

Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

“Believe In Thy Butter!”

Watch

Follow this link and watch “The Butter Battle Book” by Dr. Seuss.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jbj0nJAlO-8> OR you can watch the movie!

Please note it is a 22 minute video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qYQtyMcsf9c>

Old Testament Lesson

Micah 4:1-4 (NSRV)

¹In days to come

the mountain of the LORD’s house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised up above the hills.

Peoples shall stream to it,

² and many nations shall come and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths.”

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

³He shall judge between many peoples,
and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away;

they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more;

⁴but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees,
and no one shall make them afraid;
for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

Sermon Focus

Christian history is filled with episodes of terrible violence, some even perpetuated by the church. The crusades, the deadly application of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, and physical and emotion harm (based in theology and bible) to multiple oppressed communities are simply part of our history. Christian history is filled with wars, because the world is filled with wars. Institutions are problematic, and the institutional church is no exception. Our existence as people of faith does not separate us from the realities of communal existence. We are not less entrenched in the institutions. We are not separate from the conflict of the world, but we are called to respond to

and engage with that conflict differently than the world. We are asked by God to approach the world with a different kind of logic.

Where the world chooses an "imperial logic of combat," we can choose the "genealogical logic of the Holy Spirit" (Amy Barbour, *Critical Theology Against US Militarism in Asia*). Whereas the world chooses division of communities, we can choose to create community, bringing more and more people in with every generation. In the midst of a violent world, we can choose to make connections that respond to those who have been harmed by the violence.

The logic of the Holy Spirit, which works across generations, is a logic that works differently and in surprising ways. We see this different logic in our text from Micah. Micah prophesies under the name for God, "the Lord of Hosts." This term is the name for God as a military leader, as a God of war. Yet when our God speaks as a military leader, we hear a different logic than a combat logic. We hear that "they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more..."

God invites us into a new way of thinking in the world. A way that doesn't remove us from the violence but creates a new logic, a new way to live and respond to it. We can choose to lift each other up as community. We can choose to respond with honesty to how bad the violence is and how it tears us apart. With the Holy Spirit, we can transform a community that has been torn apart by war.

Discussion Questions

- 1) Do you believe in just war? Why or why not.
- 2) Share your memories of the cold war. What do you think of Dr. Seuss's book as a commentary on the cold war?
- 3) How does the logic of the Holy Spirit teach us to respond to violence?
- 4) Define an "imperial logic of combat" in your own words?

Prayer

Lord of Hosts, we ask that you transform our minds to respond to the harm violence does in our world. Teach us to love in the midst of violence. Help us act in, and envision your peace. Teach us to love those who have been victims of war. Amen.

*"'Grandpa!' I shouted. 'Be careful! Oh, gee! Who's going to drop it? Will you...? Or will he...?'
'Be patient,' said Grandpa. 'We'll see. We will see...'"*