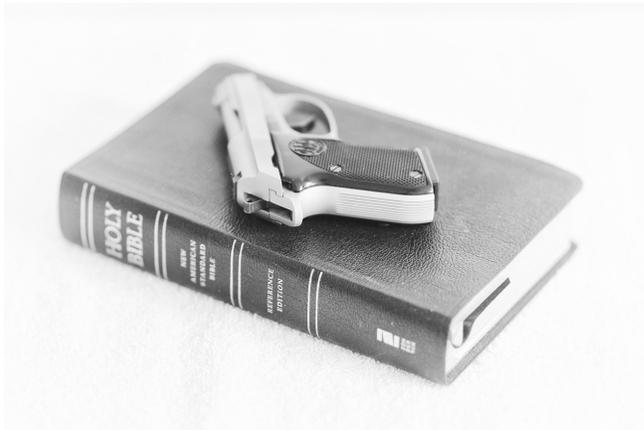


FAITH AND POLITICS

A FIVE-WEEK SERMON SERIES

#5: CAN THE SCRIPTURES GUIDE OUR THINKING ON GUN CONTROL?



Sermon 5: Main Points

1. In today's sermon we'll use the issue of gun control to test drive two of the main concepts we've been discussing: 1) The church is called to be *political*. 2) The church must avoid being *partisan*.
2. How we apply the Bible, and understand preaching, is critical
 - a. Some preachers/churches don't take positions on political issues; encourage individuals.
 - b. Historically, though not all individuals will agree, Presbyterians take a stand on issues.
 - c. The preacher's job: teach scripture so listeners can apply it using their own conscience.
 - i. To "hit you with the book?" This is the *prophetic* tradition. (e.g. Jeremiah)
 - ii. Preacher should never tell you how to think, but to help you think for yourself, as scripture speaks directly to your conscience.
3. Gun control: how does scripture guide us?
 - a. Jesus' time: the state's power derives from violence; it is not an individual right.
 - i. 1 Peter: Do not abuse individual freedom; honor the emperor.
 - b. Second amendment: fear of centralized (federal) power to become tyrannical
 - c. Only in 2008 did Supreme Court determine this could be an individual (limited) right.
 - d. It's been construed as a nearly *unlimited* individual right.
4. We need to be careful of "proof texting": a few texts to justify our pre-existing point-of-view
 - a. Applying the main message of scripture to any part, here's a bottom-line question: would Jesus be packing an AK-47? Or countenance their use by individuals?
 - b. Jesus' saying, "Those who live by the sword shall die by the sword," indicates the larger message of the New Testament: we are not to solve violence with violence.
5. Gun control's proven effective; most are for sensible gun control. Why has it not happened?
 - a. We can NEVER believe that violence is inevitable, or we can't respond to the evil that creates gun violence.