

Waging Peace (3 of 7)
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, March 3rd, 2024



Series Focus: At the beginning of Holy Week, Jesus looked out over Jerusalem and cried aloud, “If only you knew the things that make for peace.” And then Jesus spends each day confronting injustice, calling out oppressors, and contending for peace. But what if—despite our familiarity with the events of Holy Week—we have not fully understood or embraced how Jesus makes peace and calls us to do the same? Join us for Lent as we journey with Jesus through Holy Week and discover anew why he is called the Prince of Peace, and what it looks like when we are waging peace like him.

Sermon Title: Traps, Truth-Telling & Traitors

Scripture Reading: Mk. 11:27-13:37; Matt. 21:23-25:46; Lk. 20:1-21:38; Jn. 12:20-36

Sermon Focus: After Jesus cleared the temple on Monday, he returned there the next day to teach and challenge the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. They try to trap Jesus with their baited questions, hoping that the crowds would turn against him. But they fail. Instead, Jesus tricks them into entrapping themselves. In the third message of our series, Pastor David invites us not to overlook the words of Jesus on Holy Tuesday so that we can adopt his approach to waging peace when our enemies try to entrap us.

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

1. Right after the cleansing of the temple event on Monday, Jesus went right back to the temple on Holy Tuesday. Think about the courage that Jesus had to return and face the temple and religious leaders knowing that they would be trying to trap, arrest, and kill him. How does this sort of political and religious courage speak to you? Where are we lacking this courage today in the church?
2. The religious leaders tried to trap Jesus and get him to pick a side. When asked to weigh in and choose between two polarizing political and religious options, Jesus revealed the following pattern on several different occasions:
 - i. He refused to bite the bait and “take a side” between the two by not accepting the way his opponents framed the issues.
 - ii. He reframed the issue or question to reveal the underlying problems with both options, which were often extreme positions that harmed someone.
 - iii. He called his followers back to the agape commandment (love God and neighbor) and to imagine another (i.e., “third”) way.

We see this pattern above in Jesus’ response to the Roman occupation debate, paying taxes debate, the inheritance debate, the capital punishment debate, and the divorce debate (see Matt. 5:38-48; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 12:13-15; John 8:1-8; Matt. 19:1-12). What are some hot-button issues today that we need to apply this “Third Way” pattern? What if we “waged peace” like this in 2024?

3. Are there any ways that you have been “taking the bait” on questions and political issues meant to trap and polarize? What is God saying to you?
4. Are there any ways that you need to “speak truth to power” in the way of Jesus, but also listen with humility when truth is spoken to you? Give specific examples.
5. In Matthew 23:13-32, Jesus offers 7 critiques or “woes” against the religious leaders. How does Jesus’ strong language make you feel? And why is that?
6. According to Jesus in Matthew 5:38-45, our small acts of radical love can break the cycle of evil and violence (e.g., turning the other cheek and going the extra mile). How is the Spirit inviting you to embody and introduce love, mercy, and grace into a seemingly impossible situation or relationship?
7. Close in prayer together by asking God to grow your group’s courage to be peacemakers like Jesus, and to help you all do small acts of radical love to break the eye-for-eye, tooth-for-tooth, tit-for-tat cycles of retribution.