Opinion
Guest Voices



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This week on "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast," I reflect on Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem (Luke 19) where he breaks down sobbing saying, "If this day you had only learned the things that make for peace — but now it is hidden from your eyes."

Written shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., Luke describes how everyone had been blinded by violence and hatred, and how it led to their complete destruction by the empire. Had they taken Jesus' teachings to heart, loved their enemies, turned the other cheek and joined his grassroots nonviolent revolution, Jerusalem and its inhabitants would have survived.

The question facing us today is: Have we learned the things that make for peace? Unlike in Jesus' day, Jerusalem has now become the whole world. We cut funding for schools, jobs, housing, health care, poverty relief and environmental clean-up, but spend billions — trillions! — for permanent warfare and nuclear weapons. We support warfare in Gaza, Ukraine and Africa, but with our 13,000 nuclear weapons and catastrophic climate change upon us, we are closer to total destruction than ever.

These days, we need to share the lament and tears of the nonviolent Jesus and decide if we want to learn from him the things that make for peace, and then try to put them into action.

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What are the things that make for peace? The Sermon on the Mount catalogues a long to-do list for peace, love, nonviolence and justice: Daily prayer, surrender and trust in the God of peace. Love for neighbor and enemy. Nonviolent resistance to evil. Non-cooperation with the empire. Compassion for everyone. Forgiveness toward those who have hurt us. Reconciliation with everyone. Truth-telling. Seeking justice for the poor. And radical discipleship to the nonviolent Jesus. As we walk this way of nonviolence and join Jesus' grassroots movement of nonviolence, the Gospel declares that we can welcome God's reign of peace on earth.

These days, I suggest in this episode, we must unlearn the things that make for war. We have to work for the abolition of war and the causes of war and invest in nonviolent conflict resolution, just as we stop digging up fossil fuels and invest in alternative sources of energy. We get rid of our guns, abolish nuclear weapons, and

stop preparing for and spending for war. We will refuse to join the military, send our young people into the military, or support the military.

Instead, we push for every nation to create nonviolent civilian defense systems and peace teams so that global nonviolent conflict resolution will become the norm. If the world is to survive, the days of war have to come to an end.

You and I want to do what others were not able to do — I conclude — to learn from the nonviolent Jesus the things that make for peace. If Christians learn the things that make for peace and unlearn the things that make for war, then the churches can be a leading force in the global grassroots movement for the abolition of nuclear weapons, war and the causes of war. May we all choose to learn from Jesus the things that make for peace and join his never-ending peace movement.

Click here to listen to the full episode.

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