 65:25 - the wolf and lamb shall feed together. The lion shall eat straw like the ox. And dust shall be the serpents food. They shall not hurt or destroy. And all of my holy mountain says the Lord. Now these are hopes and Isaiah says they were important to him. These are hopes in our day, and it is more than painting a few flowers on the side of the car and writing the word peace. It is more than marching down a street or taking over a building - and doing this in the name of peace.

II. WHAT IS AMERICA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD WAR AND PEACE

The current attitude of the church on the issues of war and peace are found in the New Testament and the Old Testament as well. Today we have attitudes about war and peace. And we might do well just to mention some of these attitudes when modern war has been going on and the whole population seems to be involved -- men and women, and children. The church, above all, must be working toward peace. What is the general attitude.

First, there is the pacifist attitude. This is a position that is ideal. It calls upon Christians to refuse to bear arms. And to seek always the way of love and reconciliation. It is the way that practices non-violence, non-resistance to all evil.

In the Old Testament, Isaiah 53, describes the servant of the Lord who will redeem the nations and bring them back to God by his own sacrifice. He will humble himself. He will not open his mouth, before those who persecute him. And our Lord identified himself with this servant image.

Furthermore in the Messianic age it was declared by one of the prophets that men would beat their swords into plowshares. And their spheres into pruning hooks. Isaiah 2:4.

Jesus, in his Sermon on the Mount, spoke on this theme of being peacemakers. They were called blessed. They were men that would turn the other cheek. They would walk the extra mile. To meet violence with love and forgiveness. Remember those who persecuted them. They would love their enemies. They were followers of Jesus indeed. They were instructed to forgive 70 times 7.

The New Testament describes the word love as (agape) - to describe it. Unique love that was coined in the New Testament. The Disciples were to reproduce it - it was a gift of God. It was love coming down from God. And the Christ is bidden to love and not to hate.

Paul brings this kind of love to focus in I Cor. 13. It suffers long, it bears, is unselfish. And the early Christians took this seriously. It meant inward reconciliation. A man was reconciled to God - he had peace himself. And he was reconciled to his fellows who had peace with those who were about him. Of course this is magnified in that the word was made flesh. And of course, the Christians refused to be war-like until the Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the official religion of the Roman Empire in the 4th century A. D.

There is certainly no record of Christian soldiers AD 50 and AD 170. Some Christians in the army at the turn of the century - the Tertullian indicates it is with the Christian soldier who refused to wear ~~the~~ crown on the Emperor's birthday.

However, once Christianity was established the religion of the state, there was a movement away from the style of living by the Christians. Those who practiced that style went into monasteries where they were away from the other people in life.

Now there have been some like the Quakers in the 17th Century who firmly adopted the way of non-violence. (William Penn), in his dealing with the American Indians, objected to war and consistently maintained that they should be friends. And he manifested this as he worked with them.

The emphasis falls upon the Christian's conscience. Every man has a right to act the way his conscience dictates.

A second attitude is the crusading attitude. In regard to some of the so called wars as holy -- that God is on the side of the particular group. Now this has been traced in Old Testament times in Palestine when Israel regarded herself as the chosen people of God. That the Lord was on her side in times of war. And here is the concept of the holy war. Not every war is regarded in this sense. They believed that the Lord would lead them in battle. So the presence of God in the ark of the covenant quite often was believed that God would come to their aid in force. By hail storms or by lightning, or by some other way.

In Judges and I Samuel this is illustrated. In the event of the monarchy - the idea of holy wars dropped into the background as Israel was now established in the promised land and they looked to their king.

During the Babylon exile and the return to Palestine - men began to look for the day when God would personally intervene. It is not Israelites that fight but God with the Heavenly hosts. Ezekiel 38:39. In other words, when the Lord stands from the Mt. of Olives and delivers his people. Zach. 14.

Despite our Lord's use of law and grace, the holy war theme has been spiritualized. Now the enemies are not human beings but are forces and evil powers which rebell against God and his people. And so men must wrestle to flesh and blood. Christ comes to deliver his people sitting on a white horse. The whole theme is spiritualized. The crusading idea here of holy wars against Islam and the recovery of Christian holy place in Palestine became real.

This was the teaching that the state and the church should be partners and civil powers should direct. And the religious groups had a right to wage war against these powers. And for some leaders, this was for God's glory. Hence the religious wars involving the French huguenots and Roman Catholics in the 16th century and the 30 year war in which German protestants and Catholic states were concerned were regarded by religious men of God.

In England also, they had the Puritan Roundheads of the Civil War period and the holy crusade, which the churchmen and Charles the First joined in.

But I think that Christians have realized the wars are denials of God's holy purpose. That the Lord reminded us that his Kingdom was not of this world. And thus, it is not to be fought for.

The deepest conviction of man is that war eliminates many cherished values.

Can war serve any purpose in God's world.

Cicero "I Prefer the most unfair peace to the most righteous war"

The third attitude is the justified war or the police action type of war, or the judgement war, in which there are those who break the laws and they need punishment. And these powers have been ordained of God and so the rulers must go and have the task of maintaining justice and freedom.

Bishop of Milan taught that war could be just. Living in a time when the Barbarians were sweeping into the Roman Empire and sacking Rome. Living in an Empire which had accepted the Christian faith. Augustine, a great man of history, saw that what was befalling Rome was under the divine judgement. He was too much of a realist to accept the earlier centuries. The power of sin was too real for

it to be restrained. He thought that only the police power of Rome should hold it in check - and thus, it was a just war.

He ~~laid down certain conditions~~ which must be fulfilled if a war was to be just. It must be fought to vindicate justice and it must be fought to restore peace.

Of course we know that some men take the law into their own hands and kill and seek to justify the treatment of the enemy, by taking revenge. The campaign waged by the Roman Empire against Pagan invaders, was viewed as a just war - to preserve order. But the fallen state of sinful man has led us to know that the exercise of police functions and war like activities at times were justified even at times by Christian men.

Today the U. N. has such power - but who then is to decide. Can any nation set itself up to be the world policeman. Is there any nation completely in the right and never totally in the wrong. Are sinful motives mixed up with good intentions. For man is sinful and man, in a community, is still more so.

From the War in Vietnam we have discovered that war tends to beget war. And not establish peace. There seems to have been new forms at times, opposition, and oppression, and new tensions. Even from the last two wars.

What war does to human life - depersonalizes a man, dehumanizes a society. It seems that all wars are under God's judgement. It is both an expression of man's sin and the judgement of his sin. And of course, man makes a choice whether he will take the lesser of two evils - to let evil flourish and take over and spread. Or to stick to the God-given freedom which he has. Now we have thought about what Jesus was able to see in his day and in our day. We have also thought

about this Vietnam peace, which is upon us, and we have tried to survey the attitudes of Americans toward war and peace.

Now there is another step that we need to think about.

III. GOD'S CALL TO AMERICA NOW FOLLOWING THIS PEACE IN VIETNAM

First, God has given America great responsibility. America needs to have a great program, in this effort to establish peace in the world.

Many years ago Spurgeon said, in speaking to one of his American brethren, go back to your country and tell your men that the hopes of the world are centered in your country. The free church in the free state, and do you best.

I think it would do well tonight to repeat those words. The hopes of the world are centered in America and God has called us to a great responsible position in our land.

There are great things in American and we cannot be blind to the facts that we face. As we look at our country - the fast growing cities today is a clear test whether peace is going to be secure in the great cities. You go to the cities and in our state and in our nation - if somehow Christianity could win and save the cities - we could maintain the peace.

In 1800 only 3% of our people lived in the cities. Today, perhaps there are 75% or more. I read the figure but it eludes me. And in our cities there are dives and all kinds of wicked wealth, cheap politicians, the saloon with

The secular press that deals with unworthy things. Thank God that in the city we face these problems - and many times the press without any serious moral purpose, without any loyalty. I think Galatians, Paul would say, brethren ye have been called into liberty. Only use not your liberty for an occasion of flesh. But by love, serve one another. The city is filled with sewers and many times this thing is paraded in the press before the boys and girls - the rich fools, the harlots, the suicides - all of this vice and crime is paraded before our youth. Luxury deteriorates us. The home is belittled and goes down as everything but holy.

In the (second) place, America has a great task, in this peace keeping mission. We have a mission, we have the resources, we have the message for the world.

In 1870 the Vatican - ^{*infalibility of the Pope*} Arch Bishop Manning said, when he got the attention of the people, holding in his hand a piece of paper, the doctrine of the Romans - he said let all the world go to bits and we Catholics will reconstruct it on this paper.

But have we as Baptists and as Christians to say when we hear that. We can but take up this book and hold it aloft - and say his Word to the world is - let all the world go to bits and we will reconstruct it on the authority of Jesus Christ, as voiced in his New Testament.

Yes, America has the authority. Every man can have a part in it!

Now in our task we must not go back to the day of judges. ¹⁷ Every man did that which was right in his own eye. ¹¹ We must come back to the authority of Christ and his word. The task of America is to truly become Christian. This mighty America could convert the world, on one condition only, that is that

she be Christian through and through.

We will never convert the world with our missionaries in China, etc. - but it will remain for the nominal Christian to hear this call clear - that we shall not simply through a few missionaries on the foreign field - but through the national life. That we shall send out in commerce, in politics, in literature, and in social order.

America cannot be a hermit nation. We must not be one that sits on the side but we must take the world as a great neighborhood. The ocean is just a little brook and today we are being asked why do you have those plagued spots in your cities. Why do you have so much sin in your cities. Why is there so much greed in business. So much graft in politics. Are you yourselves Christians.

If we could come to the day when the prophet said that every horse would have on their bells the inscription holiness to the Lord, and when the pots and pans in the kitchen would be marked with holiness, as well as the vessels in the temple of God. The day of commerce and politics would be consecrated. And superstition and paganism would tremble.

The hour seems right for us to assume this task. The noblest of all religious campaigns. God is not only a God of grace, of providence, but he has pointed the way for unbelieving men. And I think it is falling upon American churches to have a passion for souls. We as a church and as a preacher, must have this.

The hour is ready for America to take the cross and go out to win this land and all lands, and bring them to the feet of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. (William Bell) in the (American Fifth Army), had just crossed the Po River in Italy.

They were in pursuit of the retreating German troops. They had met stubborn resistance with casualties on both sides. They had moved four times during the night and they were now resting beneath a grove of olive trees in a beautiful spot in the valley. There was a lull in the fighting. It was a Spring day and it was Sunday. And he had secured permission to hold a service. They set up a portable organ, assembled the men, and he searched for a text. And this was it - Isaiah 26:3. Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee. Because he trusted in thee. And that was it. And this is what we need in America. I need it - you need it. God's perfect peace. And as that small group came together on that day in Italy in World War II, we are led to see that the outward circumstances which we now find ourselves - God expects us and trusts us with that perfect peace.

J. M. Price - "an effective organization for world peace will be established not through political diplomats around a peace table, but through Christian teachers in all lands, teaching citizens in Sunday School & public schools. The sacredness of human life."

IV. SOME THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE

When someone speaks the word peace, we probably have different reactions. Nixon spoke of peace in Vietnam - no doubt before the T. V.'s and the radios in the land--there were people who had different responses.

The problem of war is as old as man. Men have been cruel in war today and in their lives. And we have tried to outlaw wars and reduce armaments. And treaties have been proclaimed.

Why do wars occur. What is the cause of war and who causes war. No matter what we may think about the secondary causes - men choose to fight. The decision to be aggressive. To mistreat their fellowmen and the population.

Is God's help automatic when men want to fight. Will the practice of Christianity hinder war. If God's help is to be obtained - then we must do it his way. Do you think that we can bargain with God. In these days of tension when men have been led up blind alleys - men have used peace labels and peace symbols.

Jesus does not say, blessed is the peace praiser. But he says, the peace maker is going to be blessed.

Jesus does not say sing songs about peace. Or attend meetings about peace. He does not say these will produce the results of creating peace.

What about the individual level, the community level, the national level.

President Eisenhower once said war is negative. The best we can do is to get rid of it. I hate war. As only a soldier who has lived in it can.

Dr. Albert Einstein was asked, what about the weapons that will be used in the third great war. He says, I do not know. But in war number four we will use stone clubs. He says our civilization will go back to such primitive ways that we will be like savages.

General MacArthur said our problem is a theological one. Unless there is a moral regeneration throughout the world - there is no hope for mankind. And we will all appear in the dust. This is some of the things that make for peace. We must come back to some of truths as stated by some of these great men, who have had a part and have been touched by war.

President Lincoln said with malice toward none and charity for all.

Christ taught us to hate the evil in men but not men themselves.

There are some things that make for peace. I have just come through some of the pictures in a book on World War II - entitled The 42nd Rainbow Infantry Division in which there is portrayed some of the work during war by that group of men. When the war had ended in Europe they had compiled a record of 114 days of combat - they had defended many cities. They had advanced 450 miles. In the mountains of France to Austria. They had captured Munich and several outstanding cities. They had penetrated the Siegfried line. They had crossed the Danube. They had captured 51,000 prisoners. They had a minimum of casualties. They collected thousands of German soldiers that had fled to Austria. The thing that impressed me about the book is this -- when the war and the peace had been declared - there were pictures of the men gathered in churches and out on the field. Giving thanks to God that the war was over. They were praying. And remembering those who had died in their midst and they were looking forward to peace. They were in prayer.

Brethren, what are the things that make for peace. And what will be your attitude toward it. I wonder as the changes come now to our land and as the years pass by, and as we think today about some of the things that ought to be thought of in this peace. You think today about the long list of heroes who will never come back. They had planned, they had hoped. And it makes us humble to think that there are some who will never come back and walk in our midst. There will be their names on an old tombstone somewhere in a cemetery. But they should be written in our minds and in our hearts. What a debt we owe to those who fought in this war. Those who have tried to lay a foundation and this list of heroes ought to present a challenge to every man and to every woman, and every

young person. This is not just a little game of life. Their memory ought to always challenge us, as we think of them. Perhaps some of the young people today have not too much feeling about this. But there will be those who will meet besides the graves of our heroic dead. Some who will feel the bitterness towards those who sleep yonder on the slopes, on the mountains, or in the jungle. And perhaps it is useless for us to think about who was right - which side was nearest right. Were both sides wrong. Who had good intentions. Just ordinary people will think about this.

Did our buried heroes die in vain? Did they struggle to preserve the things that we hold so dear and cherish. Will the young people remember them. Think of the widowed wives and mothers. We should somehow draw inspiration from this. Because this has given us hope - hope that we might not have had other wise.

Every normal person tonight wants peace of mind. I think we speak to everyone - we all want that inward peace. To get that peace that Paul says, let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts. You can't make it through - it is a gift. And it brings total security. This is what the middle-aged person looks for. This is a peace that everyone is searching for. The doctor wishes that in this rough world he could give peace, to all the problems that he deals with.

Dear Brethren I would challenge you that the conflict and the peace that has been proclaimed would be an instrument to challenge some person - even this hour to think seriously about his peace with God. So many times we have to be stirred up by tragedy - and war has brought a tragedy in our midst. And let us use this for a matter of peace - to make peace with God.

I close with this illustration - the other day in Austin, Texas, people gathered to praise God and to sing his praises and to listen to words about peace. 5,000 people were there in that auditorium in Austin, Texas. It happened during the Christmas holidays. And 19 people ^{joined} went out to a Baptist retreat in New Mexico - a school bus on which they were riding collided with a loaded cattle truck. And 14 other passengers on the bus were injured. It was a clear cold day - evening. And the bus was from the Woodlawn Baptist Church in Austin, Texas. Driven by a reliable man. 15 young people and 4 adults were killed - including the bus driver, and the wife and daughter of the Minister of Education, Ron Hicks. And it happened at a narrow bridge at a point - it appears that the cattle truck jack-knifed into the side of the bus. There were two buses loaded with youth and their sponsors, going to this retreat. They were 500 miles from home and every young person was between 13-20 years of age. And they had a week during Christmas and New Years - they had a special service there for 14 of them at one time. The others were buried in separate services. It is very notable that former President L. B. Johnson and his wife attended that service. Showing interest in those that had died in that tragedy.

But the thing that I want to bring out to you is this. That on the following Sunday morning the preacher preached a sermon on the reality of Heaven. And 37 people joined church and made a personal commitment to faith in Jesus Christ that morning. They had come and made their peace with God. Yes, sometimes it takes a tragedy to bring some people to make peace with God. Jesus said eternal peace was within your reach. And you turned it down. As he talked to Jerusalem - he wept - and he said, now it is too late. It is too late. You have rejected the opportunity God has offered you. Tonight I trust that no one will reject the opportunity which God is offering you, to discover peace with God.