



“Don’t even begin to think that I have come to do away with the Law and the Prophets. I haven’t come to do away with them but to fulfill them. I say to you very seriously that as long as heaven and earth exist, neither the smallest letter nor even the smallest stroke of a pen will be erased from the Law until everything there becomes a reality. Therefore, whoever ignores one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do the same will be

called the lowest in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever keeps these commands and teaches people to keep them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. I say to you that unless your righteousness is greater than the righteousness of the legal experts and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5: 17-20)

“The energy now spent on self-protection can be converted into positive energy if we’re willing to encounter reality and see it clearly. Facing reality is an empowering act - it can liberate our mind and heart to discern how best to use our power and influence in service for this time.”
(Wheatley, 2017)

I’ll begin by saying that I’m like many clerics. I frequently use scripture as a device to introduce a topic that I’m writing about in an article (like this one). On occasion, I’ll also add a quote from a subject matter expert that I admire. These techniques manifest the essence of what my position is on the matter. They present my biases too. It’s obvious that a writer can “cherry pick” from thousands of biblical verses as well as dozens of scholars to support their discourse. We assuredly think that we’ve got the correct opinion and supporting facts. However, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s timeless quote: “Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not his own facts” is becoming increasingly invalid.

That said, I, along with hundreds of clerics, politicians, philosophers, commentators, and every day citizens have something to say about what’s presently going on in our nation – most specifically in Minnesota. Some people who read this article may think that it is inappropriate to mention socio-economic-political matters in church settings. My response is Jesus Christ’s Gospel is indeed radically relevant to The Way followers live out their lives and express their values. We manifest in the world what we share in corporate prayer and sacraments. Similarly, we would not have Christ’s Gospel without its foundation in Hebrew Prophetic declarations and demands for righteousness as defined in the Torah. It is well past time to make our words more than words and demonstrate Jesus’ strength.

Here's an analogy regarding reality today. When someone has a compound fracture, the initial response is not to initiate a conversation about what needs to happen. A prayer circle is well intended, and it doesn't provide immediate healing. A complex, compound fracture is a medical/neurological emergency! Someone needs to call 911, ASAP. Someone must carefully determine if the victim is experiencing shock. Observers must act to terminate bleeding, promptly cover the wound, while praying. The injured person could die unless she or he receives urgent and effective care.

From my perspective, our nation's ethical and relational bone structures are severely fractured. We are bleeding badly. Many of us are experiencing shock – at least spiritually and mentally. Dare I say, in Minneapolis (and around the country), things are more than fractured. People are being pulled from their cars and homes. Masked, armed, "stormtroopers" are shooting first and asking questions later. People's 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th amendment rights are rejected. Instead, ICE officers spray peaceful protestors with teargas and shoot them with rubber bullets, including a Presbyterian minister. There have been more than the two tragic murders. Beyond Minneapolis, thousands of people are dying and suffering in profitable detention centers. Our nation's leaders have lost their moral compass, if they ever had one. The occupant of the White House literally declares he hates his enemies. A significant number of his supporters willfully disregard scriptural commandments to care for the poor, offer sight to the blind, and stand alongside of marginalized people and communities. Instead, the government continues to fund ICE with billions of dollars while cutting citizen's healthcare benefits. At a similar point in time, Jesus of Nazareth threw over tables, chased moneychangers from Holy Ground, and rebuked responsible leaders.



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Theologically, morally, and spiritually, from almost any religious point of view, officials possessing political, economic, societal, and military power (locally and nationally) should not create chaos, replace democracy with fascism, and murder/ harm citizens and refugees alike. Today, billionaires and governing authorities act as if the Parable of The Good Samaritan, the Golden Rule, The Ten Commandments, and any number of other ethical/relational pronouncements are irrelevant if not stupid.

Righteousness – behaviors characterized by standards of morality, justice, and uprightness are dispensable. Consequently, the nation as we know and love it may die unless neighbors, citizens, and empowered leaders don't initiate immediate and appropriate trauma care. Such righteousness isn't only their responsibility. It is ours – in fact we have much greater spheres of influence, at

least within our community, rather than requesting or wishing that someone else solve the problem.

You can read various leaders' calls for discernment, support, and action almost anywhere. I'll offer you a few links here. Episcopal bishops, especially the Rt. Rev. Craig Loya – Diocesan Bishop of Minnesota speak against tyranny. They offer suggestions for compassionate responses in this Episcopal News Service [article](#). The Rev. Pamela Cooper White offers us a host of local service agencies and compassionate care providers elsewhere in this newsletter. You can also find it [here](#). My spouse crafted a [letter](#) to his congregation. I recommend it to you. Reverend Paul Rauschenbusch, CEO and Director of the Interfaith Alliance, wrote an encouraging [article](#) on Substack. He concluded by saying:

In America today, we simply cannot say that we love our neighbor while tolerating ICE's cruelty and abuse. It is time for people of faith and for all Americans to choose love and solidarity over ICE's brutality. And, for the love of God, it is time for ICE to get out of Minnesota and all our communities.
(Raushenbush, 2026)

Many of us are afraid and perhaps feel as if there is nothing we can do. All of us own telephones. It may seem worthless to call Senators and Representatives. Research tells us otherwise. Conversations with local and commonwealth officials are even more effective. We can find everything we need [here](#). For those of us who possess activist tendencies – here's a list of [actions](#) to support. Non-violent protesting on street corners is an artform of sorts. Standing up for peace offers visible opportunities to resist evil. We join with other people who express signs of courageous hope too.

Matthew's Jesus is quite candid in Chapter 5 that our acts of righteousness are more important than our creedal statements of faith, repentant requests for forgiveness, or other acts of worship. It is very challenging to confront reality when so many of our natural evolutionary tendencies inform us to avoid dangerous situations, preserve ourselves, and resist exposure whenever possible. It is downright scary to fight back against a regime – especially when the regime declares such confrontations to be illegal. The Theology of The Cross requires bravery, a deep sense of trust in oneself, one's friends, and one's God(s). Socially diverse neighbors in Minneapolis, religious or not, are demonstrating that love for their shared communities and common values are indeed stronger than hate – even death. Their presence in sub-zero weather while standing up for themselves in the face of state-sponsored violence mirrors the faith of the early followers of The Way who bonded with one another and the Lord they believed in.

Our shared home is not on fire (yet) in Gettysburg. That said, there are neighbors who live within two or three blocks of our church buildings and grounds who are afraid to leave their homes or allow their children to go to school. We Episcopalians are quick to say that we love our neighbors, share communion with other Episcopal parishes, and live as agents of Christ's reconciliation. Recently Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe wrote:

“Carrying out the simple commands of Jesus—feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, visiting prisoners, making peace—now involves risks for the church and grave danger for those we serve. As Christians, we must acknowledge that this chaos and division is not of God, and we must commit ourselves to paying whatever price our witness requires of us.” (Rowe, 2026)

It is time to faithfully collaborate and address reality, honestly. There are matters within our spheres of influence we can strive to accomplish. God does not call all of us to be martyrs. Christ does beckon us to live into our baptismal covenants. The Holy Spirit does have purifying and prophetic ideals for us to consider and pursue. God’s triune love, in our Christian tradition, is sacrificial and communal.

Blessings along The Way, Jim+