April Presbyts

2025

Jesus' Playbook is Larger than I Think

Nathan E. Lewis

Recently, Jeff Baroli spoke at Sterry's Sunday evening worship service. You can count on Baroli choosing a text most speakers would ignore. On this particular Sunday evening he did not disappoint. Jeff's text = Matthew 10:34…

*"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." (*Jesus)

Jeff got me to thinking. After all, Jesus also said in John 14: 27…

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.
I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

In the 20th century it was common for certain New Testament scholars to point out "contradictions" in the text, even in the teachings of Jesus. Like governmental lawyers, they would redact the text. Most New Testament scholarship has sought to harmonize the Gospels, showing how "seeming contradictions" actually fit together when the reader pays attention to context. This is how I've been trained. As Jeff Baroli was speaking, he got me thinking once again about the diversity of Jesus' teaching.

My thoughts can be summarized as follows: **Jesus' playbook is larger than I think.** Jesus is not like the 7' center on the Basketball court, who has one signature shot. Every time the ball is passed to him in the key, he shoots his signature hook shot. Jesus has many moves and shots: He can hit the 3-pointer, the side bank shot and do a lay-up. He can slam dunk.

This is true for at least two reasons:

#1 = God is both merciful and just. Sometimes God pours out his mercy (e.g. his granting of peace). In other instances God pours out his justice (e.g. his bringing the sword). Amazingly, many actions of Jesus bring both divine mercy and divine justice together - mercy for the victim and justice for the perpetrator.

#2 = God pays attention to the context in which he acts. In Matthew 10, Jesus is sending his disciples into the community to combat the *"wolves,"* that is the false prophets and leaders, who are devouring the people. In this context, divine justice is needed and so Jesus brings a sword. In John 14, Jesus is comforting his disciples, preparing them for his departure and for their future persecution. In this context, divine mercy is needed and so Jesus grants peace.

In the field of real estate the rule of thumb for the value of a property = Location, location, location. In the field of biblical studies the rule of thumb for interpretation = Context, context, context. Likewise, Jesus pays attention to his immediate context and chooses the play that will deliver God's will to that particular context. His playbook is larger than I think.

One more illustration = Jesus' teaching and actions are like a card player holding all four Aces. In the card game of life Jesus plays the Ace of Hearts when peace is needed. Jesus plays the Ace of Clubs when justice is needed. As Baroli said that Sunday night - each of us must choose a side. We can't be neutral. In the card game of life, if players have partners, then you should choose Jesus to be your partner sitting across the table from you, whether he plays the Ace of Hearts or the Ace of Clubs, you need to be on his team.

The view from my chair is amazing!

By Christina Lore

My family and I started attending Sterry in December of 2021 (which is not very long compared to the long history some of the families in the congregation have at Sterry) and in March 2023 chose to become members of this amazing church! In that time, I have gotten to know so many of you through Bible Studies, Sunday service and yearly events. However, since I have been hired as Sterry's Administrative Assistant it has been a privilege to know so many of you better!

The view from my chair in the church office is amazing as I get to welcome members, visitors and with the warmer weather, the New Song Preschool children who go by my office as they head outside to play! Sterry may be a smaller church but our congregation is BIG in activity in our church and local community! I by no means know all that goes on but I do see a lot from my chair and I am blown away by the generosity members have for one another, the anonymous gestures of kindness and the willingness to roll up their sleeves to get a project done! Members of our church teach in our Parma launchpad for 5th-12th grades, serve food for the middle school launchpad, raise money for scholarships for camps, lead Bible studies, clean the church, make sure the church is ready for worship and those who feel called serve as Deacons and Elders! Not to mention all of the day to day things members step up to do for eachother.

As the Parma School year is winding down (yes I am on "parent time" as my year is based around my soon to be freshmen in High School son), ha ha, I look forward to the summer and fall and the events that our youth leaders have planned! I am truly grateful for all of you. Especially how you show me each day what it is to be generous, kind, forgiving and what it means to work together as we use the gifts God has given us so that our Church can thrive for generations to come!

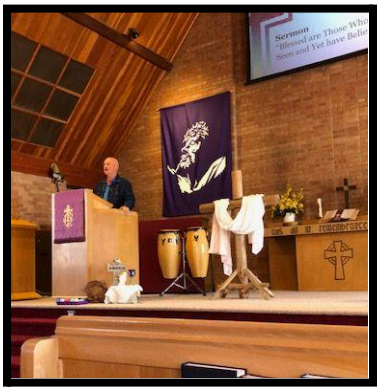
Did you know?!

That our website is updated with the latest events, event recaps & everything our church is up to! Visit our website at www.sterrymemorial.org and flip through the different tabs to see how it has been updated! You can also follow us on Instagram or Facebook!

STERRYMEMORIALCHURCH

Easter Weekend Highlights

From Sunrise Service to Sunday Easter Service! Thank you Zengler's for allowing us to gather at your beautiful home and thank you to everyone who brought food.... such a great morning! Thank you Mick for playing the music and to Pastor Nathan for the sermon.... It was brisk but like always, it was amazing!



2025 Sterry Fun Run is in the books!

April 12th, Sterry hosted its first Fun Run!! There were 54 participants of all ages and medals were awarded to the top 3 runners in each age group! The fun run raised over $1300 for church camp scholarships! It was a very fun event! Stay tuned for the next one coming up later this year! ***The Soda Shed, Hall N Dough*** supplied tasty treats and ***Colby Beck*** was there to supply the music! Thank you to ***Kennady Kramer Photography*** for capturing some great photos - the link can be found on the website!