

Wars and Rumors of Wars

Wars are happening all around the world and even more are rumored about to start. Today we want to discuss wars and rumors of wars and the Christian response.

Introduction

This weekend Israel came under attack by terrorists and this has started a war there. A year and a half ago Russia invaded Ukraine starting a war that has gone on for 20 months with no end in sight. There are more civil wars and conflicts around the globe currently going on and are almost too many to count.

Hearing about all of these and seeing the devastation and loss of life can cause us to be alarmed and dismayed. It can put doubt in our minds about where God is in all of this. Today we are going to talk about wars and rumors of wars and how God is present in the midst of all of the mess in the world today.

Common Goal

We are all feeling the pain of wars and rumors of wars. It has been this way since the beginning of time, and it will continue to be this way until the very end.

When two armies meet on the field of battle, each soldier is hoping for the same thing. Every one of them is hoping to come out of the fight alive. It does not matter which side they are on. At that moment, all the soldiers are hoping for the same thing.

This is a reminder that, despite our differences, we all have a common goal. We all want peace and stability in our lives. We want to live without fear of war and rumors of war and we want to live in a world of peace and understanding. This is why it is so important to remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:4-8 which says:

Matthew 24:4-8

(4) Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. (5) For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many. (6) You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. (7) Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. (8) All these are the beginning of birth pains."

Jesus is reminding us that we should not be troubled by wars and rumors of wars because they are part of life. These, along with disasters, famines, and unrest, are signs of the coming of the end, and Jesus' return.

We must focus on what matters most especially during these times; our faith in God and fulfilling the plan and purpose that he has prepared and equipped us for through the Holy Spirit.

Love Your Enemies

We recently shared a series of messages on the Beatitudes. This is a part of Jesus' sermon on the mount found in Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7. Jesus takes some time to compare and contrast some commonly



accepted rules with how we should respond to things as Christians. One of these has to do with enemies.

We can draw strength from the example set by Jesus when He taught us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Matthew 5:44 says:

Matthew 5:44

(44) But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

This is a difficult teaching, but it is also one that brings hope. It reminds us that no matter how dark it may seem, we can still choose to be agents of peace and understanding. Jesus goes on to ask what does it credit someone to love their friends and family. That is normal and expected. It is easy. Loving your enemies and praying for them is not.

When we pray for our enemies we must put aside our pain and hurt. Our preconceived notions about the other must be set aside.

We had the opportunity to travel to Cuba a few years ago. It was an amazing experience. It is very difficult for Americans to travel to the island nation of Cuba. Travel there has been restricted for Americans for approximately 60 years.

I had the opportunity to talk with a shopkeeper. He was a wonderful man about my age and he had a souvenir shop near a village we had just toured. I was paying for a wood carving he had made when he said to me, "You know, you and I are brothers. It is our governments that do not get along, but you and I can."

I do not know if this man was a Christian, but I felt a connection with him, and the way he looked into my eyes and called us brothers stirred in my soul. The US Government considers Cuba an enemy, I suppose, but I know there are people there who are brothers and sisters in Christ. I also know that every single person who lives there was created by God with a plan and a purpose for their life.

As we hear of wars and rumors of wars, remember to pray for everyone affected whether you agree with their politics or not.

Hope in God Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ

Let us remember the words of Isaiah 2:4, which says:

Isaiah 2:4

(4) He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

This verse reminds us of the power of God to bring peace and understanding to even the most hostile of situations.

God has a plan and a purpose for each of us. He also has a timeline for this world that only he knows. When God set all of creation into motion he knew what was going to happen. He knew that we were not



perfect. He also knew that there would be wars, disasters, strife, and evil in the world. But he had a plan, from the very beginning.

God's timing is his own. Even Jesus doesn't know when God will send him back for us. Look at what Jesus says in Matthew 24:36:

Matthew 24:36

(36) "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

Our hope and faith must be in God through Jesus Christ. God is the master designer of all creation and he knows the minds and hearts of all mankind. Jesus teaches us that he will return and will ultimately usher in the peace that Isaiah prophesied about.

We must trust that God's plan is better than anything that we could think of. If we are going to follow Jesus, we must follow all of his teachings, and that means having full faith and confidence in God, even when we do not understand what is going on in the world or our own lives.

This is the only way to not allow wars and rumors of wars to draw our spirit down, darken our hearts, and cloud our judgment.

Conclusion

Remember, despite the wars and rumors of wars that we face, we can still choose to be instruments of peace. We can still choose love over hate, compassion over cruelty, and understanding over ignorance. We have the power to turn swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks. We have the power to bring peace to our world. We have the ultimate answer to all of the strife in this world, and that is Jesus.

Do not be troubled by wars and rumors of wars. Instead, be agents of peace and understanding and ambassadors of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let us be instruments to bring God's hope and mercy into our world. Because it is only through Jesus that true peace can be found.

