

**Power - War & Peace**  
**Genesis 4**

Trinity Sunday

**Father's Day Prayer**

Loving God, Our Father, we give you thanks for the many gifts you have given us; the gift of life, the gift of those who love us and especially, today, we thank you for the gift of our fathers.

We ask your blessing upon our fathers who gave us rules to live by, standards to uphold, joys to cherish, faith to live by, hopes worth dreaming of and who blessed our lives with their unselfish and unconditional love.

We ask your blessing upon those fathers who have striven to balance the demands of work, marriage, and children with an honest awareness of both joy and sacrifice. Let us praise those fathers who, lacking a good model for a father, have worked to become a good father.

We pray for those fathers who by their own account were not always there for their children, but who continue to offer those children, now grown, their love and support. We pray for those fathers who have been wounded by the neglect and hostility of their children.

May you redeem our memories of fathers who were hurtful to us. Help us to rise above our disappointments, frustrations and bitterness to forgive and may we be granted the opportunity to be reconciled. May this not distort our understanding of you.

We ask your blessing upon those fathers who, despite divorce, have remained in their children's lives.

We ask your blessing upon adoptive fathers, that they may always know their special role of being a true father, a revelation of God's love for their children.

We ask your blessing upon those fathers who, as stepfathers, freely choose the obligation of fatherhood and earned their step children's love and respect.

We ask your blessing upon those fathers who have lost a child to death, and continue to hold that child in their heart; that their faith may give them hope, and their family and friends support and console them. May they be given continuing strength and courage and

We ask your blessing upon those men who have no children, but cherish the next generation as if they were their own.

We ask your blessing upon those men who have "fathered" us in their role as mentors and guides.

We ask your blessing upon those men who are about to become fathers; may they openly delight in their children.

We remember our fathers who have died and for the unique way they revealed for us your love. We ask that you keep them in your care until the time comes for us to join them in your Kingdom.

And we ask your blessing upon the fathers standing here before us.

Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.

Give them the strength to live the faithful and loving lives you call them to live.

Protect and guide them. Keep them in your care and grant that their children may always honor them with a spirit of profound respect.

We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord. AMEN.

**Genesis 4 (NIV)**

*Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man."<sup>2</sup> Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.*

*Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.<sup>3</sup> In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD.<sup>4</sup> And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,<sup>5</sup> but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.*

<sup>6</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? <sup>7</sup> If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."

<sup>8</sup> Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

<sup>10</sup> The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. <sup>11</sup> Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup> When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

<sup>13</sup> Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can bear. <sup>14</sup> Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

<sup>15</sup> But the LORD said to him, "Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. <sup>16</sup> So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

<sup>17</sup> Cain made love to his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch. <sup>18</sup> To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech.

<sup>19</sup> Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah. <sup>20</sup> Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. <sup>21</sup> His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play stringed instruments and pipes. <sup>22</sup> Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah.

<sup>23</sup> Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, listen to me;  
wives of Lamech, hear my words.  
I have killed a man for wounding me,  
a young man for injuring me.

<sup>24</sup> If Cain is avenged seven times,  
then Lamech seventy-seven times."

<sup>25</sup> Adam made love to his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth, saying, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him." <sup>26</sup> Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh.

At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD.

## **The Current State of War**

There are currently 44 armed conflicts, wars in the world, as listed by the UN and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program.

10 are listed as major conflicts that average over 1000 deaths per year.

The oldest major conflict is Afghanistan which has been considered to have been at war in the current era since 1978 with a death toll of an estimated 1.4-2.1 million people since it's start.

Last year (2013) there were 5,648 war related deaths.

The forgotten Somali Civil War which has been happening since 1991 has claimed over half a million lives.

I can go on with the list of major conflicts:

Nigeria, Egypt, North-West Pakistan, Mexico (Drug War), Iraq, South Sudan, Central Africa and Syria.

And then there are almost 40 other "minor" wars.

The newest of which is the Ukrainian conflict.

I don't want you to just think about war.

I don't want to just talk about war.

I want you to feel war.

I want to show you war.

Listen for the heart of God.

[Caveat: There are very disturbing images - in fact all of them. You may want to leave the room or close your eyes.]

### **Prayer:**

Gracious Lord,  
we dream of a world free of poverty and oppression,  
and we yearn for a world free of vengeance and violence.  
we pray for your peace.

When our hearts ache for the victims of war and oppression,  
help us to remember that you healed people simply by touching them...,  
and give us faith in our ability to comfort and heal bodies and minds and spirits  
that have been broken by violence.

When the injustice of this world seems too much for us to handle,  
help us to remember that you fed five thousand people  
with only five loaves of bread and two fish...,  
and give us hope that what we have to offer will turn out to be enough, too.

When fear of the power and opinions of others  
tempts us not to speak up for the least among us,  
help us to remember that you dared to turn over the tables of money changers...,  
and give us the courage to risk following you without counting the cost.

When we feel ourselves fill with anger at those who are violent and oppressive,  
help us remember that you prayed for those who killed you...,  
and give us compassion for our enemies, too.

When we tell ourselves that we have given all we can to bring peace to this world,  
help us to remember your sacrifice... ,  
and give us the miracle of losing a little more of ourselves  
in serving you and our neighbors.

Walk with us, Lord, as we answer your call to be peacemakers.  
Increase our compassion, our generosity and our hospitality for the least of your children.  
Give us the courage, the patience, the serenity, the self-honesty  
and the gentleness of spirit that are needed in a world filled with turmoil and terror. Amen.

~ written by Jack Knox, pastor of Salem (Oregon) Mennonite Church

### **War & Peace in the OT**

Violence and Warfare is the result of Sin & Envy.

The first murder of brother against brother.

This is the state of all violence, all war.

The insidious and hidden nature of sin emerges.

It passes through the generations - the self-interest of Cain.

It coexists with the marks of civilization - industry, art, waiting to spring.

Civilization is not far from murder.

Vengeance rather than Justice.

### **Justice**

The mosaic laws exist not only to provide a clear understanding of how we interact with God.

They also exist to limit the nature of escalation and vengeance.

### **Judgement**

Mercy and patience is in fact the first thing that God extends to an errant culture.

God deals not in mere individual perspective (although he sees each individual and makes allowance)  
he deals also and sometime primarily a people - whether a nation, empire, people group, or city state.  
He is after all, making a people for himself of every tribe and nation as one.  
In the Old Testament there is a concept of the cup of God's wrath than when full will be poured out.  
It is like a scale between the acts of evil versus acts of repentance.  
When the acts of evil bottom out they trigger forewarned judgment.  
And so whether it is Sodom or Gomorrah, destroyed by the hand of God,  
Or Jericho, in which Israel served as the sword of judgment for an entire culture.  
Or Israel and Judah themselves who reap God's judgment served by the pagan Assyrian or Babylonian empires,  
Or Ninevah in the story of Jonah who trigger justice but instead find mercy when they repent.  
And finally the last day, where all accounts will be paid in full at the final judgment.

Peace "Shalom" is the Desire of God

Despite how God curbs evil through justice and judgment, he always, always gives and invitation to change.  
God desires peace for all peoples, not war and not violence and not judgement.

### Micah 4:1-3

*In the last days*

*the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established  
as the highest of the mountains;  
it will be exalted above the hills,  
and peoples will stream to it.*

<sup>2</sup> *Many nations will come and say,*

*"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the temple of the God of Jacob.*

*He will teach us his ways,  
so that we may walk in his paths."*

*The law will go out from Zion,  
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

<sup>3</sup> *He will judge between many peoples  
and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.*

*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.*

### **War & Peace in the NT**

Violence and Warfare are an assumed reality of a sinful world.

Jesus tells us that there will be wars and rumors of wars.

It is the state of the fallen world - our world - even today.

Sermon on the Mount & The Den of Robbers

Turn the Other Cheek

This is often seen as a pacifist statement by Jesus.

But then how do we make sense of his patiently making a whip  
with which he lays on the merchants in the temple as he drives them out - kicking over tables?

What do we make of Jesus asking if his disciples brought a sword  
but then when Peter uses it he tells him to stop and that

"he who lives by the sword shall die by the sword?"

Is this just a proverb or a warning?

Jesus both submits to but is defiant towards the authorities of his day.

When establishing a theology, do not base it on one passage alone,  
but take note of the entire witness of Scripture.

As it stands, Jesus is neither pacifist nor warmonger.

He is, however the Prince of Peace.

Tells us to overcome Evil with Good

But this is followed directly by Romans 13

Which endorsing obedience to the state "for it does not bear the sword for nothing."

We have already discussed power and politics and the limits of this passage last week.

But we actually see a theme from the Old Testament resurfacing.

God uses the powers that are to curb evil - even if they themselves neither know nor acknowledge him.

#### Personal Ethics vs. State Responsibility

What we do see emerging is the distinct difference between personal and state ethics.

Personal ethics primarily are about mercy and peace.

State responsibility is about justice and well-being of entire peoples.

#### Peace "Shalom" is still the Desire of God

Jesus is not called the Prince of Peace for nothing.

At the coming of Jesus the angels sang,

"Peace on Earth and goodwill to humanity upon whom his favour rests."

He says, "My peace I give to you - a peace that the world cannot give." (Jn 14:27)

Jesus repeats again and again - "Peace be with You."

In Hebrew it is Shalom.

This is not your hip hopper's "peace out y'all"

It is what we mean when we pass the peace to one another in the church.

It is peace is not the absence of trouble or even of war - it is the presence of God.

It is the most meaningful desire of goodwill you can grant someone in your life.

It is a blessing beyond compare.

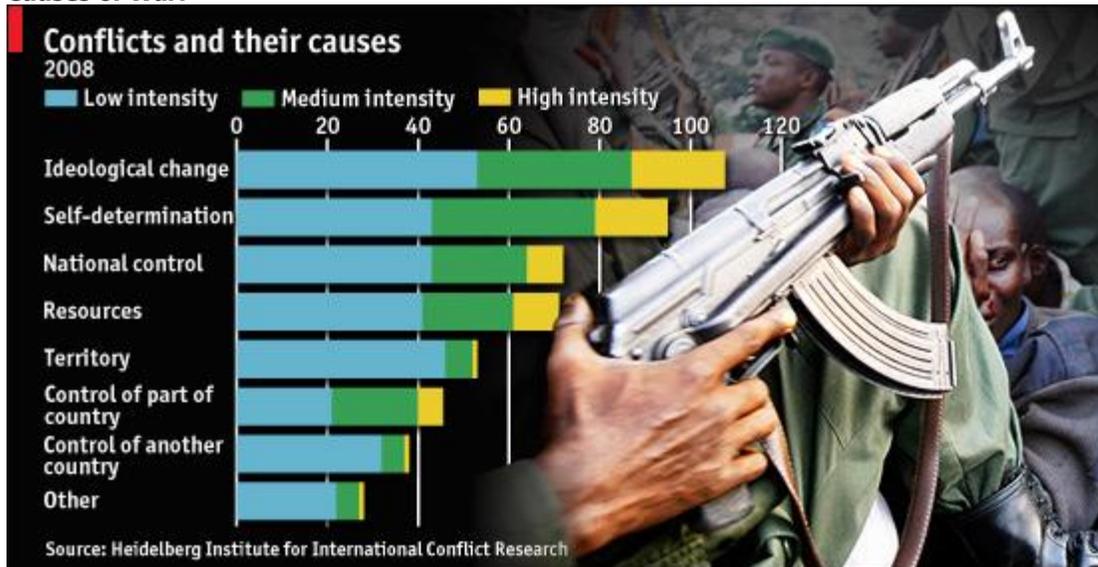
Let us pass the peace.

#### Questions

How should we view pacifism?

How should we view war in the world?

#### Causes of War:



In 2008 there were 9 full scale wars, 130 armed conflicts.

**Pacifism** - The Doctrine/Philosophy of Total Rejection of Violence i.e. War is never justified.

Peace Churches - Brethren, Mennonites (Anabaptist, Amish, Hutterite), Quakers

Understand Jesus as a Pacifist - Turn the Other Cheek

Violence on behalf of a government or country is strictly prohibited for Christians.

Non-resistance to violence.

Limited self-defense.

Can there be peace without war?

### **The Church**

Orthodox Church: "Orthodoxy condemns war in general, for she regards it as a consequence of the evil and sin in the world."

Southern Baptist Convention: "It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war."

### **Just war theory (from Wikipedia)**

#### ***Jus ad bellum***

##### Just cause

The reason for going to war needs to be just and cannot therefore be solely for recapturing things taken or punishing people who have done wrong; innocent life must be in imminent danger and intervention must be to protect life. A contemporary view of just cause was expressed in 1993 when the US Catholic Conference said: "*Force may be used only to correct a grave, public evil, i.e., aggression or massive violation of the basic human rights of whole populations.*"

##### Comparative justice

While there may be rights and wrongs on all sides of a conflict, to overcome the presumption against the use of force, the injustice suffered by one party must significantly outweigh that suffered by the other. Some theorists such as [Brian Orend](#) omit this term, seeing it as fertile ground for exploitation by bellicose regimes.

##### Competent authority

Only duly constituted public authorities may wage war. "A just war must be initiated by a political authority within a political system that allows distinctions of justice. Dictatorships (e.g. Hitler's Regime) or deceptive military actions (e.g. the 1968 US bombing of Cambodia) are typically considered as violations of this criterion. The importance of this condition is key. Plainly, we cannot have a genuine process of judging a just war within a system that represses the process of genuine justice. A just war must be initiated by a political authority within a political system that allows distinctions of justice".

##### Right intention

Force may be used only in a truly just cause and solely for that purpose—correcting a suffered wrong is considered a right intention, while material gain or maintaining economies is not.

##### Probability of success

Arms may not be used in a futile cause or in a case where disproportionate measures are required to achieve success;

##### Last resort

Force may be used only after all peaceful and viable alternatives have been seriously tried and exhausted or are clearly not practical. It may be clear that the other side is using negotiations as a delaying tactic and will not make meaningful concessions.

##### Proportionality

The anticipated benefits of waging a war must be proportionate to its expected evils or harms. This principle is also known as the principle of macro-proportionality, so as to distinguish it from the *jus in bello* principle of proportionality.

In modern terms, just war is waged in terms of self-defense, or in defense of another (with sufficient evidence).

#### ***Jus in bello***

Once war has begun, just war theory (*Jus in bello*) also directs how combatants are to act or should act:

##### Distinction

Just war conduct should be governed by the principle of distinction. The acts of war should be directed towards enemy combatants, and not towards non-combatants caught in circumstances they did not create. The prohibited acts include bombing civilian residential areas that include no military targets, committing acts of terrorism and reprisal against civilians, and even attacking neutral targets (e.g. the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor). Moreover, combatants are not permitted to attack enemy combatants who have surrendered or who have been captured or who are injured and not presenting an immediate lethal threat.

Proportionality  
Military necessity

Just war conduct should be governed by the principle of minimum force. An attack or action must be intended to help in the military defeat of the enemy; it must be an attack on a military objective, and the harm caused to civilians or civilian property must be proportional and not excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. This principle is meant to limit excessive and unnecessary death and destruction.

Fair treatment of prisoners of war

Enemy combatants who surrendered or who are captured no longer pose a threat. It is therefore wrong to torture them or otherwise mistreat them.

No means *malum in se*

Combatants may not use weapons or other methods of warfare which are considered evil, such as mass rape, forcing enemy combatants to fight against their own side or using weapons whose effects cannot be controlled (e.g. nuclear/biological weapons).

**Critique:** Just war theory is relevant only within the cultures and societies that nurture the concept. In reality, there are no rules in war and atrocities are committed (Rape of Nanking, Dresden, Firebombing of Tokyo, Hiroshima & Nagasaki, The Holocaust, Rwandan Genocide, Child Soldiers, etc.)

"War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always an evil, never a good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children." JIMMY CARTER, Nobel Lecture, Dec. 10, 2002

### **Throne of Guns & The Tree of Life**

I went to the British Museum in London last year looking in particular to see two things.

One was related to war - An Assyrian relief that my Old Testament professor Dr. Bruce Waltke had shown us in pictures of the siege of Lachish.

The other was an item I had read about in a book entitled, "A History of the World in 100 Objects."

To truly appreciate this object you have to know something about the nation of Mozambique where it is from.

It is an African Nation on the Eastern coast just across from the island of Madagascar.

It became independent by war after being ruled by Portugal for over 475 years (1500) in 1975.

In 1977 a civil war began between factions that vied for power.

That war lasted for 15 years, 4 months and 4 days.

A million men women and children were killed in the war.

Another 1.7 million people lost everything as they fled the violence.

Even after peace came in 1992, the nation was rife with corruption.

But the object I went to see is not an object of war.

It is an object of peace.

It is called "Throne of Weapons."

Two organizations - Christian Aid and Transforming Arms into Tools started an artist's collective in southern Mozambique.

One of the artists, named Kester, created this chair from weapon parts.

It is a tribute to peace that can be had after suffering.

The face is meant to be a smile

The arch in the back represents the church.

Near this piece I found another commission from the same collective.

Kester and three other artists sculpted the "Tree of Life" with the support of the Mozambican Christian Council.

It is a reference to the Tree in the Garden of Eden which is also present in the Heavenly City of Revelations.

It makes me reflect on how even in a world ravaged by war, we can look forward to a peace, a real peace.

For if we don't have hope for peace, we have nothing.

Allow me to close in the words of the Prophet Micah once again.

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*the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established*

*as the highest of the mountains;*

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to the temple of the God of Jacob.  
He will teach us his ways,  
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The law will go out from Zion,  
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<sup>3</sup> He will judge between many peoples  
and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.  
They will beat their swords into plowshares  
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Nation will not take up sword against nation,  
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