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Just War Theory : An Introduction

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For The King - Rocky Ramsey

Joined with me this week is my pastor, Nate and an intern at the church Trent answering the question, Can war ever be justified? What is the Just-War Tradition? How have Christians thought about war historically? Can a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, be a soldier with a clear conscious? Why has the just war tradition been lost on so many Christians in the last 100 years? There are many questions to be asked on the topic of war for Christians! We answer all of these and hit on even more things about this precious ethical tradition throughout church history. Learn about the line of thinking that great thinkers like Augustine, Martin Luther, and many others have taken throughout church history.

John Howard Yoder is the pacifist that is quoted many times in this book.

The book we reviewed is found here -> https://www.amazon.com/War-Peace-Christianity-Questions-Perspective/dp/1433513838/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=peace+war+and+christianity&qid=1619618311&sr=8-2

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Transcript

Hey everybody, this is a real quick preface to the podcast you're about to listen to about the Just War Theory. The book that we actually talked about throughout the entire podcast that we were referencing, I want to actually introduce because we never formally introduced it in the podcast. So the book is called War, Peace and Christianity, Questions and Answers from a Just War Perspective by J. Darryl Charles and Timothy J. Demme.

J. Darryl Charles is a PhD from Westminster Theological Seminary and Timothy Demme got his PhD from Sal Vergina University. He is a retired US Navy Commander and an Associate Professor of Military Ethics at the US Naval War College. So both of these guys

understand Just War Theory and its historical development very well.

The book kind of goes through that and it's formed in a question and answer format. So they ask a hundred some odd questions about concerning Just War Theory and they answer questions on it. So the book is really good.

So if this conversation intrigues you guys, pick up that book and read it. It'll be a good introduction. It's from a Christian worldview.

So obviously it's really good. And then the two guys that I have on the podcast is my pastor Nate Nese, one of my pastors Nate Nese and an intern at the church Trent and they've been on before. They helped do like an introduction to Reformed Theology of like I don't know maybe eight podcasts ago or whatever.

So hopefully you guys enjoy getting to see them again. Thanks for listening. Okay, so I did.

Thanks for buying this again. It's been really good. And is there anything that you how much do you know about like Just War Theory? Have you? I've never read the book.

I know a little bit of the basic concepts. Okay, so obviously it is biblical. It's pretty obvious to see like in this book, they didn't do a lot with like militarism.

They're just like, all right, like they've talked about it a little bit, but it's obvious that that one is wrong. A Christian cannot be like militarism is just wrong. Just for any reason go to war and massacre people.

They did they had to deal more with what a Christian would be inclined to go towards his pacifism and they did a lot with that. So I liked I know like the they did a lot with a I forget the Quaker guys name that they talked about. Yoder.

Yeah, Yoder. You know, his stuff is it's like sure in a sense you can see what he's getting at like his heart in it like it is more some very logical arguments to think he was the things he was presenting. It's more just kind of emotionalism like yeah, war is terrible.

You know, it's not it's not nice. It's not friendly or whatever. It will make you feel bad to be in war or to you know, your country's at war or your son dies in war.

But I do think that like Just War Theory is correct from a Christian worldview. I guess some of the big things I would kind of want to get your thoughts on a lot of it is extrapolated based on natural law and not necessarily there's not a lot of revelation of how to conduct war like the Bible doesn't really like give us a lot about if you're going to conduct war it should look like this or based on these criteria because all the criteria they come up with like they have the first they have like primary considerations which is like, you know, just cause I think proportionality right intention, right tension and right

authority or proper. Yeah, having like an establishment right declaring war right and those are the three primary criteria that you have like last resort.

Yeah, and then they've got secondary criteria last resort, but then there are kind of like two criteria that kind of fall somewhere between primary and secondary area, which is proportionality and the rights of the innocent, right? Yes, protecting those who are not an act not actually involved in the war itself. Yeah. So there's there are those two kind of intermediate criteria and then moving on to the secondary criteria.

Yeah. So let's talk about non combatant real quick because in scripture when we see war being conducted there is very frequent that the Israelites will massacre women and children. I mean, genetic genocide, but it is there, you know, God's covenant.

He's giving his people the land. Like I know covenant theology can help us understand exactly why that was commanded because I know a lot, especially a lot of non-Christians have trouble understanding why God would command something like genocide or things like that. But again, it's like the non-combatant thing is all based on natural law, like the individual rights of humans made the image of God that are not in the conflict and they should be avoided in being attacked and all that.

So how do we, what do you think are some principles in scripture and what we see happening in the Old Testament and stuff where we see non-combatants usually attacked? Sure. Or even just the thought as a Christian, like if you let somebody live, if you let some idea live, if we just talk about killing ideas, like because there were communist states that were allowed to exist for so long, like we have it creeping back up again and socialism and all that. Like when you have a bad idea that's allowed to survive and there's people that hold that view, it will come back around.

And that's why, partly why they, God said, kill all of these people because you're going to intermarry with them. They're going to, they're going to start telling you some of what they think and then you're going to compromise and all that. So I don't know what you think about all of that.

I think I think. Well, I'll, I'll begin an answer and then I'll see what Trent is adding. But a couple of things to keep in mind.

One is the distinction between God's harem, right? The ban that he places upon these nations that as his people are coming in, they will wipe out these nations. That is distinct from the context and period of redemptive history we live in right now, right? Because that's under old covenant reality in which there was a theocratic nation and God commands his people to do these things. Nowhere after this theocratic establishment do we see God commanding his people to go into other people groups and wipe them out in entirety.

It's a distinctively different aspect of redemptive history, right? God calling an old covenant people to go into the land and to wipe out these people groups for the primary reason to maintain the purity of the people of God. That was for the purposes of maintaining purity within the people. It wasn't because somehow this ethnic group is inherently less image-bearing, but that this is to protect God's established people as they're entering into the land.

So the ban is placed upon this people and the people of Israel go in and they conquer the land. They destroy the peoples in order to establish a sense of purity within the land, right? So that they're not intermingling, so that they're not unclean, so that they're not mixed. Yeah, and it's a type of heaven.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. You could look at it that way. There's a sense in which this is establishing as it were the borders.

It's extending the borders of Eden here and we're coming in driving out that which is wicked and unclean. Yeah. But we do not have those kind of commands today.

So even though we might see nations rising up and having thoughts, like you mentioned, this communistic thought process that kind of leads into socialism and different forms of totalitarianism and those types of things. Yeah. That does not justify our going in and completely annihilating a people.

That would not be a just cause for war. That would not be a just cause for war. But when we look at the non-combatants, there is a sense in which scripture does help us here, right? Because humanity is created in the image of God and therefore should be protected as much as possible, right? So when they're non-combatants and they're not involved in any kind of warfare, we should do all that we can to protect the lives of non-combatants because we are pro-life, right? And that just doesn't mean that we're pro-life from infants in the womb.

We're pro-life throughout the course of the lifespan from the beginning of life to the end of life. We're pro-life. So therefore, that's one element of how the Imago Dei helps us in understanding how we would be involved in those types of things, right? So for non-combatant who just so happens to live in a territory where war is taking place, we do all that we can to minimize the risk to those non-combatants knowing that you can be placed on trial.

You can have maybe tried for war crimes. If you go in and you slaughter non-combatants because we understand that that is actually dehumanizing human beings that are created in the image of God. So I think that that's at least two things, I guess, that maybe is helpful when we pay out of it.

One is in the Old Covenant, the Lord Himself calls His people to enter into a land, to

destroy the land, to cleanse the land as it were, and He is giving them that command. We do not have those commands in the New Covenant. That is just not something we're called to.

We're not a theocratic nation. One day, the Lord will return and He will wipe out sin and sinners for good, right? And He will establish the New Heavens and the New Earth, and then the wicked will be punished forever and ever and ever, and those who are in the sun will be experiencing His blessing forever and ever and ever in the New Heavens and the New Earth. But as New Covenant believers now in between trees as it were and they've already yet, we have no command to go into people groups and wholesale slaughter people because that's just not what the Lord has commanded His people to do.

And then there were distinctive covenant obligations, obviously, under the Old Covenant as well. So that's one. And then two, the issue with the non-combatants, even though there is a lot of justification for just war from natural law, the reason that it's there is because our being created in the image of God leads us to think that God Himself has implanted certain realities in human beings such that we, albeit fallen, we have an notion of what is just and what is right.

It's imperfect, right? And in some instances it's very perverted. But nonetheless, it does flow from what is naturally revealed. And then there's a more full picture of it in special revelation.

So that would just be two particular points that I would want to draw out. They were kind of silent on that in the book. And I figured they would actually address that, but like when there actually is war in the Bible, what do we see happening? There is non-combatants are involved in a lot of the times wars and talk about the Bible.

So I wish they would have at least addressed that. And yeah, I think it's, I would have went the same path. Like it's just when you understand covenant theology, you understand what was happening and why that was what God would have commanded His people.

But yeah, it's not our job now. Jesus is going to come back and destroy those, all those that oppose Him. Like that's not our job as Christians.

Right. And we also see, you know, Romans chapter 13, the Lord has established governing authorities with the power of the sword. Yeah.

Right. We have the power of the keys of the kingdom. The church does.

The state has the power of the sword and when conducted rightly, it is a blessing to those who live underneath the authority of the state and they are responsible for punishing the guilty. Right. So we as Christians no longer have that call to go and enact the sword that's given to the state.

We see that in Romans chapter 13. There's also particular responsibilities of the state such that if they fail to uphold those responsibilities, then there is in kind of a, it's the best way to describe it. There's a lack of legitimacy to their authority.

If they're in that, that terminology. Yes. And so you can kind of think of the distinction between Romans 12 and Romans 13.

Right. Romans 12 is the ethic of the Christian, individual Christian and individual relationships. And then there's the authority of the state.

Yeah. We're not given the sword. We're given the keys of the kingdom.

The state is given the power of the sword to deter evil doers. Aquinas really is the one when they talk about it in the book, Aquinas is the one that really developed legitimate versus illegitimate authority. I don't think Augustine talked about it as much.

It seems like Aquinas kind of in terms of developing just for theory throughout Christendom, not the, you know what I mean? Like, yeah, like Christian, just by the church being on earth. That was mainly Aquinas from what, but I think it's accurate based on what you're saying with, with Romans 13 and what the state's supposed to do. And I think that one makes sense to me where we would derive that from the Christian tradition, Christian teaching that in terms of legitimate authority being one of the primary things, well, it needs to be a state.

It needs to be an agreed upon and recognized authority that is, does have its authority derived from God to bear the sword. Right. So I think that one makes total sense to me.

And I thought they did a good job with that. Their treatment on Romans 13 and first Peter two, and they had a few chapters talking about that. It was good.

Yeah, it's good. Yeah. And I agree the book itself, it could have been helpful to have even just a brief chapter on, um, what do we do? And I, if I remember right, was there no mention of that in the book? I thought that there was at least one mention how Old Testament war, uh, they might've just for a second, but there wasn't like a question dedicated to it.

I want to say there was something in, in the book. I'd have to go back and double check each chapter. Yeah.

Um, the book itself that you're referencing has a hundred questions. Yeah. And so I just think a 400 page book.

I mean, it took me a while. It's a pretty thick book and it addresses a lot of different questions. Um, I want to say that they did mention it briefly, maybe not in, I know they talked about the crusades.

Yeah. Well, I mean the crusades, um, that we, we could condemn some of what was taking place in the country. Yeah.

I mean, because there, that was not just in the sense of just war theory. Exactly. Um, there was no right intention going on.

There wasn't a just cause that was being pursued. Um, and even when you look at all that is, was there a proper authority telling them that it's lacking in so many different ways. Um, but it would have been nice to see a question address how do you handle some of these old Testament texts? Yeah.

Um, as it relates to what we tend to think of as just war theory. So yeah, I think they may have talked about it. Um, in the field of the just work tradition and the theologian, but they also have the just war tradition in the historian.

And I imagine they would have hit it there, but I don't remember. Well, when they look at the historian, they do tend to look through, uh, you know, both first and second or second, first century BC, Greco Roman philosophers and then into, uh, early church fathers. And then grew out the middle ages.

Um, they, they, they do a long look at Aquinas because like you said, um, while just war, just war theory, you could see in the writings of guys like Ambrose and Augustine, even before them and some of the, some of the foundational elements, it's not really as we'll talk a lot about in the late second century AD rights on the issue. But they never actually put together some kind of systematic coherent argument. Um, it's not really until Aquinas that you get in his summa, um, this articulation of what has come to be known as just war theory.

Yeah. So, um, it's he developed at a time, right? Yeah. It's not accurate to say that it derives from Aquinas because Aquinas is really getting, um, much of his own writings from early church fathers, but he does systematize it.

He does make it more coherent and cogent. Um, and then afterwards we see it in the writings of the reformers and post-reformation scholastics. And then we begin to see, you know, kind of this shift away from just war theory as we get into more modern times.

Um, although even in the reformation, you've got the radical reformers, the Anabaptist movement who were very opposed to engagement with civil authority and participation within the civil. They were very pacifist. Yeah.

Yeah. Um, so why do you think they didn't really give, I don't remember them giving an account for why Christians nowadays have abandoned the last probably 200 years. We've kind of abandoned how we really think about just war theory or just being exposed to it as a, as a Christian.

Why do you think that is? Is it just, is that a failure of leadership to not expose congregants to things like that or what do you think happened? Yeah. Before answering it, did you want to add anything to the last question? Not really. I mean, like you pretty much hit all the points.

There's definitely a, I think the, the biggest question mark I would say again comes down to like in some of those old Testament texts with the eradication of the Canaanites, but how that's an isolated event in redemptive history. And like you pointed out and the scriptures actually do because Moses lays down basically two codes of war, warfare with one is that you're there for the Israelites not to make a covenant with anybody, any of the peoples within the land. They are to go in and devote them to destruction, drive them out of the land.

But then like if other enemy nations come against Israel, they're to first seek peace terms of peace. And then if all of that has been exhausted, then you know, you go to war, you have to fight and defend yourself. And so, and also it's pointing out too, is that even within the conquest of the land, there is still grace extended.

So there's still an understanding you have Rahab and her entire family and Jericho, you have the Gibeonites and so there's opportunity for repentance. There's opportunity for grace. I mean, the Lord gave the entire inhabitants of Canaan 400 years and even within the time that Israel is wandering in the wilderness, people are still aware of the Exodus.

They still know what the God of Israel is capable of that he displayed his glory and wiping out Pharaoh's army. It was the, that was the man. That was the world superpower of the day and God just utterly destroyed them and humiliated them.

And so when it says that the hearts of the peoples melt like wax, you know, you would think that a right response at that point would be to make peace, to seek asylum or whatnot with the people. But that's a good point. So yeah, there's, yeah, it's a distinct point in redemptive history.

And again, with covenant theology, the narrative of this is the seat of the woman coming in to drive out the seat of the serpent that has taken possession of the promised land that is to become this new Eden to which the nations ultimately are to flow and witness what it looks like to worship in the presence and under the authority of Yahweh, which again, the church, not a theocratic nation, it's actually now a fan, it's the new Israel made up of many nations and tribes dispensed throughout the world. And yeah, one point that you made, I think it's worth reiterating, you know, not every war that Israel went into was called that they were not called to annihilate. Yes.

So there are, even as you read through the book of Deuteronomy, for instance, there are certain laws that are codified and how they're to handle themselves in the midst of warfare, right? How you're supposed to handle individuals coming into the camp, how

are you supposed to handle prisoners of war, those types of things. So a lot of times people will point to those instances of Israel being called by the Lord to go into a land and to wipe out the peoples. And they overemphasize that to the detriment of how the Lord also gives law, which is codified and how they're supposed to handle themselves in wartime affairs.

And then like Trent had mentioned, there's just a general picture of cleansing the land as the people are moving in in order to prepare for worshiping the Lord, impurity and in righteousness. And if it's the Lord who's calling them to do these things, then it will be just, right? If he says, go in and do these things, we are not to question what he calls us to do. The reality is that sometimes people want to go, well, I've heard a word from the Lord and now I need to go do that now.

And it's like you have no justification for that in the scriptures. So the reality of what we'll cover in New Covenant differences. But to the point or the question that you had asked, you know, I think this is probably multi-factorial why it is that the church nowadays has shifted her attention away from just war theory as a model for how we're to understand these things.

One, I think that many Christians see just war theory as not understanding the history of it, but maybe understanding it as more of a post enlightenment reality that doesn't find its roots in special revelation. Yeah. Because so much of natural law comes in and that is what kind of led the enlightenment is just a lot of natural law theorists.

Rationalism based on natural law rather than natural law based in scripture. They talk about that at the beginning. Yes.

Yeah. And again, natural law, I mean, if we just add as God reveals his truth through the creation before us, right? Two books as Calvin would say, the book of nature, the book of scripture. You can derive these natural law principles from now.

They're again, as we perceive them, there's a good chance we will distort them. Right. But there are foundational realities that are just true across, across the state of humanity, right? Certain things that we just hold to be self-evident.

Well, that sounds really familiar. Yeah. These truths we hold to be self-evident that all that are created equal.

I mean, there is a reality. Everybody could notice that. Right.

Exactly. To the extent that today we've moved away from just war theory. One, I think that people misunderstand it and I think that it's just a byproduct of the enlightenment and it's just a particular way of thinking.

I do think that a lot of people misunderstand just war theory as just constant tenianism.

Right. Rather than again, deriving itself from both the natural law and revealed truth that God has given to us.

They see it as just a form of constant tensionism, a way of those who are in power seeking to derive more power, especially in our day and age, right? When we have now this huge push for critical theory, which sees the world and oppressor oppressed mentality, when you see the world through that lens, then all of a sudden just war theory is just that thinking of the oppressor group to extend their own hegemony. Yeah. Right.

So there's always going to be pushback there. And you can understand why that's the case. It doesn't make it right, but you can understand that might be a way of thinking.

I do think that many have misunderstood how we're to go about discussing, say, just war theory and biblical revelation. Say it's the Sermon on the Mount, for instance, right? Yeah. It's like, how do we understand the relationship between just war theory, which derives itself from biblical principles and from general revelation? How do we understand that in light of some of the passages in Matthew, chapters five through seven? And then what ends up happening is you get this dichotomizing of, you know, well, let's just, one, we'll completely neglect the words of Jesus, or two, we're going to neglect other truths that are revealed for us in scripture while maybe overemphasizing and misunderstanding what Jesus is saying in the Sermon on the Mount.

So I think that those are at least several factors that play into the fact that we just don't think about it. And quite frankly, we've seen just war theory applied in perverted ways. And that's always when we start talking about the rejection of something because we've seen it misappropriated, what we should be doing is we should ask, how can we better appropriate it rather than just chucking the baby out with the bathwater? Yeah.

Right. But we do that. Like that's just our general posture as Western Americans.

It's like, you've misappropriated it, therefore the whole system must be, you know, must be bunk and debunked and defunded. And it's like, wait a second. That's not actually a logical, nor right course of action.

Yeah. So I think those are at least a few reasons as to why. Yeah, I would agree.

And I wonder if anything about World War I and World War II has to do with it, just because of last century being as bloody as it was. And I think, do you think World War II was justified? And I don't know, I just because of how destructive, look how destructive even a just war could be. And it's I imagine that also in the minds, especially of Americans, maybe American theologians going forward.

Yeah, it just after Vietnam too. Sure. Like, even just practical things about how it affects the citizenry, which is made up of some Christians, like we just kind of have a distaste for war now, seeing some of the wars that Americans got themselves into, which has made

Christians maybe not consider as much what could actually be redeemable, redeemable about war.

And also, I really liked in this book how they talked about just war theory is not a prohibition against force. Because you know, what you were saying earlier about God basically, you know, judging the nations coming back, that is force, like force isn't evil, God uses force forces in and of itself inherently evil, which is what that's a category category error pacifist make. But it's actually wrongly ordered peace and justice is what we're looking for.

Because you know, the Canaanites or whatever people group that the Israelites purge, they had they may have had peace, but it wasn't rightly ordered peace. And the Israelites knew that the principal piece, like, you know, God himself. And I think that's important to maybe a place apart why people don't understand it, because maybe we live in so much peace already.

Now we don't understand that there's a wrongly ordered kind of peace that can that can occur in human societies. And the Christian should recognize what true peace looks like in Christ, or Christians should, and then realize just war is called for at times where that peace is actually corrupted. Right? Yeah, I mean, so one of the things that needs to be considered is, you know, peace is not merely the lack of conflict.

Yeah, I was talking about this earlier, right? Under dictatorial rule, there's a sod. There's peace, right? Go to quote. Why is there that that picture of peace, although it's not legitimate, it's because of dictatorial rule, right? You speak out against the dictator's ship, and they will crush you.

Yeah. And then there is this facade of peace, because there's no conflict. But that's not what the scriptures declare to be peace, right? The establishment of righteousness brings peace.

Yes. Yeah. So it's right order peace that just war theory that it pursues.

Yeah. Right. So I think you're right.

I think that we look at how over the last 150 years or so, there's just been a lot of war, a lot of bloodshed. And, and we can get to the point of just being like, Oh, my goodness. And if, if this is what we say, I mean, we, not all war is inherently engagement in war is not inherently sinful.

Right? I mean, that's, that's just war theories, trying to figure out what would be a just reason to go and apply force with an appropriate constraint. Yeah. War in itself will always be a product of sin.

Right? We can say that war will be a product of sin. Yes. It's not the world.

There will be no war. Yeah. There will be a war that ends all wars in the sense of when Jesus comes back, I'm not talking about like some kind of World War three apocalyptic time, but when Jesus comes back, that will be the end.

Yeah. He will bring writing on his white horse. He will bring an end to all wars.

Right. So war though is a product of sin, but not participation in a war is not inherently sinful. But we do, we look at him like, Oh, my goodness.

And I think a misunderstanding that arises is people think just war theory is just a reason to, you know, you're just looking for a reason to go to work. We're trying to justify ourselves. Yeah.

Actually that's not at all. We're trying to understand and consider what, what are the appropriate parameters for a just war and whether or not we should become involved in that particular world. Yeah.

So I think again, there's, there's a, I'm sure a whole host of reasons as to why there's a general posture of negativity towards the theory itself. I think if it's taught rightly and shown to be a product of special revelation as we, not that you can point to like the book of second has a high end or something like, you know, go, go, go to the book and there you've got these criteria laid out before you, but, but the, we could say the total understanding of all of revelation, special revelation, general revelation would need us to see these things to be true. Yeah.

It really is exegesis of a bunch of biblical principles and taking the full counsel of God. And I, one thing I was, while you were talking, what was it? I can't remember. Oh, how the individualism that's also addressed in the midst of war, like what you were saying, that it's not inherently evil to go to war or to be a politician or, you know, and that's the reformers talk about the two spheres.

You know, you have, what were the actual terms they used for it? They have like ecclesiology, like, like, the theological, the, the sphere of church sovereignty and state sphere. And then usually it's familial sovereignty. Sure.

Yeah. And I love that about the reformation because it's, it's extremely biblical. Jesus talks about that individualism, individualism of being accountable for your actions.

Although you may be commanded by a legitimate authority to do something evil, which is, you know, in the Nuremberg trials after World War II, the SS soldiers of the Nazis were held accountable for what they did. And that's, I do like that about, you know, the just war theory that comes out of the Christian tradition that you are also accountable. You not just following orders.

If, if you are, if you are asked as a soldier to do something that is, that is evil, it is your

obligation as a Christian, as a follower of Christ to know that you're going to be held accountable to God one day for an order that you were asked to carry out. And I like that because there's just so much restriction on war that people don't understand. Like it, war's not just like a, you know, total war is not, it doesn't make any sense.

Right. And for the Christian, there's no sense, there's no category for total war. War should be very restrictive.

And I like that it also, not only at the macro level of declaring war, having a just war declared based on all these criteria, but also for the individual to be held accountable. I think that that's cool. And then, and then it kind of gets into the whole, you know, turn the cheek, yeah, Surround the Mount stuff.

And then I also, one that kind of stuck with me too, is in the garden of Gethsemane when the soldiers come and then Peter cuts off the dude's ear and Jesus heals the ear. And he says, he who lives by the sword was I by the sword. Like, you know, people can take these texts, like, you know, we have a bunch of scripture about right of the order of peace and like force not being inherently evil, but even in the law, it's thou shall not kill.

And then the people think it's thou shall not, sorry, thou shall not kill is what people think. It's actually that's not murder. And the very next chapter you have a capital punishment being expounded on.

And so it's like, it seems like force is something that is useful, especially for humans that think that they can get away by using force. Sometimes force has to be applied back, to push back evil, you know. So yeah, just like, you know, that that individualism for the Christian, I think is cool, that there's that kind of restriction there too, even with what Jesus teaches.

And then you can actually help get an understanding of what Jesus was saying in those moments about individual retaliation of one's own honor. And it's like, that's not what we're aiming for as Christians. We're aiming for rightly ordered peace, you know, maybe at the state level, but, and also in our reconciliation, then our relationships as well, like individually.

So yeah, well, and to that point too, just the manner in which we understand the Sermon on the Mount is incredibly important. Yeah, because just your theory does not, it is not antagonistic to Jesus teaching. As a matter of fact, it actually jives with it, especially when we understand that Jesus is talking about frequently in the Sermon on the Mount, interpersonal relations, right? Not public, but not public policy, not the public sphere, but in person, if you've been personally wronged, right? Turn the other cheek.

Just take it. Yeah, yeah, it doesn't matter. Now, and again, we have to understand that this, we have to take the whole counsel of God into consideration, right? It would seem

as though when you are being persecuted for the sake of Christ, just take it.

Yeah, take it, right? But if somebody comes along and is going to rob you, you have every right to defend yourself, right? There's this, again, we are pro-life, right? And that includes your life. So it's not like we don't just abandon this pro-life argument when we, but again, when we talk about self-defense, it's proportionate, right? If I'm being attacked by a guy who has a knife and I'm able to fend him off, right? He drops a knife, but I'm carrying him, it would be disproportionate of me to after disarming him, pull out my gun and shoot him. That's disproportionate, right? I don't have that kind of authority to enact that kind of self-defense.

It's disproportionate. And we have to understand that self-defense can be a lethal use of force, may be appropriate in self-defense. We actually see instances in which they, in the Old Testament Deuteronomy chapter 22, where if a betrothed woman is out in the middle of the field and she's being raped, what do you do to the man who's raping her? You kill her.

It's lethal self, in a sense. It's lethal defense of another human being. The use of lethal force in order to defend another human being.

There's even a law, right? That if your oxen gets untied or something goes wrong with your animal and it kills somebody, you could put the dead. If you know about it, it's a one-off thing. Okay, then you make restitution.

You do the best you can to make restitution, which is different. I want to say it's different than reparations. Absolutely.

But making restitution for the wrong that was committed, you do. But if you know that your ox has a history of getting loose and goring people and you don't do anything about it, it's your fault. And you are liable to death.

That's right. It's the last time we notice, right? You have known better and you didn't do anything about it. You have a poor view of the sanctity of life and you're not doing anything to protect the life that's there.

So I do think that the scriptures justify the use of self-defense and using legal force when necessary, when proportionate, right? Again, if a man comes at me and he just, you know, want to go fisticuffs and it's not for the sake of Christ, he just is like, dude, I hate your face. For a lot of reasons other than just you look off to me. And so he's throwing punches and I'm able to get the guy down, assuming I could get him down.

And then I take lethal force into my hands. That is disproportionate. And I should be held accountable for the manner in which I have tried to defend myself.

Some people don't understand that they go, well, it's just, you know, use lethal force all

the time whenever you've been attacked. But again, that's, we also have to understand Jesus, when he's talking about the private sphere as much as possible, you should take it, right? And that's in the context of being, I mean, the Sermon on the Mount begins with the Beatitudes, right? When he talks to the Blessed with the Peacemakers, "For they shall be called sons of God, blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That's the, it's like the preamble to the Sermon on the Mount, right? So we read the Sermon on the Mount through the context of the Beatitudes. So when you're getting smacked because for the sake of righteousness, you turn the other cheek.

And that's, that's a constant theme and testimony throughout the New Testament. Yeah. But if you're just being beaten up, because somebody wants to beat you up and it has no context for the kingdom, then you have the right to defend yourself, proportionately.

Can you speak real quick to Jesus, Jesus's very specific word of peacemaker, not peacekeeper, the difference between those two things? Yeah. So in one sense, there's a difference between just keeping peace and pursuing peace, right? Yeah. And if your Jesus is specifically talking about attempting to make peace, which again, is the establishment of righteousness.

That's what constitutes peace. So we should be about that business, right? The constitution of applying a righteous standard to bring about peace. We don't just keep the peace.

Well, in one sense, we can't keep the peace because there is no peace, right? Yeah. We're an enmity with God and we're an enmity with one another. In order to be peacemakers, we bring the gospel to bear.

Yeah. Right. So that is in a sense what peacemakers do.

We make peace where hostility is present and that peace is made through the gospel. Yes. Right.

So exactly. I think that's at least one way of kind of distinguishing the two. No.

Yes. Yeah, exactly. Okay.

So I do have class at 1030. I don't know, you guys got stuff to do today. So we can kind of wrap this up.

But one, I think we basically hit kind of the core of just war theory, which is, I kind of just wanted to talk about it and some of the things I was unsure of, like at the beginning when we talked about the Old Testament stuff. But what did you think of the concept of like some of the, some of the secondary stuff like last resort, we can get into that. Those are a little bit more ambiguous.

So we could like, we could have longer, we could do an hour podcast, probably on each one of the secondary principles of last resort or things like that. But what did you think about Supreme emergency from Winston Churchill in World War Two, that it seemed to me like a teleological kind of ethic that the ends justify the means because of your circumstance has now absolved you from this accountability to morality. And do you remember that section when he talks about that? Not, not particular.

That one's not standing. Okay. So like, maybe this will jog your memory, like at like halfway into World War Two, Winston Churchill, like gave a speech where he talks about which chapter, I'll just pull it up.

It's question, it's question 83. He talks about it in another question too, but he actually gives them the longest treatment to it there. Oh, wait, after this, let's do one more thing about the after war.

Okay. I thought that stuff was really cool. I'd never thought about that, that when you go to war, you have to also consider what happens after the war, you're supposed to help rebuild and do things like that.

And that makes sense as a Christian that you should uphold life. Like you shouldn't just decimate them and leave them. Right.

Although it wasn't just where you should help rebuild. But in his, one of his speeches in World War Two, he talks about the time is that the times we're in and the circumstances have now caused us to be in a supreme emergency where now we can start killing combatants. I'm sorry, not combatants.

We can start doing some of these secondary things are some of these ethical considerations of war can now kind of go out the window because of how dire the situation is for humanity. Like if Hitler wins, humanity is destroyed. So we can't know, we can no longer adhere to ethical considerations because of Hitler's just that evil.

We have to, by all means necessary, we have to, we have to make sure that he does not prevail. Yes. Exactly.

And the, the like term for whatever is supreme emergency, but that's a better way to put it. Like fighting dirty in war. It does seem like a teleological ethic, which is not, it's not good because the ends do not justify the means.

So what do you think about that? If you, is that, do you remember that part now a little bit? It's jogged my memory just a bit. Let me read the concluding chapter from that particular section. It says, if Christians are to take seriously the doctrines of divine providence and sovereignty, they must consider how those doctrines can be applied to supreme emergencies.

Even when we take seriously the above warning by Johnson, she quoted just above that paragraph. We allow that it is possible both to uphold these pivotal doctrines and still accept any of the five options regarding supreme emergency set forth by warrant. As authors, we are inclined to favor either the third option, strict respect for jute, use in bellow, regardless of supreme emergency or the fifth option, supreme emergencies and moral tragedy, prudential strategy.

Although we freely acknowledge the strong disagreement would exist among Christians, regardless of those disagreements, what we strenuously maintain is that providence and sovereignty are never to be discarded in discussions of supreme emergency. Such doctrines do permit belief in the possibility of a supreme emergency, but they also make the discussion more complex. It personally, again, personally, I would, I would want to advocate for what they describe as the third option, strict respect for the use in bellow, regardless of supreme emergency.

There are ways in which forces to be used in war and we have gotten to abide by them. And I do think that when we begin to say things like non-combatants, whether or not they die, it just doesn't matter anymore because the threat is so imminent. We have moved away from what we are affirming as foundational aspects to just war theory.

Yeah. Right. I think that that's a land there.

I mean, there, it just, it's hard for me to believe that you have exhausted every single possibility for engagement in war and how you're supposed to use force in war, which is use in bellow, right? Yeah. That you've exhausted every option. And now the only option is to wipe out non-combatants as well, which was one of the things that was overlooked really when you start talking about dropping of atomic bombs, right? Yeah.

So it's like, it's, it's such a severe emergency or supreme emergency that we can overlook the lives of non-combatants. Yeah. So that would, that would be the third one.

Yes. Where I would tend to land and as they know, you know, there's going to be some disagreements of opinion there. Some might feel that when you get to that state, you're able to fight dirty as well.

Personally, I would, I would argue that we would receive our commendation based off of how well we apply a consistent ethic across the board and not do a utilitarianism. Yeah. Like at the end of the day, supreme emergency is the end is now justified means.

Yeah. Right. It's, this is the goal and the ends will justify the means to that goal.

I think utilitarian ethics should never be applied, at least not in isolation. Yeah. So that's, that's kind of where I would, I would land.

Yeah. And making sure that we follow a strict respect. Yep.

And basically it's, they fought dirty first by like Hitler started putting building munition factories in the middle of a town where people live. So he, he started kind of playing dirty first, but it's, you know, when you even think about it's sports, like, do you commend somebody when they prevail, even though the other team is playing dirty and getting all the calls or do you commit them when they play dirty as well? And at the end of the day, it's like, this is now a mockery of the sport. And we are, we don't applaud that.

That's not morally upright. Like even though you won, you fought fire with fire and that's not, that doesn't make sense. Right.

Yeah. And in those instances, we tend to prize the teams that are actually honoring the sport and the rules. Yeah.

The rules of engagement have been followed even if the team that won completely chucked him out the window. Exactly. The team that won is dishonored.

The team that upheld the rules of the sport are honored. And that would be where I would tend to fall. I mean, because I do think that in just war theory is, it's compatible with natural law and special revelation.

It derives from both. And in that sense, we should be about, and like, like they mentioned, the strict respect for use of the other, this is how you're going to use force in war. And you should use it consistently and not allow external circumstances, even if it's a severe or supreme emergency to somehow attain to our understanding of now, okay, you know, things, things have gotten so bad.

People have fought dirty for so long. It's our turn to fight dirty. I just, it's hard for me to consider a commendation again.

I mean, especially when non-combatants are involved. Right. I mean, that's, I just don't see us receiving non or a commendation from the Lord when you've just annihilated, you know, hundreds of thousands of non-combatants in order to stop a threat.

Now again, you can talk about what about the total amounts of, and then those are all, those are, those tend to be hypothetical. Yeah. That was exactly the reasoning Truman did for when he dropped Nagasaki.

Just, we can either follow the islands and have X amount of casualties or we can let the war continue and see, you know, an exponential increase. And really at the end of the day, what I think this book helped me do a lot of what I hope other Christians would pick something up, send more and read about it. It helped me understand just how difficult it is to make these decisions.

When I'm very, as a citizen, I'm very critical of the American government. When they

make a decision, then it's like, man, that's tough. Like it's not easy to make these decisions.

You have to consider, especially as a Christian, there's a lot of biblical principles you need to consider and make sure that you are honoring God and what he's told you and revealed to you. And I really like that about this book because I kind of treated war flippantly before that where it's like, oh, it's obvious what's right. And it's like, it's just not, it is, this is a difficult, war is just very messy.

So it's, it's more difficult than I thought. And I thought that was good. Well, one reality too, as we're, as we're being more conformed to the image of Jesus, we're being sanctified more and more, you know, being formed one image of glory to the next.

The reality is what we once thought was just so plain and so horrible. We're like, maybe I should have practiced a little bit of silence, you know, away seems right to a man until he's, you know, someone else comes along. With his case, he presents this case.

The only reality is I'm the one who's coming along later and asking, was I right about what I was thinking? Maybe, maybe not. So you're right. It is there.

It's very complex. And when we, things are just very straight. I mean, there are things that are straight forward, right? But then there are others that are just way too complex for us to approach it with some kind of simplistic way of understanding issues before us.

So I hope that people would find the book helpful. It was War, Peace and Christianity by, what were the author's names again? Jay Darl Charles and Timothy Jay Demme. One of them, and I can't remember which one, was an Navy.

So Timothy Demme was a US Naval War College and Navy commander. Yeah. And then I think the other guy just was a Westminster Theological Seminary, like PhD.

Yeah. And books published by Crossway. Oh, a hundred questions.

Really good. Really helpful. And addresses a lot of different issues.

Yeah. I guess my last little comment real quick. I, what I was talking about earlier, the, the post bellum or whatever, after more considerations, I think that's so cool.

And I think that to me was one of the most biblical. Well, I mean, it's all, it's all biblical. But in terms of the most clear, it's like, if you're going to destroy something, you ought to be willing to build it back up.

Just, you know, in Ecclesiastes, there's a time for war, there's a time for peace, there's a time to break down, there's a time to build back up. So it's, if you think it's a time to break down, there's going to come a time to build it back up. And you need to be, you need to be considering that in macro scale, going to war, but also at the micro level in

your household and your family and your relationships and all these things like that to me seems like general equity of, of, of applying a principle, a biblical principle.

I thought that was really cool. It's something I don't even think about when I think about war, that what's going to happen afterwards? Are we going to stay and help these people rebuild? Are we going to, like the, you know, like the Jews afterwards, the Holocaust, you know, the only reason they have their nation back. Right.

Well, and, and one of the realities is we've experienced that firsthand, right? We've experienced the first end of being broken and then being built back. Yes. Right.

That's what happens in conversion, right? We are broken and the Lord rebuilds us. We're born again. Yeah.

And, and if we've experienced that personally, then we can begin to understand the importance of that practically say in post-fellow situations, right? Is this after the war reality is we should be about the business of building up what's been torn down for the glory of God and the good of those individuals that we're building this up for. Yeah. And, um, the, the, the being commended after war of being righteous in the midst of it, the people group that you fought that they're not bitter towards a Christian nation.

Like the, the way we handle things in the middle East that makes Muslim people hate America because we haven't handled things perfectly. If we did everything, if we, if we helped rebuild and we did things in a correct manner instead of just destabilizing the region and then kind of like leaving, you know, and not really helping that does even for the witness of the gospel of being labeled as a Christian nation. Like it does, there's repercussions there, you know, so.

Yeah. Kind of seems to go back to what we were talking about, like as far as consistency and how we apply the principles of just war and not, uh, succumbing to it and to justify the means because there will be it that the consistency mitigates against further consequences after the war. Like you said, peace involves to an extent reconciliation and righteousness being, uh, prevailing within a region.

And I mean, if you start fighting dirty at the level that, uh, the enemy nation is fighting, then it's just, it will, whether you win or not, it will breed animosity for generations to come and it will lead to further conflict rather than meaning that there's not, not a stable sense of true peace. Yes. And so if you, if you demonstrate, if you demonstrate righteousness in the execution of just war, I think that there will be more opportunity for reconciliation, more opportunity for peace.

And yeah, agreed. Well said. All right, cool.

Okay. Okay. Okay.

Jesus.