



At the beginning of 1 Peter 4, Peter tells his listeners to arm themselves with the same attitude that Christ had in the midst of the persecution and suffering that they were facing. Donovan expanded on the idea of what it means to arm oneself. To arm oneself, he suggested, is to gather and prepare for something ahead of time; to understand what kind of war you are heading into. It's about being calculated instead of blindly engaging in battle.

*“Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because whoever suffers in the body is done with sin. As a result, they do not live the rest of their earthly lives for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.” vs. 1-2*

A clear picture of the attitude of Christ is seen in the love and compassion he demonstrated on the cross. In the middle of his suffering he looked to the crowd and said to God, “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.” Donovan pointed out that Jesus’ humble and self-sacrificial attitude was the result of time spent “arming himself”. We see this being played out in the Garden of Gethsemane as Jesus prays and wrestles with the rejection, betrayal and suffering he is about to face. The attitude Jesus demonstrated in these events was something he worked towards.

In the next part of the chapter Peter begins to tell his listeners what they can do to arm themselves in order to love each other and care for the body. He’s articulating what the church should be like.

*“The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” vs. 7-10*

Donovan reminded us that to be alert and of sober mind doesn’t mean to try and drown out everything that’s happening around us or hide what’s going on inside of us. Be mindful of it – and here’s the reason why – so that we can pray. As we give ourselves over to Jesus in prayer we align our attitude with his. It enables us to love each other without hidden motives.

When it comes down to this current moment we are living in, Donovan asked what the attitude of Christ would be like. He imagined that governmental issues would probably be put aside, and rather that Jesus would be concerned with how the body is loving each other. To offer hospitality, to love each other deeply, to serve one another – this is how we are to arm ourselves in this present moment of tension and uncertainty.

### DISCUSSION

- As you reflect on your attitude during this pandemic, what has it been like?
- What will it look like for you to spend time “arming yourself” with the attitude of Christ? Where in your schedule are you willing to make time to do that?
- Donovan mentioned that sometimes there are hidden motives at play in the way that we speak and live out our lives (jealousy, fear, bitterness, wanting to have control, not wanting to disappoint people, etc.) Do you recognize this your own life? Are there specific moments recently that come to mind?
- Our hidden motives often get in the way of our ability to truly love others. God wants what’s on the inside and outside to be the same. What does it take for a group of people to work towards truly loving each other, free from the hidden motives that trip us up?

## **POSTURING**

*“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.” James 5:16*

Confession: (admit, acknowledge, reveal, make known)

- In light of our conversation, is there anything that the Lord is asking you to confess and be made known?

*“Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!”*

*Ps 106:1*

Thanksgiving: (a prayer expressing gratitude)

- Thank Him for all that He has promised and for His faithfulness upon your life.

## **EMPOWER**

*“God will strengthen you with His own great power so that you will not give up when troubles come, but you will be patient. And you will joyfully give thanks to the Father who has made you able to have a share in all that He has prepared for His people in the kingdom of light.”*

*Colossians 1:11,12*

- Pray for each other for strength, strategy, wisdom etc.
- Listen in prayer for words of encouragement and edification.
- Spur each other on!