

CHOOSING THE RIGHT WEAPON

Scripture used: [Matthew 26:50-54 \(NKJV\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Dan Monroe reflected on all the tumult and upheaval going on in our nation and around the world. He asked bluntly: "What do we do about all the craziness in the world?" In an unhinged world full of people behaving erratically and disagreeing with such vehemence and disrespect, it is tempting to give in to a feeling of outrage and self-righteousness, especially for things we consider "our side" or "God's side." We can easily start calling people names, casting ridicule, and worse. Our Scripture today reminds us that those who "take the sword will perish by the sword." Jesus gave His life freely, as a sacrifice and as an act of love, to overcome evil, forgive sins, and reconcile enemies to relationship. The only weapon he used was love, and that is also the only "weapon" we should use. It is in our faith - an eternal testimony that Jesus overcame evil - that we have the power to make a difference in this world ([1 John 5:4, NKJV](#)).

KEY POINTS

1. **We must pick up the right weapon: not the same weapon the world is using, but the one that God has given us.** In his mid-twenties, Pastor Dan was angry at the institutional church, and was ready to pick up the sword of indignation and righteousness. As he grew in maturity and wisdom, he realized that the zealot can be unrighteous, especially if one is tempted to use the wrong tools. We should not pick up the tactics and weapons of those we disagree with, which include taunting, belittling, or acting out of anger or a desire to wound. [James 1:20 \(NKJV\)](#) reminds us to not give in to wrath, because wrath does not produce the righteousness of God.
2. Using the allegory of a cave, Pastor Dan showed **we don't combat darkness by bringing more darkness, we need light to show the path out.** Pastor Dan was greatly inspired by a visit to the house of [Corrie ten Boom](#) in the Netherlands, where the young Dutchwoman and her family hid many Jews during World War II to save them from deportation and murder by the Nazis. Corrie and her family were caught, arrested, and imprisoned in the Ravensbruck concentration camp, where her sister Betsie died. Corrie suffered grievous loss, but she never lost her faith, or her ability to love others abundantly. We cannot depend on the prevalent tools to channel our wrath; we must remember that wrath will never produce righteousness; and that we must exercise self-control and gentleness. [Romans 12:21 \(NKJV\)](#) reminds us that we don't overcome evil with evil, but we overcome evil with good.
3. **We must care for the church and all others in the world, and let God be the judge.** [Luke 6:35 \(NIV\)](#) reminds us that God calls us to love our enemies, and to be kind and merciful even to those who mistreat us. That's the love we receive from God, the love that changed the world and changed our lives, and the love we are called to pass on to others. God challenges us to be **overcomers** of the wrong in the world with the strength and gift of the Spirit. Our challenge: how do we show kindness to those we strongly disagree with? It's very difficult, yet it's what God has called us to. The Spirit moves us to obedience, to grace, to love, and to confront evil in the way God wants us to. We are not to get caught up in the ugly and destructive weapons of the world, but to arm ourselves with the glorious weapons of the Spirit.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** -. What is one example that you respect and admire of a friendship across differences or an ability for someone to love one's enemies? Consider instances in history or an example you may be aware of in your own life. What do you think makes it possible for someone to build a friendship across differences or to love an "enemy"?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider [Luke 6:35 \(NIV\)](#). Consider how this command of Jesus, to love our enemies, is one of the primary ways He calls us to change the world and to represent the character of God. Why would he ask us to do this? Do you believe it works? Have you experienced this kind of love from God, and has it changed you?
- 3) **DO** -. Ask God to bring to mind one person in your life that is difficult for you to love. Consider in prayer a way for you to show love and kindness to them. Ask God to be with you and to give you strength as you love in a supernatural way! Join us next Sunday as we start an important new series, "Plug In!"