POWER AND OBEDIENCE

The application of power to the theologies of risk, suffering, and violence.

ABSTRACT

When it comes to understanding power, Christians struggle to accept what power really is or how to wield it in a way that honors the Lord. Power is central to the authority of God. In fact, it is through the power of His authority that God reigns. The power of God's authority is focused on its legitimacy, appropriateness, scope, and distribution, as well as its role in God's economy for human life.

PRESENTED BY SCOTT BRAWNER
TO THE RISK & CRISIS MANAGEMENT
NETWORK - EUROPE

SEPTEMBER 2022
CLOVERLEY HALL,
WHITCHURCH, UNITED KINGDOM

About the Author

Scott Brawner accepted Jesus as his personal Savior in January of 1987 at the age of sixteen. He went on to serve in the United States Army with the First Ranger Battalion. As a US Army Ranger, his military service included a tour in Operation Desert Storm as a sniper and team medic.

In 1992, while on active duty, the Lord called Scott to the ministry. Since that time, he has served Southern Baptist churches, associations, state conventions, seminaries and mission agencies in multiple leadership roles including state Baptist Conventions, North American Mission Board, and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Scott founded FaithWorks! Ministries Inc. in 1999. For a decade, this organization discipled, equipped, and mobilized young people to more than forty nations around the world.

In January of 2005, Scott started Fusion, a ministry that equips young believers for global kingdom service. Since that time, Fusion has been equipping and sending young people to serve the Lord and walk with Jesus for a lifetime. In 2007, the International Mission Board

The International Mission Board called Scott to serve as Director of Risk Management in 2007. In this position, Scott led the development of risk management and security programming for the IMB. For seven years, Scott coordinated security for Southern Baptist Missionaries around the world. Additionally in 2007, IMB brought Fusion under the IMB umbrella and Scott served as National Director for Fusion until 2019.

In 2009, Scott partnered with security directors from multiple US mission agencies and NGOs to create the Risk Management Network (RMN), an interactive network of Evangelical security and risk management professionals. Scott serves as executive director of the RMN. In that role, he serves the network's more than 100 members representing nearly as many US mission agencies and organizations serving around the world.

Scott collaborated with US Department Overseas Security and Advisory Council (OSAC) and other security leaders in the private sector in 2009-2010 to create a faith-based working group at the State Department. Scott served as founding private-sector co-chair of this group and continues to champion the needs of faith-based organizations throughout the US Government.

In 2013, the US Secretary of State asked Scott to join the prestigious OSAC Council. The Council is comprised of thirty-four private and public sector members that represent specific industries and federal agencies operating abroad to provide direction and guidance for security programming that benefits the U.S. private sector overseas.

In 2013, Scott co-founded Concilium Inc., a nonprofit Kingdom security firm with the Gospel as our highest value. Concilium is dedicated to influencing, equipping, and resourcing gospel workers around the world in the practice of biblically based, Gospel centered security. Concilium accomplishes it mission through a five-fold ministry of security training, strategic analysis, security and crisis management, member care, and public and private sector engagement. As of 2022, Concilium has provided training in security and resilience strategies for thousand of gospel workers and persecuted believers in nine languages, provided hundreds of written analysis products for mission leaders from over 100 missions and ministries, provided security and crisis management consulting for more than 100 mission agencies including detainments, kidnapping, violent conflict/acts of war, critical incident debriefings, and public engagement with public and private sector leaders on safety and security concerns for expatriate gospel workers and persecuted Christians.

Scott is married to Jamie who is the love of his life. They have three children and live in the Midwest United States.

Introduction

As Christians, we are richly steeped in the idea of servanthood guided by the fruits of the Spirit, namely: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Since we were children, most of us in the Church have been taught to be kind, show mercy, and be slow to anger—and this is good! All Christians should endeavor to live at peace with our neighbors as we "love our neighbors as ourselves" (Matthew 22:29). What we are less well versed in is the understanding and use of power as servants of the most-high God.

When it comes to understanding power, Christians struggle to accept what power really is or how to wield it in a way that honors the Lord. At minimum, most Christians understand that God has given them spiritual power to wield against spiritual forces. They also may understand how to wield emotional power that manifests itself as hardiness, grit, and resilience. When it comes to physical power that manifests itself as authority, influence, prowess, and even deterrence, however, that is where the most confusion is manifested. The truth of the matter is, whether you are a pastor or missionary, teacher or administrator, deacon or Sunday School teacher, or father or mother, God has granted you power.

While most Christians understand there is power in Jesus' name, quite often what that power is and how it is wielded in the physical world is confusing at best and unknown at worst. The word for power in the Old and New Testaments appears 1123 times in the Bible.[1] However, "power" may be one of the most misunderstood terms and principles in God's Word; especially when it comes to safety and protection.

Part 1: Theological Underpinnings

Defining Power

According to the Oxford Languages Dictionary, "power" is defined several ways, including:

- The capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events.
- The ability to do something or act in a particular way, especially as a faculty or quality.
- Physical strength and force exerted by something or someone.
- A right or authority that is given or delegated to a person or body.

---

[1] https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/words/Power

Power is central to the authority of God. In fact, it is through the power of His authority that God reigns. The power of God's authority is focused on its legitimacy, appropriateness, scope, and distribution, as well as its role in God's economy for human life.

Every follower of Christ must reflect on the issue of power and how power is utilized. From a sociological and political perspective to the use of power as exhibited through violence, the use of power must be understood by Christians as something God grants us just like any other gift. Like any gift we are given by God, we must each view and control it through a moral perspective rooted in the orthodoxy of our faith. This begins with God's law.

God's law, as expressed in both the Old and New Testaments, codifies, legitimizes, and perhaps even freezes power realities. It is through God's law that His children wield power by and through His authority. Thus, we as His children lay the power we have been given on the alter as we each personally submit the power we have been gifted to His authority.

Using Power for God's Glory

In order to understand how the Lord expects us to use our power for His glory, an exploration of biblical perspectives on power is essential for Christian reflection. Indeed, a biblical perspective of power, and the implications for each of us who wield it, is critical to understanding God's will for our lives.

Romano Guardini in his book, *Power and Responsibility*, states that "the core of the new epoch's task will be to integrate power into life in such a way that man may employ power without forfeiting his humanity."[2] This is true in how we seek justice for self or others, how we use our influence upon others, and even how we yield power in the use of violence for God's glory and the good of His creation.

Most Christians seem to have a love-hate relationship with power. According to Lynn Buzzard, Christians have a "deep embarrassment about power--an embarrassment that may in fact be appropriate and healthy."[3] Throughout the Old and New Testaments, moving through the first centuries of the early Church, and throughout history to even today, Christians have struggled with how to wield personal power in a way that is good for themselves, their families, communities, and the Church. Missionaries and theologians alike struggle with the use of power. Theologians like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Baptist missionary John Birch each had to make decisions on how to use their power, even if it manifested in the use of violence and cost them their lives. Likewise, Christians who subscribe to pacifism have also made decisions on how to wield their power. In these cases, it is not that these groups are powerless. Instead, they

---

[2] Romano Guardini, *Power and Responsibility: A Course of Action for The New Age* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1961), page 8.
[3] Lynn R. Buzzard, *A Biblical Theology of Power* (Campbell University School of Law. Scholarly Repository, 1980), page 127.

have made a conscious decision in their theology and practice to not allow their power to be exerted through violence. Christian groups and movements like the Anabaptists (Amish and Mennonites) and Quakerism (including Quakers and the Religious Society of Friends) are well known pacifist religions. Additionally, there are Christians who may not theologically adhere to pacifism but, in the moment of decision, choose to lay down their power to act in their defense. Missionaries Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Ed McCully, Roger Youderian, and Pete Fleming are five missionaries who, having firearms, chose not to utilize them when attacked and murdered by the Waodani Trine on Ecuador in 1956.

Because power and the use of power is such a broad philosophical discussion, we must streamline what we are talking about when we speak of power. For the purpose of this document, I will be looking at the use of power through three theological lenses: risk, suffering, and violence, and how those three theological lenses shade the practices of risk, security, and crisis management in the Christian's Great Commission pursuit of personal and corporate gospel obedience through the practices of acceptance, protection, and deterrence.

Power and the Christian Ethos

Christianity is often double minded about power and its uses. As much as there is misunderstanding, there also seems to be an embarrassment about the use of power with some Christians. In these cases, power is often seen as something to be shunned instead of embraced. Altruistic sayings such as Lord Acton's quote that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely" are often heard. As Tex Sample suggests, Christians have generally viewed the use of power as an "unbaptized activity."[4] The emphasis, especially in evangelical circles, becomes hyper focused on turning the other cheek and self-sacrifice.

The fact of the matter is, no matter how Christians might try to avoid it, they daily find themselves in positions of power. This includes both formal and informal settings dealing with interpersonal relationships, as well as in handling daily decisions concerning personal security. Indeed, the decision-making process of a criminal to victimize a person is often driven by the potential victim's likely ability to wield power in the form of violence against the criminal. Power, then, is part and parcel to every level of human experience. Because of this reality, how are Christians, who have been raised in an anti-power devotional form of Christianity, to cope with the world of power in which they live, and how should power be exercised as part of their professional, ministerial, and personal lives? How does God's gift of power fit into one's world view and ethos in their commitment to the Gospel?

---

[4] Tex Sample, *Toward a Christian Understanding of Power, Toward a Discipline of Social Ethics* (ed. Paul Deats, Jr.), (Boston: Boston University Press, 1972), page 117.

Meekness and the Understanding of Bridled Power

God wants His people to understand power and how to use it, and a good place to start is the New Testament. The Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Epistles, and even the Apocalyptic writings give us perspective on how the Lord would have us utilize power. That said, the ability to wield power should begin with meekness.

The word for meekness in Koine Greek is the noun "praótēs" (πραΰτης). According to Strong's Concordance, praótēs is defined as "properly, temperate, displaying the right blend of force and reserve (gentleness)" and, "avoids unnecessary harshness, yet without compromising or being too slow to use necessary force."[5] Praótēs appears 12 times in the New Testament. As an adjective, meekness is transliterated as "praus" (πραΰ) and appears four times in the New Testament.[6] Praus can be best defined as "meek" or "gentle." But Strong's Concordance goes on to state, "This difficult-to-translate root (pra-) means more than 'meek.' Biblical meekness is not weakness but rather refers to exercising God's strength under His control – i.e., demonstrating power without undue harshness. The English term 'meek' often lacks this blend – i.e., of gentleness (reserve) and strength."

This misunderstanding of meekness is especially true today in Western culture where the emasculation of males is not only increasing, but even celebrated. The biblical definition of meekness does not shy away from the use of power. Instead, it demonstrates that meekness is power under control and exhibited as power that is mild and gentle. Thus, there is a morality in meekness, not because meekness lacks power, but because meekness contains great power that is under control. To put it another way, without power, there cannot be meekness. Thus, the one who is meek is in no way emasculated (lacking power). Instead, the one who has power and keeps it under control (and thus capable of wielding power for good) is the one who is virtuous. Understanding meekness demonstrates that the Christian's wielding of power is not something to be avoided, rather something to be brought under God's authority.

The Exercise of Power in Theology of Risk, Suffering, and Violence

If we are to understand the biblical use of power through the theologies of risk, suffering, and violence, we cannot begin that study with the modern Church or even modern missiology. The human context for wielding power for Christians must be understood from the lives of Christians in the first century, especially while facing Jewish and Roman persecution, as well as other physical threats rooted in victimization, like economic crime.

There is a challenge with attempting to understand the first century: far too few of us understand it. Modern Christians often have a misconception about theology of risk because we frame our modern principles of theology of risk through a Western individualistic lens (what

---

[5] https://biblehub.com/greek/4236.htm.
[6] https://biblehub.com/greek/4239.htm.

is good for us personally; "I think therefore I am") vs a dyadic lens of personal social responsibility and obligation (I exist in a web of relationships, thus, "I am who my community says I am"). This is the time when passing on a father's blessing quite often meant passing down a father's vocation ("my father was a teacher, therefore I will be a teacher."). Family set their children up for success in that way. Our world today is different from the first century, and we must understand that truth. In the first century, everyone had a place; in the family, community, and world. Without the ability to read scripture with cultural context, all we are practicing is eisegesis,[7] whether we know it or not. Our understanding of power and the theologies surrounding the use and experience of power may be manipulated and flawed.

To develop a biblical theology of power as expressed though risk, suffering, and violence, we must understand first century social construct. Jesus taught in and to a dyadic culture rooted in collective identity. In the first century, Jesus spoke to and taught Jews highly influenced by not only Jewish history and tradition, but also by Hellenism and modern Greek and Roman philosophies. Thus, Jesus' teaching was framed through the lens of "politeia" (πολιτεία) and an understanding of social identity and responsibility. According to Merriam-Webster, politeia was, "the whole order of social and political relationships in a polis (community and identity)."[8] The word "polis" (πόλις) has no perfect translation or even transliteration today. A general definition of a polis would be a "community," but it is more than that. Because of the dyadic worldview of the day, a polis would encompass a person's socio-political and religious identity in the community. This is why Paul, in Philippians 3:20, says, "But our citizenship (Greek: "politeuma" [πολίτευμα]) is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ…" This dyadic understanding of polis and politeia drove the first century Christian's understanding of power and how power was utilized in theology of risk, suffering, and violence.

Next, it is important to understand that Christians in the first through third centuries did not have a monolithic response to Jewish and Roman persecution. Christians exercised their power in one of three basic ways when facing persecution: capitulation, resistance, and martyrdom. In some cases, all three ways may have been used at one point or another by early Christians, depending on their worldview, spiritual maturity, and calling. Following Jesus was HARD. The early Christians, with their commitment to their polis (the Kingdom of God—not Rome) and with their identity and significance wrapped up in their politeia (Jesus being the supreme leader worthy of loyalty— "Jesus is Lord" vs "Caesar is lord"), made following Jesus more than just a prayer; it made it a socio-political statement with significant socio-legal consequences as well (see Theology of Suffering below). Understanding this reality, we can now apply the use of power into New Testament and first through third century theology of risk, suffering, and violence, as well as its subsequent application to modern practices of risk, security, and crisis management.

---

[7] Eisegesis: "The interpretation of a text by reading into it one's own ideas."
[8] https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/politeia

Finally, in the wielding of power, first century Christians understood that violence and anger, just like power, were neutral in their existence. Unlike today, violence and anger were not bad or good in and of themselves, but could be used for good or evil depending on the one who wielded them. Jesus, Himself, as well as John the Baptist and Paul the Apostle, spoke and demonstrated by their words, writings, and conduct the usefulness of force as exhibited through anger (ferocity) and violence in the form of deterrence and/or self-defense.

Power and Theology of Risk

To understand power in theology of risk (TOR), we must begin with Epistemology. To that end, Catherine E. Althaus stated in her work, *A Disciplinary Perspective on the Epistemological Status of Risk*, that "understanding that the epistemological underpinnings of risk places the personal decisionmaker at the center of attention and decision making."[9] With the power the decision maker possesses, the decision maker must distinguish between what is justified belief and that which is personal opinion concerning threat and risk. This, in turn, forces personal analysis of risk taking to concentrate on the nature of uncertainty in the risk being taken, and the available knowledge that is brought to bear to remove uncertainty from the decision-making process. This process forces the decision maker to "count the cost" of risk taking. While there are many different approaches to analyzing and processing risk, the power someone possesses to mitigate risk is the one common factor of all approaches for risk analysis.

To put it another way, one's use of power has a direct impact on their understanding and practice of theology of risk. This is not only the wielding of physical power, but also of the power of knowledge ("knowledge is power"). In particular, a theology of risk cannot be complete without the power of knowledge to drive consideration. One cannot count the cost of obedience if they do not know what the cost is or could be. In this way, one is not faithful before God for forsaking knowledge in decision making. To the contrary, one would be ridiculed and considered a fool for doing so. Jesus evens says this when He tells those who would follow Him, "Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27). Jesus goes on in Luke 14:28-32 to provide critical word-picture examples of those who, having power but lacking knowledge, did not count the cost and paid an extreme price.

With knowledge comes understanding; namely, under what conditions can risks be accepted? Wisdom allows us to understand that there is a difference between incurring a risk and bearing the costs of risks, especially risks selected by other agencies. In particular, risk taking on behalf of others is morally questionable, especially if those driving risk have not thought through the consequences of risk for others (this is critical to a comprehensive "duty of care"). One can find

---

[9] Catherine E. Althaus, *A Disciplinary Perspective on the Epistemological Status of Risk*, Risk Analysis, Vol. 25, No. 3, 2005, Page 567.

this philosophy and understanding from the days of Polycarp,[10] and will be discussed further in Power and Theology of Suffering.

Power and Theology of Suffering

Part and parcel to counting the cost is understanding suffering. Developing a theology of suffering begins with asking the question: "Why does God allow suffering?" For early Christians, Jesus suffered in the flesh in obedience to the will of God. The writer of Hebrews speaks to this: "In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered. And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 5:7-10).

According to Dr. Michael Brown, Christ's suffering and death was early Christians' politeia (their identity and understanding of social identity and responsibility in the world).[11] For the Roman Empire, the Emperor set the politeia for the entire empire. However, in the Church, Jesus' life was their politeia; their unique way of understanding, finding significance, and living for Christ in the world. It must be pointed out that one should never underestimate the power of politeia. Indeed, it was the Christian understanding of politeia that quite often led to their suffering.

Now is a good time to note that Roman society and religion were not intolerant; the opposite was true. Rome hosted a pantheon of deities from the many peoples and nations they had conquered. Even the worship of Jehovah was accepted. The issue was, however, that Christians did not find their politeia in the emperor; they found it in Christ! As a result, Christians were seen as not only heretical; they were disloyal. As mentioned earlier, following Jesus required more than just a private prayer; it required making a socio-political statement with significant socio-legal consequences, as a Christian would commit the ultimate political faux paus of saying "Jesus is Lord" instead of "Caesar is Lord."

When it comes to developing a theology of suffering and martyrdom, understanding why God allows suffering is fundamentally different from intentionally seeking out suffering for oneself or others. In fact, the early church fathers gave sage advice when it came to seeking out suffering and martyrdom--don't do it:

> "However, there was one, Quintus by name, a Phrygian recently arrived Phrygia, who at the sight of the beasts became a coward. He was the one who had forced himself and some others to come forward voluntarily. The Proconsul persuaded him with many

---

[10] The Apostolic Fathers, *The Fathers of the Church, Volume 1* (Translated by Francis X. Glimm), (Washington DC, The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), page 153.
[11] Dr. Michael Brown's teachings can be found at: www.rethinkjcmission.org.

pleas to take the oath and offer sacrifice. For this reason, therefore, brethren, we do not approve of those who give themselves up because the Gospel does not teach this."[12]

With the power to suffer, deciding to take risks that lead to suffering and understanding that suffering is purposeful and has a purpose in the formation of Christ-like character (Romans 8:28-29) – and even provides opportunity toward God's glory and our good through the transformation of our mind, testimony, and ministry – Christians must nevertheless be careful in how they seek out suffering. This is because suffering is not a decision merely made by the individual; it is also a calling given by God. Therefore, suffering requires our cooperation and Christlike response if suffering is truly to accomplish God's purposes. This is true to two ends. To quote Davis and Denney, some Christians "want the product, character; but we don't want the process, suffering."[13] Others desire to make themselves martyrs, and also run the risk of stepping out of God's will as the early church fathers made evident with Phrygian.

Power and Theology of Violence

You can never fully develop or understand theology of risk or suffering without understanding power as it applies to theology of violence. For the purpose of this document, the focus on "violence" will center around personal safety and security of the Christian. We will not discuss just war theory or the theological understanding of retribution (that is a WHOLE other discussion…). Instead, focus will be placed on how God uses violence for His glory and the good of His people through virtuous people who seek to practice the Greatest Commandment as they love their neighbors as themselves (Matthew 22:37-40). A biblically systematic approach to understanding violence must arrange theological truths in a self-consistent whole, based on both Old Testament and New Testament Scripture. Understanding violence is a critical component of counting the cost of obedience to God (Luke 14:27).

To begin, in the Bible, the utilization of violence does not make one "bad" in the same way that being "harmless" does not make one good; it depends on why violence is being used – for evil or for good. More than once, God personally used violence for His glory in the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament. Examples include: The Flood, Genesis 6-7; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Genesis 19; the killing of Ananias and Sephirah, Acts 5; the Battle of Armageddon in Revelation 16, etc. God also commanded His people to use violence in the Old Testament and protected His people with the threat of violence in the New Testament (God's Command to the people in Deuteronomy 7; the conquest of northern Canaan, Joshua 11; Paul being evacuated by 400 soldiers and 70-armed cavalry in Acts 23).

Power as applied in the theology of violence is also tied to moral virtue. This requires an understanding of the differences between the capacity for evil and the capacity for violence.

---

[12] The Apostolic Fathers, *The Fathers of the Church, Volume 1* (Translated by Francis X. Glimm), (Washington DC, The Catholic University of America Press, 1947), page 153.
[13] Ron Lee Davis with James Lee Denney, *Gold in the Making*, (Nashville, Thomas Nelson Publishers), 1983, page 32.

Part and parcel to the salvation process is understanding that you are a sinner in need of a Savior, and a key facet of our sinful nature is our capacity for evil.

- Through Adam's original act of disobedience, all humans thereafter inherited a sinful nature (Romans 5:12–14). Moreover, we were credited with the guilt of Adam's sin (Romans 5:18). Only Jesus Christ was sinless: "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22).
- Because each human is born with a sin nature, we are naturally rebellious against God. Likewise, because of sin and rebellion, each of us has a greater or lesser inclination to embrace evil. It is because of that evil in our sin nature that embarrassing violence comes so easily to so many.
- In the act of salvation, you begin to understand who you are: a sinner lacking right relationship with God. That conviction also brings you to a place to understand your capacity for evil and violence. As one under conviction of the Holy Spirit, by understanding your sinful state and capacity for evil and violence, you comprehend your need for a Savior (Jesus) and repent of your sin, submitting to Jesus as Savior and Lord.
- Once saved and under the authority of God, the one capable of violence must gain an understanding of (and commitment to) moral virtue to ensure that their capacity for violence remains wholly submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. With our capacity for violence submitted to the Lord, our capacity for violence is only used for virtuous causes instead of selfishness and evil.

Power and Understanding Anger's Role in Godliness

To understand capacity for violence, we must understand capacity for anger. Similar to violence, anger in itself is not sinful. However, because anger carries so much raw emotional power and greatly influences people toward evil, God warns us throughout Scripture to control our anger. Jesus, Himself, in the Sermon on the Mount, warns that, "everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment" (Matthew 5:21).

As with violence, there is also confusion with anger. Quite often, anger is seen as an emotion that is to be shunned and done away with. Similar to violence, however, God is not calling us to do away with anger, rather to redeem our anger as we submit our anger unto the Lord as we do for every area of our lives.

In an article entitled *Anger: The Neglected Virtue*, Mitchell Slater stated: "We are not called to get rid of our anger, but to redeem our anger. We should get angry at what makes God angry, and we should respond to evil the way He responds to evil. This kind of anger does not give the devil an opportunity; rather, it proves to be his defeat."[14]

---

[14] https://thethink.institute/articles/anger-the-neglected-virtue.

In Ephesians 4:22-24, the apostle Paul gives some excellent advice about taking off sinful anger and putting on righteous anger. Indeed, it is righteous anger that can not only incite righteous violence, but even drive that violence through ferocity toward a righteous end. As protectors, we must understand the correlation between righteous anger, ferocity, and violence. Consider:

- Righteous anger is directed towards that which opposes God (unrighteousness, evil, idolatry, impurity, and sin). Most importantly, righteous anger must not be motivated by sin. In the New Testament, we have examples of Jesus becoming righteously angry, driven by ferocity, and engaging in violent behavior, yet Jesus did not sin:
- Jesus "felt anger" in Mark 3:5, "And He (Jesus) looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart…"
- With righteous anger driven by ferocity, Jesus took violent action against idolatry in Matthew 21:12-14 and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, overturning the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.
- Righteous anger does not always lead to, or even justify, violence. In some cases, having righteous anger should lead us to avoid violence yet fiercely stand for Christ as we preach the Gospel. Acts 17:16, Paul was "provoked" (Greek, paroxunó) which can be upset, stirred, or roused to anger. As a result, Paul boldly preached the gospel in Athens.
- In Ephesians 4:26-29, we are told to "be angry and do not sin" as we crucify those catalysts for evil which give the devil an opportunity to manipulate our capacity for violence. Anger and evil are intimate bedfellows who, if left unchecked, can drive us to terrible violence through rage—all the more reason to crucify the flesh as we "discipline ourselves for the purpose of godliness" (1 Timothy 4:7). There is a real and tangible difference between anger that is considered "godly" and anger that is considered evil.

Our understanding of violence must be framed through a biblically based, Gospel-centered worldview. This is the goal of Security in the Context of Ministry (SICM). In SICM, violence is neither bad nor good. What makes violence bad or good depends on why violence is being used. Our understanding of violence requires an understanding of evil and how evil has impacted the very nature of man through our sin nature. Evil and sin are most often seen driving the use of violence in the world. This has created confusion over the nature of violence and caused much confusion in the Church and in mission sending in general. As a result, the development of theology of risk most often focuses on personal suffering of God's people as "sheep to the slaughter." Very little in theology of risk has focused on the just and righteous use of violence for God's glory and our good as "love protects" (1 Corinthians 13:7).

Part 2: Practical Application

Understanding Early Christian Resistance Strategies

Within first century theology of risk, early Christians facing both Jewish and Roman persecution took proactive steps to protect the members of the Church. This included proactive principles of evasion and avoidance of capture, use of intelligence collection to forecast the moves of the opposition, counterintelligence to protect the flock, and the ad-hoc use of security and crisis management teams to protect not only key leaders of the Church, but also local believers. All of these activities and actions required "counting the cost" of Gospel obedience and understanding, in their theology of risk, what was worth risking and why. It is in the New Testament that we find key principles and examples for application in modern theologies of risk, suffering, and violence, as they are applied to the modern practices of risk, security, and crisis management.

In order to truly understand what is happening in these New Testament examples, we must fully understand what the Bible says, and what it does not say, as it pertains to security. What the Bible does not say in word is certainly understood via the culture and perspective of the day. Likewise, there was little reason to focus on communicating the "how" of the many amazing outcomes of safety and security decision making for Jesus and the disciples, as that would have taken up much time and space in writing. In the same way we do not have written account of every activity and miracle of Jesus (John 20:30; 21:25), so too, there are many necessary, but unspoken, activities that took place for successful security strategy to be implemented by first century Christians.

Risk, Suffering, and Developing Information Networks in First Century Security Management

Human Intelligence (HUMINT) is intelligence gathered by means of interpersonal contact. It is a category of intelligence derived from information collected and provided by human sources. When it comes to collecting critical information for security, people have to be motivated to give information. The three chief motivators in information collection include money, intrinsic relationships, and political and religious ideology.

In the New Testament, we see the development of human intelligence networks with Jesus. Because of Jesus' ministry and relationships:

- Jesus is attracting followers from all strata of Jewish life, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, wife of Chuza, and Suzanna (Luke 8:1-3), Roman Authorities (Centurion and his servant, Luke 7:1-10), and Jewish religious leaders (Jairus: Luke 8:41, 54-56; Nicodemus: John 3:1-2). All of these people undoubtedly formed parts of informal networks.

- Jesus and His disciples are using these burgeoning information networks to protect themselves. Imagine every person that Jesus healed, and their families, looking out for Jesus' interests. Imagine people in significant places of power, manifested through their authority and influence, providing critical intelligence to Jesus and His disciples out of their allegiance (politeia) to Him.

A Strategic Ministry Relocation Based on Credible Threats from Religious/Ideological Actors (Matthew 12:14-15)

In Matthew 12, Jesus is not only teaching and healing, but His influence is growing. This has made him an enemy of the Pharisees. As a result of healing a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath, the Pharisees hatched a plot to assassinate Jesus. Because of the HUMINT collected from a human network within the Pharisees, Jesus and His disciples relocated their ministry to another location to mitigate the threat.

- A plot is a plan made in secret by a group of people to do something illegal or harmful. The plot was intentionally kept from public dissemination to keep Jesus from hearing about it.
- Someone who was familiar with the conspirators AND supported Jesus heard of the plot (overheard it, was invited in, or maneuvered his way in).
- Threat assessment and evaluation took place, assessing the credibility of the threat.
- A risk assessment would have been undertaken establishing both the likelihood and impact of the threat (how realistic is the threat; what is the capability and intent of the threat actors?).
- As a result of the risk assessment, the decision is made to relocate their ministry to another area.
- A counter-intelligence operation is launched when Jesus orders those who are with Him to "not make Him known." This would have made it harder for the Pharisees to track Jesus down.

A Special Operation: Paul's Extraction from Damascus (Acts 9:23-25; 2 Corinthians 11:32-33)

After Saul was converted on the Road to Damascus, he began to boldly preach the Gospel. As a result, the Jews launched a plot to assassinate him. How did Saul learn of this murderous plot?

- Someone who was familiar with the conspirators AND supported Saul heard of the plot (overheard it, was invited in, or manipulated his way in).
- Threat assessment, investigation, and evaluation took place (how realistic is the threat; capability and intent?).
- Based on the threat, Saul's supporters assembled a dedicated security team.

- Most likely, Saul at this time was staying in safe houses in the city and his movement was concealed to protect him from the threat.

How did Saul's security team thwart the assassination threat against him? After investigating the veracity of the plot and conducting a risk assessment, Saul's security team took proactive steps to protect him, most likely from the Sicarii. The Sicarii were a sect of the Jewish Zealots. They were assassins known as "dagger-men" for their use of daggers to kill a person at extreme close range and then fade back into the crowd.

Saul's security team undoubtedly understood the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) of the Sicarii. In fact, Jesus had a former Zealot as one of His disciples (Simon the Zealot) who undoubtedly understood the ways of the Sicarii. It is not hard to imagine that other Zealots had come to faith and used their knowledge and understanding to keep Saul safe. To that end, the security team most likely identified the assassins through HUMINT sources. As a result, they kept Saul away from the areas those assassins were observing, thwarting their ability to get close to Saul.

As a result of the assassination plot's failure, the Jewish leaders turned to a state actor by employing the help of the governor of Damascus to "guard the city with a garrison to arrest Saul" (2 Corinthians 11:32-33). This made leaving the city by its gates too risky. A contingency plan was needed. To get Saul out took a strong counter-intelligence plan that kept Saul safe from authorities. Likewise, Saul's security team had to utilize their HUMINT chains, as well as surveillance, to collect tactical intelligence on a state actor to be used for the benefit of the Church. With that information collected, a plan was developed to lower Saul down the exterior city wall to safety. To do so without being detected meant gaining knowledge of the city security plans. This included guard shift changes and movement patterns. With that critical intelligence in hand, an extraction plan was coordinated with members of the Church inside and outside the wall.

Paul's Proactive Actions to Protect His Life (Privilege to Avoid Torture [Acts 22:22-29], Local Intelligence to Avoid Assassination [Acts 23:12-22], State Sponsored Evacuation [Acts 23:23-24], and Legal Wrangling [Acts 25:10-12])

Paul was directly warned by God that if he continued in his current course of action (going back to Jerusalem) he would die. Paul knew the risks and believed the reward to be worth it. This is the reality for every Christian, especially Gospel workers. We all make decisions to serve that could lead to our suffering and demise, whether by attack or by accident (remember: the number one killer of missionaries is not al Qaeda; its car accidents…). Paul was prophesied over twice and chose to continue on his journey knowing that his trip to Jerusalem could well lead to his death. Although Paul's death was directly prophesied, Paul did not know when or how it would come. Therefore, he continued on with wisdom and pragmatism and preserved his life.

Remember, Paul's journey was an act of obedience on his part to bring the Gospel to all parts of the Roman Empire and beyond. To do that would require the greatest of risks.

Paul utilized his privilege to escape a bloody interrogation (22:25-29), local intelligence to avoid assassination (23:12-22), an armed evacuation force to escape Jerusalem (23:23-24), and the legal system to appeal his case (25:11). It should not be surprising then that Paul, in his deep faith and trust in God, became quite the pragmatist with his security. Paul made the decision to utilize very specific resources to keep himself from being victimized. Specifically, Paul utilized:

- Privilege (22:25-29). Paul asserted his privilege by confirming his citizenship in order to avoid scourging. Why? Because Paul refused to suffer at the hands of the Romans because of the anger of the Jews. The Romans were going to, essentially, beat a confession from him over the situation. Because Paul was a Roman Citizen – a native Roman Citizen – he used his privilege of citizenship to escape suffering.
- Intelligence (23:12-22). Because of Paul's influence for the Gospel, at least 40 Jewish zealots swore a blood oath to the Sanhedrin that they would not eat or drink until Paul was dead. Paul's nephew, however, overheard the plot and came to tell Paul of the conspiracy. Paul then pointed his nephew to the Chief Centurion (the ranking officer) to share of the plot and save his life.
- Armed Evacuation Force (23:23-24). The Chief Centurion immediately called for reinforcements as deterrent against ambush. The Romans implemented a QRF (quick reaction force) of 200 soldiers, 70 cavalry, and 200 spearmen. This was an overwhelming show of force on behalf of the Romans. Paul gladly took the help of the government and cooperated with the military to preserve his life as they evacuated him to Caesarea.
- The Legal System (25:10-12). Paul stood before two Roman governors over a two-year period in Caesarea. First, Paul stood before Felix, who feared Paul and the Gospel and had him held as a prisoner but with many of his freedoms intact. Paul used this opportunity to meet with the disciples and continue his ministry from Caesarea. Felix was replaced by Festus. Festus said he saw nothing wrong with what Paul had done and desired to release him. However, Paul had already appealed his case to Caesar, so to Caesar Paul was sent.

Paul was a wise man who fleshed out obedience in light of his spiritual calling. Paul delighted in serving the Lord, even with the hardship it included. Paul, being a good steward, took personal responsibility for his walk, and used very practical measures to protect himself from victimization. Thus, Paul's life is an excellent example of developing Gospel resilience in both ministry and life.

Old and New Testament Examples: Utilizing Power Through Both Virtuous and Evil Uses of Violence

David's Virtuous Anger (1 Samuel 17:20-58)

The boy David burned with righteous anger at Goliath. That righteous anger was channeled toward violence through ferocity. With God's blessing (anointing?) upon David's righteous use of violence, David was able to kill Goliath. It was David's righteous anger that drove his ferocity. That ferocity was what made a mere boy capable of decapitating a giant, thus motivating the armies of Israel to action.

SPIRITUAL MAXIM: Bringing one's capacity for anger and violence under the authority of Christ – including anger that drives our ferocity – is CRITICAL to the sanctification process.

The Violence of David Driven by Evil: David and the Murder of Uriah the Hittite (2 Samuel 11:1-27)

Decades later, after David became king, evil entered the heart of David. In his lust, he took Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and slept with her and impregnated her. Worse, David attempted to cover his sin by bringing Uriah back from the battlefront and manipulating him to sleep with his wife. Uriah, an honorable man, would not allow himself pleasure as the Ark and the armies of Israel and Judah were at war (2 Samuel 11:11). As a result, David, in his greatest act of evil driven by desperation, sent orders to Joab that Uriah was to be isolated on the battlefield to be murdered by the enemy.

SPIRITUAL MAXIM: Even as a "man after God's own heart," David was capable of great evil, and the evil manifested in the power of authority that led to adultery and the violence of murder.

Righteous Anger in Violence and Death: Elijah and the 450 Prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:20-40)

Here, we see the Lord using Elijah to turn the people of Israel back from worshipping false Gods as Elijah sought to put an end to Baal worship. According to the Law, in Deuteronomy 18:20-22 the Lord lays out the punishment for a false prophet: death.

In this case, Elijah, in his righteous anger, slaughtered the prophets of Baal to end the worship of a false god and the murder of innocent children sacrificed to a demon, and did so with the authority of the Law.

SPIRITUAL MAXIM: When our hearts are submitted to God and we focus our hearts on the things of God, we begin to see the things that grieve God's heart. We are then spurred to powerful action by the Lord through godly conviction. For those capable of wielding physical power for the safety of others, this means allowing all their skills to be used for God's glory in service to the King as He would dictate.

New Testament Examples: Utilizing Power in Deterrence

It is important to begin by noting that nowhere in the New Testament does the Lord call His people to use their power to go on the offensive and take life as God did in the Old Testament. While it is outside the intent of this document to consider just war theory or submitting to the state in Romans 13, it must be said that, in the pursuit of the Great Commission, there is not a specific New Testament example of God's people going off "offense" in order to protect themselves from persecution or the insult of the Name of God. Please keep this in consideration as you read.

Jesus' Upper Room Discourse (Luke 22:35-38)

In the Upper Room Discourse, Jesus spoke to His disciples, reminding them of God's faithfulness when they were first sent out in Luke 10:4 when He said, "Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road." Jesus' intent was for the disciples to see, experience, and learn of God's faithful provision through the kindness of men whom God had convicted to bless them with food and accommodation on their journey. That was then...

Now, Jesus was returning to the Father, and He was sending the Holy Spirit, our Comforter, Counselor, and Guide (amongst other names for the Holy Spirit), to accompany them and all Christians through their good times and bad. It was because of the coming hard times that Jesus not only told them to provide money and clothes for themselves, but also swords to protect themselves along the way. No longer was divine providence to protect them as they continued in obedience to Jesus' call to go. Instead, Jesus says in Luke 22:36, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one."

What is important here is Jesus' intent with His words; NOT what the disciples initially understood (or perhaps wanted) Jesus' words to mean. This is important because Jesus' disciples were still expecting Jesus to usher in an earthly political kingdom; NOT go to the cross and die for the sins of the world. This is why, when the disciples reply to Jesus' words about taking swords by saying, "Here are two swords," Jesus replies, "It is enough." The disciples' intent for swords was regime change while Jesus' intent was to give the disciples, and Christians who come after them, a way to create deterrence along the many dangerous roads they might travel, utilizing wisdom as they travel to be as "shrewd as serpents yet innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). Instead, the disciples were still focused on who would be the greatest in the new political order (Luke 22:24).

A short time later, the disciples found themselves on the Mount of Olives with Jesus. It was at this time that a crowd approached them and Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. When Jesus was seized, the disciples were shocked and perplexed and called out to Jesus, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" (Luke 22:49). At that same moment, Peter drew his sword and struck

the servant of the high priest, severing his right ear. But Jesus stopped Peter and the disciples, quelling the violence, and said, "No more of this!" (22:51) and healed the now bleeding servant.

It is at this point that we must pay close attention: Jesus, knowing that His hour had come, admonished Peter and the other disciples because their use of force was literally impeding God's will! Peter's well-meaning intent in particular, was, at minimum, a stumbling block to the other disciples and, at worst, sinful behavior because Peter was impeding Jesus from fulfilling the Father's will. I would say that this is the greatest challenge in wielding the sword: knowing when to lay it down. Indeed, the humblest and yet most obedient place for protectors to find themselves is being willing to listen to the Holy Spirit and in meekness, lay down the sword in order to suffer persecution in the power of the Holy Spirit in accordance with God's will.

Practical Application to Modern Ministry

As much as this document is intended to help Great Commission security leaders understand the application of power to theology of risk, suffering, and violence, the APPLICATION of this knowledge must also be clearly communicated by security practitioners to those we protect and empower to risk for Christ in the Nations. In our respective roles we teach, consult, mentor, and encourage the flock! It is my hope that this document helps you to do just that.

As security, risk, and crisis managers, we have the sacred duty of educating the flock on how the Lord utilizes the stewardship of security to empower His people to be on mission together. We want to be wise stewards as we teach and equip the flock so all of us can run the race with endurance, being faithful to the end with all we have been entrusted. We can only fight the good fight if we are wise, both spiritually and practically. We can only finish the race if we run in a manner worthy. Therefore, as a godly protector who invests in the flock, remember:

In counting the cost of Gospel obedience, the Lord wants all of His children to understand that the use of power in our lives, and in our calling, is an endeavor that is intended for God's glory and our good. It is not merely enough to answer the question, "What am I willing to risk and suffer for Christ?" We must also answer the question, "What am I willing to DO about injustice - especially victimization - suffered by myself, my family, or my neighbor?"

When it comes to injustice, especially when it involves violence, Jesus makes it clear there is a difference between persecution and victimization. Likewise, there is a difference between martyrdom (those "slain in the Lord," Revelation 6:9-11) and dying due to other forms of victimization (suffering/dying for nationality, race, gender, etc.). While these deaths are equally tragic, they are NOT considered martyrdom. We can see this in Revelation 6:9-11 where John has a vision of God's throne room. In that room is an alter (a table), and under that table are the "souls of martyrs." In that place they are crying out: "...how long before You will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" God literally placates them, and gives each of them a white robe and tells them to rest and wait a little longer until "their numbers

are complete." There is much we can draw out of this passage in Revelation 6 (especially in light of Matthew 4):

- First, God is still using martyrs for His glory today. Indeed, God knows who each and every martyr is and knows how many there will be. That is why He says to wait until their "numbers are complete…"
- Second, from an obedience perspective, any security program that keeps brothers and sisters from persecution and martyrdom is, at minimum, a stumbling block. At worst, it is sin.
- Finally, God's children are NEVER told to intentionally seek out martyrdom. What we ARE told to do is to seek ways to die to ourselves daily as we crucify the flesh, take up the cross, and follow Jesus.

The Lord gives us wisdom through the Holy Spirit to understand these differences and has empowered us as security managers and teachers to help the flock process this as well.

When it comes to the use of power, the one who chooses not to utilize their power (especially in violence) is not wrong or sinful in their decision making. We must always respect that person's decision when it comes to avoiding the use of force through aggression and violence. We do, however, want to help that person count the cost of obedience by helping them process their choices and potential consequences therein. NEVER in arrogance lord your ability as a protector over the flock. Likewise, for the protector to call out the sheep as cowardly for not defending themselves is arrogantly sinful.

Conversely, just as it would be foolish and arrogant (sinful?) for the sheep to boast, "I am harmless therefore I am good," it would also be arrogant to accuse as sinful the one willing to submit their capacity for violence under the authority of Christ. It is the Lord who gave that person the capacity for violence in the first place.

May we all lay the power we have been given at the feet of Christ, for His glory and our good!

Exercise 1: Theology of Risk Thought and Discussion

In the development of a personal and corporate theology of risk, we must ask ourselves the question, can God take risks?

What are the conditions under which the notion of a risk-taking God can be affirmed without leaving us with the picture of God as an arbitrary, cosmic tyrant?

What are the practical implications for the ways in which human agents of faith, hope, and love can learn to cope with the risks of everyday vs Great Commission risk?

What are the moral consequences of risk taking on behalf of others?

Exercise 2:
Persecution vs Victimization Discussion

Read the account of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. Discuss the following at your table and be prepared to share with the group:

- Who was this man?

- Where was he going?

- Why did the Priest and Levite cross the road to pass by?

- Why was the Good Samaritan not attacked on the road after helping the man?

- Was this an incident of persecution or victimization?

Exercise 3:
Progressive Revelation: Reflecting on the Juxtaposition of Luke 10 and 22

Read Luke 10:1-12 and Luke 22:35-38 and discuss the following questions. Be prepared to share your answers with the group.

- In Luke 10, why does Jesus send His followers out without basic necessities?

- Why would Jesus send them without basic necessities, yet command them to go "two by two?"

- As Jesus' followers obey and go to "every town and place where He himself was about to go," what does it say about God's faithfulness that all the needs of the disciples were met?

In Luke 22, Jesus not only updates the "policies and procedures" of the organization, but Jesus also updates the culture of the organization. What has caused this change?

- When it comes to the mention of swords, why were there already swords in the Upper Room?

- What were the Disciples expecting Jesus to do after the Passover?

- What did the Disciples miss in Jesus' comments about carrying swords?

- What impact does progressive revelation (the philosophy that the things that God revealed to humanity were not all given at once, rather in stages) have on our understanding of the use of power in theology of risk, suffering, and violence?

"The Future of Security Management is In Security Management"
Reflect and Review

- Where is the focus of the verbiage of your organization's security ministry? Risk management? Security management? Crisis Management? Other?

- What is the highest value of your security management program?

- What is the highest priority of your security management program?

- How do you currently seek "buy in" for security programming in your organization?

- Is it working?

- If you could change one thing about your organization's security management program to make it better, what would it be?

- What does, and what will it mean, to pursue excellence in security management for your organization in the future?