

Peter 2 of 10

Put Up the Sword

#0376

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—August 2, 1969

Let us turn this morning to Matthew again, Matthew 26:51. You remember we were studying yesterday morning about who? About Peter. Now we'll study some more about Peter this morning.

“And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear”
Matthew 26:51.

Now, if you want to know who this was, you'll find it in John 18:10. It was Peter. This is the man that took the sword and smote off the servant's ear.

Notice what Jesus says in the next three verses—three things:

“Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” Matthew 26:52–54.

Now, what did Jesus tell Peter to do with that sword? Put it up again into its place. Then He gives Peter three reasons for not taking the sword. I want to study them with you this morning.

The first one is in the 52nd verse:

“Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” Matthew 26:52.

Has it been that way down through history? We think of Julius Caesar. He was a military genius how he marched his legions here, there, and yonder. He conquered, conquered, conquered, but he died by what? Died by the sword.

Oh, my dear friends, I wonder if you and I are really noncombatants. Well, I'll tell you this: Whenever we take up carnal weapons, we're just getting ready to *suffer* under those weapons. Don't forget it. We'll come to that more presently.

“All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword”
Matthew 26:52.

“So Peter, you’d better put up the sword because you’re going to get hurt. You’re going to get hurt if you stick with that sword. You think you’re hurting somebody else, but it’s just a matter of time until it catches up with you.”

But now, He has another reason, the 53rd verse:

“Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?” Matthew 26:53.

A whole company of soldiers for each one of the disciples. “Why,” He says, “Peter, you don’t need to take this sword. I can ask My Father, and He’ll have the angels here right now. So it isn’t necessary.”

“In the first place, you’d better put up the sword, or you are going to get hurt. In the second place, it isn’t necessary.” And certainly, it’s foolish to do that which is unnecessary when the thing is fatal, isn’t it? Very foolish.

But now the 54th verse:

“But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?” Matthew 26:54.

“Peter, you’re not only getting ready to get hurt yourself, and you are not only doing that which is unnecessary, you are seeking to prevent that which God has ordained.”

Peter was fighting against God, wasn’t he? He didn’t know it. He thought he was fighting for God, didn’t he? But he was really fighting against God. And God had to stop him. God had to interfere.

Three great lessons then; three great reasons for not taking the sword: First, they that take the sword, will what? Perish by the sword. Second, “My Father can take care of this thing any way. If I ask Him, He will send the angels.” Third, “Peter, you are trying to stop something with your sword that the scriptures have foretold. And it *must* be.” Is that what it says? That thus it *must* be.

Now, I’d like to study with you this expression, “Put up the sword.” And the sword that I would like to study with you is not made of steel. It is made of muscle.

Let’s go to Jeremiah 18:18. I want you to see another sword. It has slain more people than all the ones hammered out on the anvils. Look at that verse and tell me what’s the sword spoken of here. You’ll find it in the last part of the verse. The tongue. They said about Jeremiah:

“Come, and let us smite him with the tongue” Jeremiah 18:18.

Did they do it? Oh, yes.

Take another verse on this, Psalm 57:4. David suffered under this sort of thing. He said:

“My soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword” Psalms 57:4.

Did you ever get hit with this? Did you ever have somebody pierce you with the sword that comes right out here, between the teeth?

Now, Jesus said to Peter, “Put up the sword again into its sheath.” Does this sword have a sheath? Yes. Inside. In other words, Jesus would say to the man who is using his tongue as a sword, “Put the sword back in its sheath. Keep still. Don’t *wound* others. Don’t smite people with the tongue.”

And I’d like to study these three reasons with you this morning that Jesus gave Peter for not using the sword as they apply to using our tongues as swords to speak about others.

The first is:

“All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword”
Matthew 26:52.

If you wound others with your tongue by criticism, fault-finding, telling their mistakes, God will see to it that sooner or later, you will suffer the same pain in your heart that you have caused your brother. So you had better put the sword up. You had better not talk about other people, because it is coming back to you:

“All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword”
Matthew 26:52.

If you wound others with your tongue, by criticism, fault finding, telling their mistakes, God will see to it that sooner or later, you suffer the same pain in your heart that you have caused your brother. So, you’d better put the sword up; you’d better not talk about other people because it’s coming back to you. “They that take the sword shall perish by the sword.”

But now, the second reason he gave Peter not to use the sword was that it wasn’t needed. He said, “The angels can take care of this if it’s necessary.” Do you remember?

Oh, my dear friends, how often men seek to do the surgery that only the great Physician is capable of doing. Now, you know if I had to have some surgery this morning, I don’t see very many people here that I would want to start out on. I see one man down here I trust to take me apart. And you know, I think if I needed surgery, I’d go to him and I’d say, “Doctor, will you please operate on me?” But if some of the rest of you would dart like flies and start in, I think I’d say, “Please don’t. Stand off.” What do you say?

How often when we see some evil, we think, "Oh, I've got to do something about this." And so we pull the sword out. We start in. Now the sword is a good surgical instrument, especially if it's sharp. And we read here, David said:

"Their tongue is a sharp sword" Psalm 57:4.

But oh, wouldn't you hate to have somebody, every time you came near them, getting out an actual, physical sword and start to clip off this and that on you?

I remember a lesson Brother McClure gave us when he was doing orchard work. He said he got to thinking one day about pruning when he was pruning the apple trees. Pruning is necessary. But he said, "You know, if every time I came near an apple tree I was pruning it, pretty soon what? There wouldn't be much of a tree."

There is a time for pruning and a place for pruning. But it's not all the time, and not everyone is fitted to do it, either.

So Jesus says to Peter, "Put up the sword. They that take it will perish by the sword." And second, "Peter, it isn't necessary. God has somebody that can do this better than you. If now is the time to do it, and if it needs to be done, the angels can do it."

But now there's the third reason. What was that third reason? The scriptures must be fulfilled. "Peter, you think that by using the sword you can stop something. That's what you want. But the very thing you're trying to stop is something that God sees has to be done.

Let me read from *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*:

"The Father's presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at Him falls upon the Saviour, Who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord's permission, and all things that are permitted work together for good to them that love God" *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 71.

Now, turn over to John 18, and I want you to see a little further word that Jesus said to Peter on this as He explained to him why he shouldn't use the sword. It's the same thought, but an additional wording that I want you to get:

"Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" John 18:11.

“Peter, you’re trying to keep me from drinking this cup. You’re trying to keep these soldiers from taking me. But Peter, I want you to know that it’s My Father that has arranged this, and I’m going to take what He says.” Do you see? This is the great reason we don’t need to fight. We don’t have to defend ourselves, and we don’t need to encourage others to take up arms to defend us.

Oh, my friends, what a world of problems would be swept right out of the church today if we’d just learn this lesson. We don’t have to fight others. And if people fight us, we don’t have to fight back. Like Jesus, we can stand and take it. Can’t we? We can if we learn this lesson that Peter failed to learn at this time—“Put up the sword, Peter.”

And remember, right now we’re not studying—not the sword that’s carried down here on the belt, but the sword that’s carried here in the mouth. What is it? The tongue, that sharp sword that pierces deeper than any sword of metal—the tongue, the words of criticism and fault-finding.

I want to read something that is tremendous in its implication. Listen carefully:

“Keep the tongue sanctified unto God” *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Volume 5, page 1093.

What does sanctified mean? Set apart for a holy use.

“Keep the tongue sanctified unto God. Cease to dwell upon the shortcomings of others. Refrain from saying anything that might detract from the influence of another, for by indulging in these words of criticism, you blaspheme God’s holy name as verily as you would were you to swear” *Ibid*.

So you know dear folks, if we would go around on these grounds and hear people taking God’s name in vain, we would think that was awful, wouldn’t we? It would be too, wouldn’t it? People swearing. Suppose a visitor were to come here and go away saying, “Why, you know, I just heard swearing every now and then on the Oak Haven grounds.” We’d feel terrible. We ought to.

But now let me read this again. And I didn’t say this; the inspired prophet said it:

“Keep the tongue sanctified unto God. Refrain from saying anything that might detract from the influence of another, for by indulging in these words of criticism, you blaspheme God’s holy name as verily as you would were you to swear” *Ibid*.

Well, you say, “I don’t see how that could be.”

It’s very simple, friends. Your brothers and sisters bear the family name, and that’s the name of God. When you and I talk about our brothers and sisters who

bear the family name, we are bringing reproach on the *name* of God, the family name, aren't we? That's what happens.

That's what happens when these people who think they're doing God's service get out these mimeographed sheets against the General Conference and our leaders. Even if they tell the truth, friends, even if the mistakes they write about the brethren are correct, it's still bringing reproach upon the name of God, isn't it? That's why you and I don't circulate those things, isn't it?

Well, my dear friends, what about among ourselves? Of course, you're fortunate in having leaders here that never make any mistakes, aren't you? What? Or do they? Well, if they do, get out the sword and start working. Tell Tom, Dick, and Harry, Jenny, Barbara and Mary all about the faults, the mistakes, the shortcomings. That will fix things, won't it? That will get everything all right. No.

Jesus says, don't do it for three reasons. In the first place, if you use that method, sooner or later, it will come back to you. That's the first thing.

"They that take the sword will perish by the sword"
Matthew 26:52.

Second: It isn't necessary. God's going to handle things. And the third thing is: These things must needs be.

Oh you say, "My, but this mustn't be."

Well, how do you know? Peter was *sure* that those soldiers shouldn't come out there and take Jesus. He was *sure* that they shouldn't bind Him and carry Him away to the high priest's palace. But God was using all that to work out His will.

Of course, it's true the soldiers were doing the wrong thing, but Peter's way wasn't the way to handle it. Jesus' way was the way to handle it. He took the cup and drank it. This meant salvation to others.

Oh, my friends, I want to learn this lesson. What do you say? I want to learn this lesson.

"Ah, but," somebody says, "I just have to say something."

All right. You know what Jesus said in Matthew 18, if you saw something that needs correcting and you had to do something about it, who were you to talk to? If thy brother sin, do what? Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.

I read something very interesting here in Volume 1. Now, this is talking about New York. I suppose it would work in Michigan too. See if you think so:

"Now the only way the brethren and sisters in New York can rise is for each to attend to his own individual case, and set his own heart in order. If sin is plain in a brother, breathe it not to another, but with love for the brother's

soul, with a heart full of compassion, with bowels of mercy, tell him the wrong, then leave the matter with him and the Lord. You have discharged your duty. You are not to pass sentence” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 1*, page 165.

Oh, what a wonderful principle! Then if I see my brother doing something that I feel sure is a mistake, whether of the head or the heart, I can go to him in love, and I can say, "Brother, here is something I have noticed. And I believe if you can see it and put it away, it would be a blessing."

But did you notice what I am not to do?

"Breathe it not to another" *Ibid.*

"Oh, but I have told him, and it doesn't do any good."

Well, then I can forget this and put this all away, can't I? What does this say?

"Tell him the wrong, then leave the matter with him and the Lord. You have discharged your duty. You are not to pass sentence" *Ibid.*

Of course, as Jesus makes plain in Matthew 18, if the brother will not hear us, and it's something that needs further attention, we are to do what? Who do you tell the second time? Oh, no, you don't tell two or three of them. You take two or three others and tell the brother over again, which is an entirely different thing.

You know dear folks, if we'd do that, we'd see some wonderful reformations. But to follow this counsel is very rare. It's far rarer than health reform and dress reform. Reform of the tongue is a very rare thing.

Let me illustrate. I want to ask you a question: Some of you have been serving the Lord for many, many years, but I want to ask you—and you don't need to raise your hands, for I don't want to embarrass you—but how many of you have ever, even once in your life, taken one or two others and gone to somebody and told them their faults—trying to help them, you understand?

One other question: Again, you don't need to raise your hand. How many of you have ever had the experience, even once in your life of having a brother or come to you and tell you your fault, and then when they didn't seem to see any results in your life, you've had the experience of having them bring one or two others and labor with you over that matter?

Why brothers and sisters, if we were following this counsel, I wouldn't say this would all be happening every day, but it certainly ought to happen at least once or twice or three times in a lifetime. Don't you think so? This is the Master's method of correcting difficulties. And when we turn aside from the Master's method and use gossip, fault-finding, criticism, telling other people about it, we are taking up the sword that Jesus said to Peter, "You had better put it up."

Now, there is one place where we can forget all about this. And I'll tell you where it is. That's in committee meetings and board meetings. There we can all get out the swords and use them, usually on people that aren't there. It would hardly do to do it with the people who are there. But with the people that aren't there, we can just cut and slash all around, can't we, because it's a committee meeting?

Ah, brethren, it seems to me I hear the words of the unseen Visitor in the committee meeting and the board meeting, "Peter," do what? "Put up the sword for all they that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

Brother, sister, if in committee and board meetings you use your tongue to slash, slash, slash, just be sure someday, some committee or board is going to sit down when you're not there. More than once in a committee meeting, formal or informal, when I've heard somebody discussed and there was an opportunity, I've said this, "I wonder what they say about us when we're not here?" Is it a good question? "I wonder what they say about us when we're not here?"

Oh, brothers and sisters, I pray in Jesus' name, that we shall this morning, let the Holy Spirit talk to our hearts about being noncombatants.

You know, we tell our boys that when they go over there to Vietnam, even if one of those enemies comes rushing at them with a bayonet, they are not to take a bayonet and hit back at him. Is that correct? We tell them that would be violating that commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

"But he is about to kill me."

Never mind. God has angels that will take care of you, if that's for His glory. And if not, you'd better die than to make somebody else die. Right?

Oh friends, our heavenly Father is directing traffic. He's directing the battle. And if we will leave ourselves in His hands, thank God, there are wonderful blessings ahead.

Now turn over to something Peter himself wrote. He learned the lesson, thank God. Turn over to 1 Peter 2:21–23. Oh, I am so glad Peter learned the lesson. And writing by the Holy Spirit he put it down here, and you can see he's learned it. This is years later. He's learned it well.

"For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" 1 Peter 2:21–22.

Now watch:

"Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" 1 Peter 2:23.

What do you say, brethren? Shall we put the sword back in its sheath and leave it there?

Is there somebody this morning that's gotten some help on this? Would you like to express it in your own words? Let's make this place ring with the praises of God.

And brethren, let me say this as my own personal testimony. God's had to talk to me about this a great many times. I've never taken a sword of steel and cut anybody, not even drawn one drop of blood. But oh, I am sorry to say, many a time, God has had to reprove me for taking this little, pink sword up here, the tongue, and smiting somebody. And oh, I praise Him this morning for reproofing me.

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