

Jesus' teachings on peace are not an afterthought to his purposes here on earth
Nor are they merely a sub-plot of his ministry
The call to peace is woven throughout Jesus' message
Jesus begins his ministry on earth with these words...

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:18-19

This is his mission statement—his purpose on this earth

Jesus' Teachings on Peace—an Ethic for all Christians—are throughout all 4 Gospels

Rather than a unique Quaker thing—or the Peace Churches—Mennonite, Brethren, Quaker
Jesus call all people—all followers of Jesus—to live in the way of peace

1. The Love Command!

- Jesus commands his followers to love God with all of our hearts, souls, minds and strength; and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt 22:37-40; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27).
- The example of a neighbor is given in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- The trademark by which Jesus' followers are known is sacrificial love for others (John 13:34-35).

2. "Love (even) Your Enemies"

- Jesus calls his followers to love even our enemies, and to pray for those who spitefully use us (Matt 5:43-48).
- Even the Gentiles and tax gatherers can return good for good, or evil for evil; Jesus' followers are called to live by a higher standard (Matt 5:47).

3. Renounce Vengeance, and Live by a "Third Way."

- Nonviolent generosity creates new possibilities (Matt 5:38-42).
- When slapped, stand with dignity; turn the other cheek, risking a forehead.
- If a cloak requested, give also your undergarments, exposing the system.
- Carry a load twice the distance requested as a means of seizing the initiative.

4. Our Kingdom is Other—the Kingdom of God

- Jesus' Kingdom is not of this world – if it were, his disciples would fight to defend it – the truth can never be furthered by force (John 18:36-37).
- But we are to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness, and all we truly need will be given us (Matt 6:33).

5. Servanthood, not Domination, is "Success"

- Jesus' Kingdom turns things upside down: the first will be last, and the last will be first.
- The Gentiles lord it over their subjects, but not so among Jesus' followers (Mark 10:42).
- The one wishing to be first must be the servant of all (Matt 18:4; Mark 9:35; 10:42-45; Luke 22:25-25).

6. "Put away your sword"

- Jesus commands his followers to put away their swords (Matt 26:52-53; Luke 22:49-51; John 18:11).
- Those wishing to live by the sword will also die by it (Matt 26:52).
- Despite its destruction, the way God works is to raise "this temple" in three days (John 2:13-25; Mark 14:58; 15:29).

7. “Forgive; do not Avenge”

- Jesus commands his followers to forgive even the undeserving—not 7, but 77 times (Matt 18:21-35).
- This is the character of God's forgivingness, and it is also the kind to be emulated by Jesus' followers—have mercy on others, as Christ had mercy on us (Matt 18:33).
- As we forgive, so are we forgiven (The Lord's Prayer in Matt 6:12; Luke 11:4).
- Jesus' command to us after his resurrection: Forgive others and they are forgiven (John 20:23).

8. “Embrace the Cross”

- Jesus calls for his followers to embrace the cross (Matt 10:38-39; Mark 8:34-38; John 12:25-26).
- He who wishes to save his life will lose it, but he who is willing to release his life for the sake of Christ and his way will paradoxically find it (Matt 8:35; 16:25; Luke 9:25).
- Following Jesus may not protect one from persecution – it may provoke it (Matt 5:10-12).

9. “Blessed are the Peacemakers”

- “...for they will be called children of God” (Matt 5:9).

10. “Peace I give you, not of this world”

- Jesus promises his followers that he will bless us with peace – not as the world gives, bolstered by outward symbols of security, but inward peace – that overcomes the world (John 14:25-27).
- Jesus gives us his peace by means of the Holy Spirit; he invites us to believe (John 20:21-31).
- That is the only way to overcome the world (John 16:33) – by trusting in Jesus.

As followers of Jesus—we are to live as peacemakers

We follow Jesus in the way of peace

It is a lifestyle

It is a commitment

It is daily trusting in the living Christ who is present with us today

It is a willingness to suffer the consequences

It is both bold and modest

It is both loud and silent

It is always Listening for nudges, next steps, way forward and is willing to follow the Leading

It is not easy and may be very costly, but we choose faithfulness over ease

*We choose to be peacemakers because we believe it to be the faithful response to our decision to follow Jesus. We have decided to reject the option of violence, believing that peace is not only possible, but often practical. We choose love. We choose life. We believe in miracle because we choose Christ.
(Mennonite Church Peace and Justice Committee)*

Sermon based on *Following Jesus in the way of Peace*, resources from Northwest Yearly Meeting of Friends for use during Peace Month January 2017. Sermon suggestions written by Paul Anderson and Cherice Bock. For this message, the following resources were used...

Paul Anderson, “Jesus and Peace” in *The Churches Peace Witness*, Marlin Miller and Barbara Nelson Gingerich, eds. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994): 104-30. See also Paul Anderson, *Following Jesus: The Heart of Christian Faith and Practice* (Newberg, OR: Barclay Press, 2013): 170-171.