

# Suffering Love: The Doctrine of Nonresistance and Conscientious Objection to War

by Aaron Hurst

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*Aaron Hurst's sermon emphasizes the doctrine of non-resistance and the call to embody Christ's love in a world often marked by violence and retaliation.*

**Duration:** 1:13:26

**Scripture:** Exodus 21:22-25, Leviticus 24:19-20, Deuteronomy 19:16-21, Matthew 5:3, Matthew 5:38, Romans 12:19, Romans 12:21

**Topics:** "Nonresistance"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by addressing the issue of human trafficking and challenges the congregation, especially the young people, to take action through prayer. They emphasize the importance of dedicating time to spiritual warfare and making a real impact. The speaker then expresses gratitude for the congregation's support and prayers during their recent loss. They share about burying their father and celebrating the resurrection power of Jesus Christ. The sermon then transitions to a biblical passage about Peter being imprisoned and the church praying for him. Despite the guards' efforts to keep Peter secure, the power of prayer prevails as an angel of the Lord sets Peter free. The sermon concludes by referencing Matthew chapter 5 and highlighting Jesus' teachings on righteousness and the importance of living according to God's commandments.

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## Transcript

I was asking myself some questions this morning. Why would I preach this message? These are good questions for the preacher to ask himself. Well, first of all, I would preach this because it's the Word of God.

Paul told Timothy, preach the Word of God. Paul told Titus, speak the things which become sound doctrine. Why would I preach this message? Another thought I had is it's applicable for us New Covenant believers today.

Another thought I had, it's to equip and to arm each one of us, but especially our young men and women, in truth, in biblical conviction, to be rooted and grounded in the Word. Why would I preach a message such as this? So that I and you may walk and live as Jesus walked and lived. Why would I preach a message such as this? Oh, so that we may all hear.

Well done, good and faithful servants. Turn your Bibles to Matthew chapter 5. Matthew chapter 5. While you're turning there, we make a few observations. Matthew chapter 5. Six times Jesus said this similar thought.

Not exact same word, but similar thought. Matthew 5.21. Are you there? Matthew 5.21. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill. Whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of judgment.

But I say unto you... Now the phrases that we're catching here and are looking for is, ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, ye have heard this message from the prophets and from the law of Moses, that what God spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai when He gave the commandments and the precepts for Israel, His chosen people. Ye have heard. Ye have heard the law of God which has said, but I say unto you... Those are the phrases we are looking for.

Verse 27. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Verse 31. It has been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causes her to commit adultery.

And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery. Verse 33. Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.

But I say unto you, swear not at all. Verse 38. Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil. But whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if a man will sue thee at law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you.

And pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. For he maketh his Son to rise on the evil and on the good. And sendeth forth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if you love them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Let's kneel together for prayer if you can. Father, we come in the name of Jesus this morning to ask bread of you.

We come, Father, to ask food, spiritual food, for our souls, our never dying souls, O God. Father, we come asking in Jesus' name that your words would be made alive unto us. For your words are alive and they are truth.

Father, pierce into our hearts, O God, lest we become so familiar that we miss the heart of Jesus. It's just another story like we heard this morning. God, help us open our eyes, Lord.

It tells us that the people who heard those words of Jesus that day, they were astonished at His doctrine. For He taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. O God, we ask in Jesus' name that the authority of the Holy Spirit of God would speak truth to our hearts.

Bless each one. Bless Your Word. Father, that we would be faithful hearers and doers of the Word.

Thank You for Your Word. Thank You that we can open the Bible and we can read the Word of God. Thank You for the Holy Spirit that shall teach us truth in all things that Jesus has said.

So, Father, we are looking to You today for the revelation of the Holy Spirit of God upon our hearts. We ask it in the name of Jesus and for Your sake. Amen.

Why would I preach this message? Well, as we were visiting families in pastoral visits, it came up quite a few times that a desire to hear the doctrines of Jesus taught. So I've been meditating on that and pondering that, laying it before the Lord, and asking the Lord that He would grant me grace to preach a doctrinal message and that together we could be persuaded that this is the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a doctrine of men.

It's not some invention of men, but this is the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, Aaron, what doctrine are you going to preach on today? It would be a lovely thing for us to open our hearts to the entire Sermon on the Mount and to hear the words of Jesus as He opened His earthly ministry upon that mountaintop with the people gathered around Him. And He began to proclaim the heart of His Father in preaching those wonderful, beautiful messages of blessing.

Blessed are the poor in heart. Blessed are those who are impoverished in their heart and spirit and know that they need God. Oh, blessed are those people.

It would be a blessing to preach through all the Beatitudes this morning. But as I was pondering what the Lord would have me share, I thought to bring a specific doctrine that I do believe is in danger, even among us, in danger of being minimized and maybe marginalized and pushed aside. Because I think many times we sort of view it as, well, it's the Anabaptist doctrine.

It's the Anabaptists who came up with this doctrine. I say unto you that ye resist not evil, whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn him the other also. I say unto you that you resist not evil.

What doctrine comes to mind? Can anybody tell me this morning what doctrine I feel led to share on today? Non-resistance. What comes to your mind when you think of that word non-resistance? How does it make you feel? Does it just make you excited and delighted? Or does it carry some baggage with it? Do we have some baggage with it? Maybe, some of us? Maybe there's better terminology for it. Why is it coined non-resistance? Well, I believe it's coined non-resistance because Jesus said that ye resist not evil.

He said, you have heard that it has been said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. I would like three single young men to volunteer to read some Scriptures. I'll give them to you ahead of time.

And then I want you to just come up here and read them. I need three volunteers, three young single men. Who will take Exodus 21, verse 22 to 25? Just raise your hand.

Okay? Thank you. Who will take Leviticus 24, 19 and 20? Raise your hand high so I can see you. Yeah? Somebody? Okay, we have one over here.

And who will take Deuteronomy 19, verses 16 to 21? I think we had a hand here. Yes, Sheldon. Okay.

You young men, come on up here. And in that order, we're going to read these Scriptures. And as they're coming to read, you read right here at the podium.

As they're coming to read, I'm going to continue to read here out of Jesus' teaching. But come on up, all three of you, and just get in line here to share. First, we'll have Exodus 21, 22 to 25.

Then we'll have Leviticus 24, 19 and 20. And then we'll have Deuteronomy 19, verses 16 to 21. Now, before they read, we're going to read this verse again out of Matthew 5, 38.

Ye have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Alright, let's hear it from the law of God. Go ahead with Exodus 21, 22 to 25.

Thank you. Leviticus 24, 19 and 20. Thank you.

Deuteronomy 19, 16 to 21. Let a witness be a false witness and have testified falsely against his brother. Then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother.

So shalt thou put evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear and fear and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. And thine eye shall not pity, but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Thank you. Thank you. Is there any shadow of doubt that God ordained retribution in the Old Covenant? Is there any question? In fact, He said, if you don't carry this out... What did He say, Sheldon? You read that last verse.

What did He say? If you don't carry this out... You shall not be afraid to carry this out. I'm sorry? Don't pity. Jesus was present in the Trinity with the Father when the law was given.

Is that correct? Is that a true statement? Jesus enters the scene of His ministry. God come in the flesh. Does He have authority to change what was written in the law? Does Jesus have that authority? I see some heads nodding.

Yes. So Jesus made it very clear in all of those examples we read, all six of them, by giving a preface. It has been said by them of old time, looking to the law that was given to God's people Israel.

It has been said, but I say unto you. How would we describe that? What was Jesus doing in the beginning of His ministry in declaring the Kingdom of God? Call it out. He was teaching.

That's right. What was He doing? He was giving us a higher law. That's right, Brother Luke.

A message of mercy. Yes. He was teaching the truth.

Yes. He was describing the New Covenant. Yes.

The new Adam is here. And He has come to usher in the New Covenant. Can you imagine why the people were astonished at His teaching, who for hundreds and hundreds of years kept the law and were very diligent to be obedient to God in keeping His law.

And here Jesus says, listen up, there is a dawning of a new age. The Kingdom of God has come unto you. And Jesus Christ the King is here ushering in the Kingdom of God and the children of God, the followers of Jesus, the believers of the Messiah.

They are going to look very different than the old covenant Christians. It's a new higher law. The term non-resistance.

Is there a better term? I remember Denny preached a message. Does anybody else remember his title? Suffering Love. Yes.

I heard another one that I thought was pretty good as well. Radical Love. Over the weekend I was at a conference where there was some teaching taking place and someone asked a question about what defines the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God now. And somebody said, we love our enemies. See a lot of biblical principle in teaching today is even embraced by the world.

And you see it out on the public school sign of our focus for this week or our character trait for this week is courage. Or kindness. Have you ever seen it on one of those billboards? Our motto, our character for this school is love your enemies.

You see this is a high call. This is a call that distincts, it separates and it is distinctive of the followers of Jesus. Those who love Jesus with all their heart.

This is not some abstract doctrine that was coined by the Anabaptists. This is the heart of Jesus. This is the teaching of Jesus.

This is the life of Jesus. This is how He lived. You can examine it through the whole Scripture.

That suffering love, that laying down His life is found everywhere, permeated throughout His whole life. Is that right? Yes. So why preach on non-resistance? We are going to look at a few things here.

We are going to look at some principles of the doctrine. The Kingdom of Christ is not of this world. Let us turn to John chapter 18.

As we look at the Scriptures and look at some foundational teachings. John chapter 18. The Kingdom of Christ is not of this world.

Let's start in verse 33. Get a little more context. Jesus is at the judgment before Pilate.

And verse 33 of John 18. Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again and called Jesus and said unto Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him saying, Sayest Thou this thing of Thyself, or did others tell thee of Me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto Me. What hast Thou done? Jesus answered, My Kingdom is not of this world.

If My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews. But now is My Kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a King then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King.

To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth My voice. The point we want to gather from these verses, and there's a lot more here that we won't be able to go over, but Jesus very clearly declared, My Kingdom is not of this world.

And we need to understand the two Kingdom principles so that we don't get confused in this doctrine of non-resistance or suffering love. Jesus said, My Kingdom is not of this world. My Kingdom is a heavenly Kingdom.

My Kingdom is a Kingdom that is not a national Kingdom of a certain nation, but My Kingdom is in the hearts of the regenerate born-again Christians, and it spans all nations and all peoples. Isn't that amazing? The Kingdom of God today is not something that comes by the observation of the eye and is limited to a certain people group, but it is limited to the people, both Jews and Gentiles, who are circumcised in heart and born again by the Spirit of God and enter into the Kingdom by faith in Christ Jesus. And we are the kings and priests in that Kingdom with Christ Jesus, the head.

So, in one measure, you might say the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world, but it's here. It's in the world because we are yet saved, are in the world. We are saved, are yet here.

The Kingdom of God is here in the believers, but it is not an earthly kingdom. It is the kingdom of the born again, of the believers. Because Christ's Kingdom is not of this world, early Christendom made application to the teachings of Jesus in this matter of going to war.

Tertullian, a historian who wrote of the early church, he says this, of the legions in the Roman army, not a Christian could be found among them. No professing Christian could be found among the Roman army. The early Christians refused to participate in military service.

Those who wanted to become Christians if they were involved in military service of any kind, were commanded or required to cease from military service or they could not become a participant in the Kingdom of Christ. They would not receive them. Another historian, C.J., not sure how to pronounce his last name, Caddox, probably not right, probably butchering it, but he says that no Christian after his conversion ever thought of enlisting in the army.

It was not even on the radar that a Christian could be serving in the army of the kings of this world. There wasn't even a question. Only after about 200, 300 years of apostatizing starting to take place did the Christians begin to entertain the thought that they could serve in the armed forces.

So for the first 200 years, the believing Christians were suffering Christians. They were persecuted Christians and the lines were pretty clear. This is the Kingdom of our Christ and of our God where we lay down our lives and we suffer and we're shamefully entreated and we take joyfully the spoiling of our goods.

We don't stand up for our rights and we don't participate in the armed forces. We don't serve in the armies of this world. A very clear understanding of the two kingdoms.

The Kingdom of Christ is not of this world. Non-resistance was believed and practiced by the entire Christian community. The Philippians, the Colossians, the Ephesians, there was no question in the early church of Jesus Christ.

Why? Because they were followers of the Lamb. They were walking according to the heartbeat of Jesus Christ. Let's look at another one.

The Spirit of Christ is not of this world. The first one was the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world. Now let's look at the Spirit of Jesus.

The Spirit of Christ being filled with the Spirit, being full of the Holy Ghost of God and having the Holy Spirit controlling us, that gracious Spirit we sung about. Open your Bibles to Luke 9. Luke chapter 9 and verse 51. Paul told Timothy, study.

Study to show yourself approved unto God. A workman. Yes, a workman that needs not to be ashamed.

Study. Open your Bible. Get on your face before God and ask Him to teach you.

The Spirit of Christ is not of this world. Luke 9 and verse 51. Let's begin reading there.

And it came to pass when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem and sent messengers before His face. And they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for Him. Verse 53.

And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. And when the disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them even as Elias did? But He turned and rebuked them and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

And they went to another village. Here we see very clearly the apostles James and John. And I thought how, how interesting that it's Apostle John.

I can maybe see Peter calling for fire. But John who leaned upon Jesus' bosom at the supper. John who seemed to be gentle, meek.

James, I'm not sure what his disposition was so much. But you know these disciples of Jesus, they remembered a time when the prophet Elijah called fire down from heaven with those that opposed him and there was destruction. And they thought, well this might be a good time to wipe out some of these enemies.

And we'll call fire down from heaven. Shall we? Shall we call fire down from heaven? Lord, wilt thou that we call fire from heaven to consume them even as Elijah did? Or Elisa? But He turned and rebuked them and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. The spirit of Christ is not of this world.

The spirit of Christ is contrary to the spirit of vengeance and of killing and destroying men's lives. He said, no, no you don't get it. That's not why I came.

I came to seek and save the lost. I didn't come to destroy. I came to lay down my life for men.

You know, in basic training they teach you how to fight. I did listen to Dean Taylor's testimony again, though he preached it right from this pulpit, but I did listen to it again. You know, in basic training they teach you how to fight.

General Leslie McNair in a New York Times article said this. He said, our soldiers must have a fighting spirit. And if you call that hating our enemies, well then we must hate our enemies with every fiber in our being.

We must lust for battle. We must scheme and plan night and day to kill. The avowed purpose of the army is to make killers out of every soldier.

I ask you a question. How does that reconcile with the teachings and the spirit of Jesus? There is a young man in basic training there during World War II. He was a bit of the tender kind, compassionate, soft-hearted.

And in training they were to take bayonets and had this dummy set up there or a number of dummies. And they were to charge these dummies and ram their bayonets into the dummies. And this one man, he was of tender heart and conscience and he just could hardly bear to do that.

And so he was timid about it and finally the sergeant was so fed up he called him out and he said, go ahead and ram that bayonet into that dummy and cut him to pieces. Cursed and swore at him. And he said, this is war.

This is not a Sunday school picnic. You are here to learn how to kill. And you cannot have that attitude of pity or compassion for the enemy.

You are here to learn how to kill Germans. World War II. Hear the words of Jesus.

But I say unto you that ye resist not evil. But I say unto you that ye love your enemies. But I say unto you that you bless them that curse you.

But I say unto you that you pray for them which despitefully use you. Why Jesus? That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. That you may rightfully represent Christ.

It's impossible to have the Spirit of Christ within and at the same time carry the carnal sword to kill and to destroy. By the way, the carnal sword and the Spirit of Jesus do not point in the same direction. They don't point in the same direction.

A third principle of this doctrine. The methods of Christ are not of this world. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians chapter 10.

2 Corinthians chapter 10. The methods of Christ are not of this world. 2 Corinthians 10 verse 1. Now I, Paul, myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ who in presence am based among you but being absent and bold toward you.

But I beseech you that I may not be bold when I am present with you with that confidence wherewith I think to be bold against some which think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. Very familiar verses here. For though we walk in the flesh we do not war after the flesh.

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ and having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. They are not physical weapons.

We don't fight with the physical weapons of this world. But that doesn't mean we don't have weapons, brothers and sisters. We have mighty weapons.

The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God. There are a lot of other Scriptures we could go to for that as well. Ephesians chapter 6. I don't think we'll take time to turn there.

But the weapon of the Christian is mighty through God. We are not without weapons. But our weapons look very different.

Many a persecutor has been disarmed of his weapons by the testimony of a faithful martyr. Do you know that? Read the Martyr's Mirror. Read the Fox's Book of Martyrs.

Many a hardened soldier bearing the weapons, his carnal weapons was disarmed by the suffering, loving Christians. Brothers and sisters, we are called to the same. We are called to suffer with our Lord Jesus.

To bear reproach with our Lord Jesus. We are called to love our enemies. We are called to forgive those who spitefully entreat us and fight against us.

Just as Jesus there in the grand scheme said, Father, forgive them. His words from the cross. Forgive them.

They don't know what they're doing. Yes, the weapons of the Christian. I think we'll look at one example.

Turn to Acts chapter 12. To encourage our hearts here today as we look at this subject of non-resistance. Here's a beautiful example of the Christians being fully armed and using their armor.

Oh, it's beautiful. Acts 12 verse 1. About that time, Herod the king stretched forth his hand to vex certain of the church. And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.

And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded farther to take Peter also. Then were the days of unleavened bread. You know, our lives are in the hands of Almighty God.

You are indestructible by your enemy until the day God says, Okay, it's enough. His race is run. His job is finished now.

Come on home to glory. And Jesus may be standing there with His arms wide open just like Stephen. I see Jesus standing at the right hand of God and He goes home to be with His Savior.

Well, it was James' time. It was. Herod had James killed.

And James went to be with His Lord. So when he saw it pleased the Jews, he said, Alright, this looks pretty good. I'm gaining some points here.

Let's go ahead and stretch my hand out a little farther and let's get that Peter guy. The guy that's sort of the out front spokesman and always so bold. Let's get him.

Let's get the chief of the disciples. Let's get that one. Let's get Peter.

Let's get Peter and put him into prison also. So he apprehended Peter. Verse 4. Put him in prison.

Delivered him to four quadrants of soldiers to keep him and tend him after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Now how many soldiers was that? Someone tell me. Four quadrants.

Four quadrants. How many was that? Sixteen soldiers for one man? Peter? Wow! We're going to make sure that this Peter is not going to get escaped out of our hands. We'll appoint sixteen soldiers over him even though he's behind locked doors.

We're going to make sure about this Peter guy because I've heard about this Peter. A fearless man. Preaching the Gospel.

And God has worked some miracles by his hand. We'd better make this Peter sure. But he forgot something.

Verse 5. Peter was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. Herod, you forgot something. The church has weapons that are greater than yours, Herod, and they know how to use them.

O brother, sister, be encouraged in prayer because God's ears are open to His children, to His people. His ears are open to their cry and He hears them when they pray. And prayer was made for Peter of the church unto God for him.

Well, Herod, he had his plans and his schemes. Verse 6. He was going to bring Peter forth to the people. And the night before the day that Herod thought he was going to pull this thing off, Peter was so at rest in his Lord Jesus, so secure in Christ's love that he was sleeping between two soldiers bound with two chains and the keepers before the door that kept the prison.

This is exciting. Can you imagine what this would be like to be reading this for the first time? Let's try to put ourselves in those shoes. Behold, the angel of the Lord came to him and a light shone in the prison and he smote Peter on the side and raised him up saying, Arise up quickly! And his chains fell off from his hands.

And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he said unto him, Cast thy garment about thee and follow me.

And he went out and followed him and wished not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, if you've ever been in prison ministry, you know you go through the first ward and the iron gates open and then close behind you and there are the guard houses and there they sit, you know, and they watch you. Then you go down the hall to the second ward and there again the doors open and you go into the little holding place and the door closes behind you and then the next door opens.

Well, he went through both of those checkpoints and they were past the second ward and they came out to the big iron gate. Now, how many of you ever saw that big iron gate out in front of the prison? Come on, let me see your hands. Quite a lot of you here saw that.

You've been in prison ministry and you know those big iron gates out front and nobody's going through them unless they are opened and they're well secured. But he went out and the iron gate, which leadeth

out to the city, out into the freedom, opened to them of his own accord and they went out and passed through one street and forthwith the angel departed from him. Wow! Brother, sister, I along with you confess, I don't see the full depth of the potential of our weapons, the weapon of prayer.

Oh, brother, sister, yes, God is sovereign and almighty, but brother, sister, God also answers prayer. When these people get on their faces and cry out to God, God answers prayer. And the whole church prayed.

I wonder what would happen in Charity Christian Fellowship to our prayer meeting if we got word that one of the brethren has been taken and killed for his faith. And now, they're coming for one of the elders and one of the elders has been taken and he's in prison. I wonder if there'd be any change in our prayer meeting, brother, sister.

I hope there would be. I hope there'd be more fervor and zeal. I hope you would look at this example and say, oh, God, if it's not Aaron's time yet, if it's not brother Paul's time yet, Lord, open the doors.

Show Yourself Your strong, mighty arm and bring deliverance. Be mighty upon our brother that he may testify of Jesus and be faithful unto the death. Oh, I hope that You would pray for me in that way.

That we would pray for our brother Abner in that way. Our brother Mel. Yes, we have weapons.

The weapons of our warfare. No. No, they're not swords and AK-47s or whatever they use today in the army.

I don't know. They're not machine guns and bombs, but they're the almighty atomic power of God through prayer, brother and sister. The weapons of our warfare are mighty through God.

Not through us. We're just weak beggars, but we have an almighty God. And the weak beggars got before Almighty God, the whole church it says.

All the church was gathered together and they were praying. Now, did they have a revelation from God, a word of prophecy that Peter's going to be released? What do you think? If we read the end of the story, I don't think they did. Because when Peter arrived at the prayer meeting and began knocking, they sent a little girl out, a little youth girl, you know, hey, Rhoda, why don't you just go look once? Who's knocking at the door? And she was so excited, she didn't even think to unlock the gate.

She ran back in and said, it's Peter, it's Peter, he's at the gate. They said, you must be, what did they say? Huh, what did they say? You must be hearing things, imagining things. But Peter, ah, he just kept knocking.

Finally they said, we better go examine this. Maybe Rhoda isn't out of her mind. And sure enough, here was Peter! Whoo! Glory! I'll need to bring this to a close.

There'd be a lot more that could be said. But brother, sister, I exhort you in the name of Jesus with divert words out of Peter. Yes, yes, yes.

I'll close with Peter. Let's go to, I believe it's 2 Peter. Hmm, or is it 1 Peter? Let me see here.

No, I believe it's 1 Peter 2. Yes, 1 Peter 2. And verses 19 we'll start. For this is thank-worthy of a man for conscience toward God endured grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it if when ye are buffeted for

your faults ye shall take it patiently? But if when you do well and suffer for it and take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

Now listen to these words. For even hereunto were ye called because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps. Yes, that's our portion, brother, sister.

I share this message today. Why would I preach a message like this? To equip and to arm my dear brothers and sisters for suffering. That we don't look at it as some strange thing happening to us when it falls upon us.

Brother, sister, the way of Jesus is a way of suffering and self-denial and taking up the cross. It's a way of living sacrifice like we talked about this morning. That ye should follow in Jesus' steps who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, who when He was reviled, reviled not again.

When He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. Brother, sister, this is our calling that we should walk in His steps. He left us an example that you should follow in Jesus' steps.

O Jesus, precious Jesus, live in me, Lord Jesus. Precious Lord Jesus, love through me even when it's hard, even when it's costly. Lord Jesus, bless Your enemies through me.

Why would I preach this message? Well, there's another reason. Some who sat here where you sit have decided that's just sort of a lesser thing of the kingdom. I don't know that it really is understood properly.

I don't know if the Anabaptists were really right, but I beg us today to go farther back than the Anabaptists, but I say we honor those who died for Jesus, who stood for truth and shed their blood. Let's be careful to not just thumb down the martyrs of the past. Many Anabaptists were martyred.

Were they perfect? No, they weren't all perfect. Do I want to just lift up Anabaptism today? No. I want to lift up Jesus Christ and His example and His Word and His life.

This is not an Anabaptist doctrine. This is the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the doctrine of the Bible.

God bless you, young men, young women. Young men, you may be drafted for armed service. It is told me that the women will be drafted the next time the draft starts.

It was also told me the draft could be starting as early as 2020 and these are reliable sources. These are not just some hearsays. There are Anabaptist peoples, there are Mennonite peoples that are meeting with the officials from Washington and they're very concerned.

There's a lot of talk going on. Will there be a conscience objector clause for the Christians when the draft starts? We do not know. One thing that I was told is it will most likely be upon the person's personal testimony.

Not just because you belong to a peace loving church or a non-resistant church. You say, well how will they find out about my personal testimony? Records are being kept of every webpage you view, every phone call you make, every text message you send. They just chuckle a little and said, oh we know more about you people than you have any idea.

Brother, sister, why do I say that? To strike fear? No, I say that to urge us to live a holy life, to be true followers of Jesus and believe that Jesus meant every word He said. It wasn't just a suggestion. This is the Kingdom of our God and of His Christ.

Will you stand with the King and share in His glorious inheritance? Praise God. We're in the minority and are put down as out of touch and just some sort of marginalized group. That's not how God sees it.

How do you think God sees it when He looks and finds people who actually hold to the words of Jesus Christ? Don't let the world around you beat you down and make you feel like you're a loser and out of touch or whatever it might be because you believe what Jesus said. Praise God. What a privilege it is.

It's a privilege to uphold the truth of God. That's an opportunity. That's a get-to.

And don't let the world beat you down and tell you you're some fool or you're some coward and things like this. That's a lie. Praise God.

We get to stand for the truth in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation who doesn't believe it. And God in Heaven is pleased and He looks down on you and He has a smile. Like He said with Job, have you considered My servants over there a charity? Or wherever they are.

Praise God. If you're not a loser, you're a winner. Because Jesus is the winner.

Amen. Maybe somebody has something you'd like to share, something the Lord has spoken to you today about this subject, a testimony. It's always good to hear a testimony.

Sometimes that helps to illustrate things. I thought it was a beautiful follow-up to our Sunday School class about renewing our mind, being transformed by the renewing of our mind. It's by the Word of God.

We heard something today that has the power to renew our mind, to keep us from being conformed to this world, but to be transformed into the kind of people that God is looking for on earth today. So we have a hand here. Any others? One over here as well.

Can we get a microphone up here? Aunt Miriam up here. Okay, go ahead Luke. Aaron said there's a lot more that could be said and I believe some of those things that he had in mind that this doctrine applies to a lot more than just not going to war in that way.

Most of us will probably never face the draft. It may happen, but many of us may face persecution which would be like similar testes. But in everyday life we're tested on whether we will submit to the authorities around us to allow us to be taken advantage of or be cheated or whatever it is and not to fight back.

So it applies a lot more than just not going to war. So within the last five weeks, I was in prison where I had an opportunity to address those that come to the church there. And one of the questions I asked was what's the best way to get rid of your enemies? And one of them, I hope it was jokingly, said you've got to kill them because he should have learned after being in prison there for 10, 20, 30 years.

I don't know how long he was in. He's an old man now and I remember him for a long time. But I told them, as I told many times before, the best way to get rid of our enemies is to make them our friends.

That's God's way. That's exactly what God did, isn't it? He took His enemies and He turned them into His friends who love Him. I would just say amen to what Luke said.

I would say I have a Scripture that God has used in my life many times. You know, in our daily lives sometimes we feel like we're mistreated or we're misused and our flesh would like to get even. But that's not God's way.

In Romans, it's actually the end of Chapter 12, what we were looking at today. Paul was talking about vengeance and how we should not give place to avenge ourselves but vengeance belongs to God. And then he goes on to say this verse.

Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good. Reminding us that if we feel like we've been mistreated, do something good for that person. Amen.

Good is more powerful than evil. Beautiful. Thank you for sharing that Scripture.

Yes, Emmanuel. Yes, I was very blessed with the Word of God this morning. Aaron, you were saying, why should you preach this message? I'm sitting here in contact with our team in Lesbos and they're facing some very, very difficult situations.

The Greeks are angry and the Greeks are threatening to drive them out of the island today. And so this message came at a very good time and I think that's another reason why you were preaching it. As you were preaching it, I was sending text messages to the team there about resisting not evil but loving your enemies, praying for them.

So this was a very, very, very powerful message as I put myself into their situation. This is not just a theology. Once you walk through these type of things and you're very close to a situation like this, it's not just an empty theology.

It's reality. And maybe we as a church need to do like the church did for Peter to pray for them. So maybe I'd like to be a part of our service today.

Yes, we will do that. Maybe we can get Emmanuel a microphone at the end and you can lead us. We can all pray together for that.

We have another one up here. Before then, yes. Yeah, thank you Aaron for sharing that.

It was a good reminder again, although it's something I believe in, to hear that it is the doctrine of Jesus. And my wife and I were listening to a story about the Jews. It sort of follows three Jewish women who were in concentration camps and such during World War II and the atrocities that were committed against them and how they were just, I mean, skin and bones and starving and on trains going through Europe and through beautiful towns and places where people would stand there and watch them go and did nothing.

So I would like to challenge all of us, but especially the young people, that although, yes, we don't go pick up physical arms to go to war, but we need to be even more committed and more dedicated to wielding our spiritual weapons well, that it's not an excuse to stand by and watch things happen in the world, but we can impact what is happening. Like at the beginning of the service, there was a slide up there about the human trafficking and such that's occurring. There is atrocities being committed to people in the world right now.

And what are we doing? Are we just sitting by on our technology or on our social media or whatever it is that's occupying our time? Or are we on our knees praying and truly making an impact? So I just wanted to challenge all of us, but especially the young people. Learn well while you have time to really dedicate to this spiritual weapon. Amen.

Alright, was there any other hands there? On a different note, Amy and I would just like to thank the congregation for your love and your support and prayers during our loss of my father. We buried him yesterday. It was a time of wonderful memory, a time of celebrating the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

So thank you for that, especially for the card shower and the money shower. Bless you all for your gifts and your kindness. We plan to be home here until about the middle of April.

We do have a few trips out of state. But thank you for your fellowship. God bless you.

Amen. While they're here, take advantage of that opportunity. Invite them over.

Have a meal. Alright, was there any others? Thank you for listening. We hope this message has blessed you.

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