

**From the Rev. Dan King**  
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With all the understandable shock, grief, pain, and anger many of us feel as a natural consequence of the terrible events of last Tuesday, how should we react? What should we do?

The little bracelets that many Christian children have been wearing over the last couple of years may provide a useful clue.

They ask themselves, and they ask us all to consider as well: 'What would Jesus do?'

To answer that question, we might ask another: 'What kind of person was Jesus?'

Jesus was clearly a compassionate man who keenly felt the human pain and controversies of his own times, no matter what else you believe about Him. He knew the yoke of despised Roman colonial oppression. He was a Jew, an Israelite born in a manger, scripture tells us, because his parents had to go to Bethlehem to pay the tax collectors of the occupying government.

Respected Bible scholars have described how Jesus probably grew up in Nazareth as an outcast because of his apparently humble origins. We are told that he was a landless peasant in a society that placed a high value on land.

So we might speculate that Jesus the Jewish peasant was in some obvious ways very much like the Palestinians of our own times. Today a majority of those who live in Palestine are the Muslims and Christians whose ancestral homes and properties were expropriated by the British colonial regime which divided ancient Palestine into the states of Israel and Jordan, enforcing a partition based on ethnicity, but also on religious beliefs. But each of the faiths represented in that partition shared many values, and among those values are certain expectations about human behaviors, about fairness, and justice.

The words attributed to Jesus about justice are relatively few, but their impact has been lasting. Perhaps the most memorable saying is what we call "The Golden Rule." Of course, the elemental truth of the so-called Golden Rule existed long before Jesus, but thanks to the influence of Christianity, its essential power has been even more widespread: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

It is clear that those who use acts of violence to make political statements, especially terrorist attacks on innocents, do not feel the restraint implied by the Golden Rule. The escalation of this kind of violence in acts of vengeance and retribution is likewise not condoned or accepted by the faithful of any healthy religious institution, whether Christian, Jewish, Muslim, or others.

But we who do accept this simple statement as being at the foundation of our faiths, must pause and ask ourselves anew each time that we feel assaulted or threatened: What **WOULD** Jesus, or Buddha, or Mohammed the Prophet do? What would be the right thing to do?

Our political and governmental leaders could do much worse than to consider this simple maxim as they take care to make overtures, to build alliances, to engage in constructive dialogue, to make adjustments and concessions and demands, BEFORE launching the terrible might of the world's remaining superpower against individual or national targets anywhere.

I believe the great Rabbi of Galilee would ask no more, and certainly no less of us.