



Faith and ... Violence

Date: 18th August 2019

Speakers: Adam Pipe & Andy Smith

Key Verses: Matthew 5:38-48, (See also Matthew 5:9 & 5:21-22)

Talk Summary

'Peace is at the heart of the gospel. As followers of Jesus in a divided and violent world, we are committed to finding non-violent alternatives and to learning how to make peace between individuals, within and among churches, in society, and between nations.' (This statement may be useful for discussing together.)

What is violence?

Violence: behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill someone or something.

'Therefore, if you do some sort of harm to someone else, whether it's bodily, emotional, or mental harm without his or her consent, then you have violated that person. You have committed an act of violence.'

—Preston Sprinkle

- When we consider a subject like this we must remember that it is Jesus who perfectly reveals what God is like (Heb 1:3) and that the Bible must be interpreted through the lens of Jesus.
- Peace is at the heart of the gospel because the mission of God is to restore shalom to the whole of creation. We are called to participate in God's ongoing Shalom project (Matt 5:9). In the new heavens and new earth there will be no more violence and we are called to work for that now.
- Violence starts in our heart and minds and often manifests in our speech (Matthew 5: 21-22).
- Matthew 5:38-48. 'Eye for eye' was supposed to limit violence but by the time of Jesus was being used to justify revenge. Jesus taught that we must not use violence to resist evil however that doesn't mean we are passive doormats.
- The examples Jesus gives in 38-41 show creative non-violent alternatives which oppose evil and restore human dignity.

- **This video** (approx. 15 mins) **would be great to watch with a small group** and illustrates the meanings of 5:38-41 <https://youtu.be/aCgBSleCbm8> (it is a bit 1980's but is a brilliant summary with visual illustrations)
- At the heart of Jesus' third way is the love of enemies (5:43). Jesus takes the familiar OT command, to love your neighbour, and stretches it to its limits. The word for enemies in Greek means all types of enemies religious, national and personal. Loving enemies entails doing them good and praying blessing upon them. Agape love.
- Boyd *'The distinct mark of the reign of God is that God's people love and do good to people who don't love them and don't treat them well'*
- Jesus models this with his life and death. Jesus destroys the myth that violence is redemptive.

What you think the Bible teaches us about violence? And what questions does this subject raise for you?

Who are our enemies today?

What are we doing to turn them into neighbours?

Further Resources -These conversations are brilliant and worth referring people to:

<https://bridgetown.church/teaching/gospel-of-matthew/non-violence-interview-with-preston-sprinkle/>

<https://bridgetown.church/teaching/gospel-of-matthew/non-violence-interview-with-dr-tim-mackie/>

<https://bridgetown.church/teaching/gospel-of-matthew/non-violence-interview-with-sister-rosemary-nyirumbe/>

<https://bridgetown.church/teaching/gospel-of-matthew/non-violence-interview-with-dr-gerry-breshears/>

<https://bridgetown.church/teaching/gospel-of-matthew/non-violence-interview-with-dr-greg-boyd/>

<https://bridgetown.church/teaching/gospel-of-matthew/non-violent-interview-with-bruxy-cravy/>

Group Discussion Questions

Welcome

If you don't eat together as a small group then you might want to start the group with some kind of ice breaker question. Remember to introduce yourselves when there are new people.

Worship

Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.

(Small group worship resources can be found at bvc.so/sgworship)

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:

- How is 'Read and Listen' going? What has God been speaking to you about this week? (*Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it*)

Word (see Talk Summary points above)

We want our thoughts and lives to be shaped by what God says in the Bible. If most of your group weren't there on a Sunday base the discussion on the main passage rather than the talk.

- What from this week's talk/Bible passage stood out to you, and/or you found challenging? Why?
- Follow Jesus: What does this passage teach me about God?
- Live life to the full: What does this passage teach me about myself?
- Make a difference: What is God inviting you to do or change as a result of what we have discussed? (You can give everyone a minute or so in silence to write it down) Spend some time praying for one another.

Witness

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?

A few notices to highlight to your small groups. Details for all events can be found on the website www.birminghamvineyard.com, or on social media (Facebook, Insta Twitter):

- **Community Sunday: Funday & Worship Night** – this Sunday, 25th August

Once a month we have Community Sunday, which is an opportunity for us to gather in communities throughout the city to bless our local areas, rather than meeting in our normal church space for service. August's Community Sunday will feature two events, details on bvc.so/funday

Community Funday

Join us and bring along friends and family to the Community Funday at South Site! All of our groups and services will be gathering together for a shared picnic, games, a bouncy castle and loads of fun, from 11am-2pm!

Worship Night

As well as the Community Funday on the 25th, there is also an opportunity to come to an evening of worship, starting at 5:30pm at the City Centre site. Come along to City Centre site for extended worship, a chance to pray for each other, and most importantly, to hang out with Jesus!

- **Kingdom Impact Conference - 4th – 5th October**

This is a weekend of equipping for Vineyard churches across the country, and our prayer for this conference is that each of us will grow in having a powerful and effective kingdom impact on the world around us. As we gather we'll worship, learn together and have plenty of time to pray for one another, expectant that God is going to meet us.

Go to bvc.so/kingdomimpact to find a serving form, find out more details about the weekend, and to book tickets.

- **New Sermon Series - Starts Sunday, 1st September**

We've got a new sermon series starting up the first Sunday in September, called "Who Is This Man?".

Each week we'll look at first-hand accounts of when Jesus entered into a situation or a relationship, and the difference that He made to people's lives.

This series will be very welcoming and easy to connect with, no matter what your experience with God or church may be, so what a great opportunity to invite someone new. Go to bvc.so/whoisthisman for details