

# PEACE MAKERS



*in a noisy world*

## *08 When Nation and Faith Get Confused*

**Because loyalty to Christ must never be confused with loyalty to nation, faithful peacemaking requires Christians to think carefully about power, influence, and public faithfulness.**

### **EMBARK**

*Which Statement Feels More Right?* Read each pair below and discuss which statement feels more instinctively persuasive — and why.

#### *Pair 1*

- “If Christians lose enough cultural influence, the faith itself is in danger.”
- “If Christians lose faithfulness, no amount of cultural influence can save their witness.”

#### *Pair 2*

- “Strong opposition requires strong retaliation.”
- “The harder the opposition, the more carefully Christians must reflect the character of Christ.”

#### *Pair 3*

- “If we care about our country, we should use whatever power we can to win.”
- “If we care about Christ’s honor, we must never use methods that deny His pattern.”

#### *Pair 4*

- “Political success is the key to preserving what matters most.”
- “Political success may matter, but it must never become the hope of the church.”

### **Discuss**

- Which statements sound most natural in a time of cultural anxiety?
- Why do fear and urgency make certain responses feel persuasive?
- What kinds of confusion begin when concern for nation and loyalty to Christ are no longer kept in the right order?
- Which statements seem closer to the teaching of Jesus?

### **EXAMINE**

#### **READ Luke 22:24–27**

1. What kind of argument breaks out among the disciples?
2. How does Jesus describe the way authority normally works among the nations?
3. How does Jesus redefine greatness and leadership among His followers?
4. What does this passage teach us about Christian power?

#### **READ John 18:33–37**

5. What does Jesus say about the nature of His reign?
6. Why does Jesus say His servants are not fighting?
7. What does this teach us about the difference between Christ’s reign and worldly rule?

#### **READ Romans 12:17–21**

8. What kinds of responses does Paul forbid?
9. What does he command believers to pursue instead?
10. How does this passage challenge the instinct to retaliate or dominate?

*The danger is not  
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*with the*  
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THE NATION**

## EXPOSE

Christians cannot avoid questions about power, nation, and public life. Influence matters. Laws matter. Public life matters. And Scripture does not call believers to indifference. But real danger begins when love for country, concern for culture, and loyalty to Christ are no longer kept in the right order. The danger is not caring about public life. The danger is confusing the cause of Christ with the cause of the nation.

Jesus makes clear that His people are not to operate by the same instincts that govern the powers of this world. The rulers of the nations seek control, recognition, and visible dominance. Jesus tells His followers, “It is not to be like that among you.” That does not mean Christians withdraw from public life. It *does* mean that the methods of worldly power must never become the methods of Christian faithfulness.

One modern expression of this confusion is often called Christian Nationalism. The term is used in different ways, but at minimum it describes an effort to tie Christian identity too closely to national identity, and to seek cultural or political dominance in ways that confuse the mission of the church with the power of the state. That confusion is spiritually costly.

When Christians begin to think that the future of the faith depends on controlling the culture, fear begins to shape their witness. And when fear shapes witness, the tone and tactics of the world quickly replace the character of Christ. Jesus does not call His people to panic. He does not call His churches to rule by coercion. He calls us to truth, holiness, witness, service, and trust. Christians may serve, vote, lead, persuade, and work for justice. But the church must never lose its soul by trying to “win” in ways that deny the pattern of Christ. Faithful peacemaking requires power to be cruciform, not controlling.

## ENGAGE

### *Which Pattern Is This? (8–10 minutes)*

Read the situations below and discuss which pattern is being reflected:

- **worldly control**
- **fear-driven reaction**
- **cross-shaped faithfulness**

#### **Situation 1**

A believer becomes convinced that unless Christians gain enough political influence, the faith itself will not survive in the country.

11. What fear may be driving this response?
12. How does the lordship of Christ challenge that fear?

#### **Situation 2**

A church leader begins using increasingly harsh and combative rhetoric because he believes strong cultural opposition justifies strong Christian retaliation.

13. Why might this feel effective?
14. What damage could this do to Christian witness?

#### **Situation 3**

A Christian serves faithfully in public life, speaks clearly about biblical truth, and works for what is good, but refuses to treat political success as the hope of the church.

15. What does this kind of faithfulness get right?
16. Why is this posture often harder than it looks?

#### **Final Question**

17. What is the difference between faithful public engagement and the desire for cultural domination?

## **For further discussion...**

18. Why does fear make worldly power feel attractive to Christians?
19. How does Jesus redefine greatness and authority in Luke 22?
20. In what ways can churches begin to confuse faithfulness with political success?
21. What might it look like for our church to remain courageous in public life without becoming shaped by panic or domination?

## **MEMORY VERSE**

Luke 22:26 (CSB) “It is not to be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever is greatest among you should become like the youngest, and whoever leads, like the one serving.”