
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **Does God expect people to become martyrs?**

One of our Bible Talk messages revolved around the following question: "**Is it okay to shoot someone breaking into your home?**" A friend came by my house to do some work and mentioned he had heard about this message being posted on our sign in front of the church building. He asked me, "What was that all about?" I explained how Bible Talk worked. I explained we pose a question of the week and post the question on our sign. If people want to know the answer to the question, they have to call the number or go to our website and listen to the answer to the question. Upon hearing this, my friend automatically said, "*Well of course we can shoot an intruder. God doesn't expect us to just sit there and let someone kill us.*"

This is the common reaction I have received from people. Another friend said virtually the same thing to me concerning the very same subject. So the question today's Bible Talk message is asking is this: **Does God expect people to become martyrs? Is it obvious from reading the NT scriptures that God expects Christians to defend themselves and, if necessary, kill and maim others in order to protect their own lives and their own families?** That's what we're asking in this message.

First, I notice that both my friends who said, "*Of course we can shoot an intruder! God doesn't expect us to just sit there and let someone kill us,*" I notice there was no scripture quoted from the Bible. So let me begin by asking: **How do we know what God expects?**

The answer is: **We know what God expects by reading what He has revealed in His word.**

My two friends are using their own opinions. They are basing their judgments on how they feel. They're basing their judgments on what they want God to say. However, what we want and what we feel and what we wish are different than what God has said. If there is a scripture which teaches Christians may defend themselves no-matter-what, let's hear the scripture so we can know what God thinks. Let's not base our faith on our own opinions and human wisdom.

To be fair, one friend did offer a passage. She referred to Lk 22:35-38 where Jesus told His apostles to sell their garments and get swords. Some of those disciples said, "*Lord, look, here are two swords.*" (Lk 22:38) and Jesus, "*It is enough.*" So here are Jesus and His disciples, twelve men. They are soon going to be confronted with a mob who is going to arrest Jesus and kill Him. Jesus said two swords are enough for the occasion. So here are twelve men with only two swords among them. Does that sound like a group of men who are prepared to fight and kill anyone attempting to hurt Jesus?

Q: What was Jesus planning with those two swords? Was He intending His disciples fight and kill and maim people in the mob and save Him from having to die a martyr's death?

A: Not at all. Jesus' was going to use the two swords to teach an object lesson. As you continue reading you find Peter draws one of those swords and tries to defend Jesus and Jesus told Peter, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Mt 26:52). In other words, the very reason Jesus had the disciples obtain the two swords to begin with is so He could purposefully teach them they were not permitted to use the swords to hurt those attacking Him.

If we are not careful, we will eventually rationalize every scenario to the point where no Christian ever has to die for the Lord. No Christian will ever have to lose his life. This is the exact opposite of what the scriptures teach.

Revelation 2:10

¹⁰ Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. **Be faithful until death**, and I will give you the crown of life.

When this passage says, "Be faithful until death," it is teaching that some Christians would be put to death. The passage never says, "Of course God doesn't want you to die or suffer. Of course God wants you to defend yourself and kill those threatening your life." No.

IS THERE NOTHING WE CAN DO?

Before closing, I want to ask one more question: ***Is there nothing a Christian can do? Are we supposed to just stand there and let people kill us?***

What's interesting is that people are envisioning only two possibilities:

- You can just stand there and let an intruder kill you,
- Or you can kill him.

Those are supposedly the only two options available. Is there, however, a third possibility? Is there something a Christian can do short of using lethal force? Yes there is an alternative:

Matthew 10:23

²³ When they persecute you in this city, **flee** to another. ...

Fleeing is an option which Jesus Himself gives. We don't have to "*just stand there and take it.*" We are allowed to flee. However, Jesus never authorized His people to use lethal force to protect their lives or the lives of their families.

The question we're asking today, "***Does God expect people to become martyrs?***" I ask in return: Is there any death more senseless than the death of Jesus? He was the most perfect person who ever lived and He was taken and crucified. This means He not only died, He was tortured till He died. It was senseless and yet Jesus would not allow His disciples to use lethal force to protect Him. As we noticed in Rev 2:10, some of God's people would be persecuted and would have to die. That's a martyr's death.

In closing I would pose the following questions for your consideration:

- Shall we rationalize the need to ever die for the Lord's cause?
- Shall we rationalize to the point where we ignore scripture and base decisions on what we think is reasonable, or shall we look to the scripture first and allow scripture to have the final say in our decisions? What will be the standard of authority in our lives?

Think about this. My hope and prayer is that everyone of us will allow the scripture to have the final say in decisions which we make and if the time ever comes in which we must face a life or death situation, I pray we will have the strength to respond in a scriptural way rather than in a carnal fashion.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on ***Bible Talk***.