

**Peace Sunday 2024**  
Small Group Discussion Questions

Join our congregation for worship in-person or online at 10:30 am each Sunday via our [Grantham Church YouTube Channel](#). If you ever miss a message, the sermons are always posted to the [recent sermons page](#) at our website and at the [Grantham Church Podcast](#) the following day, along with the sermon slides and small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

**Sunday, April 7th, 2024**



**Peace Sunday 2024 | Pursuing Peace in Israel & Palestine**

**Sermon Title:** Does God Have Pets?

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 10:24-35

**Sermon Focus:** An armed conflict between Israel and Hamas-led Palestinian militants has been raging for months now. How should Christ-followers respond to what is happening in Israel and Palestine? The weight of biblical teaching is that God loves the whole world, that all humans are created in God's image, and that God does not have favorites. Listen as guest speaker Daryl Byler shares some practical steps that we can take to reflect a theology of love that is not laden by a hierarchy of human value.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group. Use the following questions to help *guide* your small group discussion:

1. Read Acts 10:23-48. Why is this story so important to the gospel and the progressive revelation of God to Peter and the Jewish Church, especially verses 34-35? Reflect and discuss how significant this insight was at the time.
2. The story in Acts 10:23-48 marks a real change in the way that Jewish Christians viewed their own story and how they saw the Gentiles. Jesus had clearly pointed them in this direction, but it was through the outpouring of the Spirit in Acts 2, and through the ministry of the Apostle Paul, that they began to realize the full extent of what God was doing, and what it meant for Israel's history and future. Why is this important to keep in mind when talking about the modern state of Israel today? In what ways do you see this truth being ignored or minimized in present-day conversations among Christians about the modern state of Israel?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 1:20. How might this verse shed light on, or even challenge, a Zionist theology that justifies violence and unconditional support of the modern state of Israel? What promises about Israel are now fulfilled in Christ?
4. Regardless of how one interprets Paul's thoughts on the people of Israel in Romans 9-11, why is it anti-Christ and anti-gospel to unilaterally support the modern nation state of Israel, or any other state for that matter? Give specific examples from Jesus and the New Testament that would challenge the notion that we should ignore the plight of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. In other words, why should disciples of Jesus be concerned about the horror that occurred on October 7, 2023, and what is happening now to Palestinians?
5. Daryl Byler said, "What we believe about God has life and death implications for others." This is similar to what Pastor David often says, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." Why are both statements true? How are they true? Give some examples of how our thinking about God and our interpretations of the Bible play out in real life.
6. Daryl Byler said, "Whenever our theology creates a hierarchy of human value, we are skating on thin ice – or perhaps no ice at all. God does not have pets." How have humans (even Christians) done this in history—ancient and modern? What counter message to this toxic theology should the church be proclaiming? What might that look like, and sound like, amidst our own challenges today?
7. How did God speak to you through Peace Sunday 2024? What is he saying?