



What's coming up in middle school @NCC:

- **Jump 6 • Monday, November 4 :: On Location** Buckle up! Pastor Dan is taking us on a trip to Mt. Everest tonight! Be sure to bring your friends and some change because checkers will be open! 6:30-8:00pm in Lower Court.
- **Vertical Edge • Tuesday, November 5 :: Core Groups** It's the first core group night of the year! Check the website to see what you're getting up to & where to meet!



november 2/3 lesson

Series: Buried Treasure

Lesson: The Righteous Will Shine. We overcome the evil in the world through our faith in Jesus Christ

Scripture: *Matthew 22:36-40; Romans 12:9-21; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 John 5:1-5*



Chew Time

- Read **Luke 4:31-5:11**





Looking at today:

We are going to look at passages that speak on how we as Christians are to deal with evil in the world.

Story time #1:

Most of you have seen the Veggie Tales movie of the Rumor Weed & the results of sinful actions left unchecked. Read this real historical account of what was thought to be a “good” plant but had “bad” consequences.

Invasion of the Weed!

Kudzu is a notorious weed found in the Deep South. There’s so much of this fast-growing vine in the Southeastern U.S., you might think it was a native plant. Actually, it took a lot of hard work to help kudzu spread so widely. Now that it covers over seven million acres of the deep South, there are a lot of people working hard to get rid of it!

Kudzu was introduced to the United States in 1876 at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Countries were invited to build exhibits to celebrate the 100th birthday of the U.S. The Japanese government constructed a beautiful garden filled with plants from their country. The large leaves and sweet-smelling blooms of kudzu captured the imagination of American gardeners who used the plant for ornamental purposes.

Florida nursery operators, Charles and Lillie Pleas, discovered that animals would eat the plant and promoted its use for forage in the 1920s. Their Glen Arden Nursery in Chipley sold kudzu plants through the mail. A historical marker there proudly proclaims “Kudzu Developed Here.”

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Soil Conservation Service promoted kudzu for erosion control. Hundreds of young men worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps planting kudzu. Farmers were paid as much as eight dollars an acre as an incentive to plant fields of the vines in the 1940s.

The problem is that it just grows too well! The climate of the Southeastern U.S. is perfect for kudzu. The vines grow as much as a foot per day during summer months, climbing trees, power poles, and anything else they contact. Under ideal conditions kudzu vines can grow sixty feet each year.

While they help prevent erosion, the vines can also destroy valuable forests by preventing trees from getting sunlight. This problem led Dr. James H. Miller of the U.S. Forest Service in Auburn, Alabama to research methods for killing kudzu. In eighteen years of research, he has found that one herbicide actually makes kudzu grow better while many have little effect. Miller recommends repeated herbicide treatments for at least four years, but some kudzu plants may take as long as ten years to kill, even with the most effective herbicides.

Lesson Connection

What lessons we can learn from the story of the Kudzu? How can sin appear “good” or attractive but really have harmful consequences.

Stepping Up:

We overcome the evil in the world through our faith in Jesus Christ.

A) Read 1 John 5:1-5.

† **1 John 5:1-5 (New Living Translation)** *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. ² We know we love God’s children if we love God and obey his commandments. ³ Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. ⁴ For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. ⁵ And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.*



1. According to this passage, how do we demonstrate our love for God? (We obey His commands.)

2. How did Jesus sum up the commandments when asked? Check out **Matthew 22:36-40 (New Living Translation)** ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” ³⁷ Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.” ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.
3. What is the victory that has overcome the world’s evil? (Our faith in Jesus, God’s Son. We overcome the world through our belief in Him.)
4. We don’t usually talk about our life being a battle against the “world”, but Paul in his writings often uses military language to communicate this. Take a few moments to go over our spiritual armor

Ephesians 6:10-18 (New Living Translation)

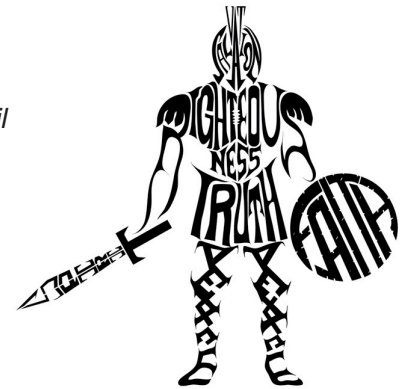
The Whole Armor of God

† ¹⁰ A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

¹³ Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.

¹⁴ Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness. ¹⁵ For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. ¹⁶ In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. ¹⁷ Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.



- B) In Romans 12**, Paul gives some very practical suggestions on how we can overcome evil through our faith in Christ. Let’s read to discover some tangible actions we can take in order to overcome evil with good.

Read Romans 12:9-21

⁹ Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. ¹⁰ Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. ¹¹ Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. ¹² Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. ¹³ When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you. Don’t curse them; pray that God will bless them. ¹⁵ Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with each other. Don’t be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all!

¹⁷ Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable.

¹⁸ Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

¹⁹ Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the Lord.

²⁰ Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.”

²¹ Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

1. In general, what are we supposed to do in our battle against evil? (Love sincerely, hate evil and cling to what is good.)
2. What does it mean to “honor one another above yourself?” (It means to put the needs of others before your own.) Why is that hard for us to do at times?



3. Name some of the ways Paul suggests that we can show light in a dark world through the way we interact with people. (*We can bless people, rejoice with them, mourn with those who mourn, live in harmony, be willing to associate with people who don't have as much as you or who may be different from you.*)
 4. Read v.17 & think about some tough situations you have been in or can think of, in which it would be tough to walk away without getting even.
 5. How do you think a person who has been mean to you would react if you treated him kindly instead of striking back in anger?
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Story time #2

Dare to Share: Does Evil Exist?

A University professor at a well-known institution of higher learning challenged his students with this question. "Did God create everything that exists?" A student bravely replied, "Yes he did!"

"God created everything?" The professor asked. "Yes sir, he certainly did," the student replied.

The professor answered, "If God created everything; then God created evil. And, since evil exists, and according to the principal that our works define who we are, then we can assume God is evil."

The student became quiet and did not answer the professor's hypothetical definition. The professor, quite pleased with himself, boasted to the students that he had proven once more that the Christian faith was a myth.

Another student, Albert, raised his hand and said, "May I ask you a question, professor?"

"Of course", replied the professor.

The student stood up and asked, "Professor, does cold exist?"

"What kind of question is this? Of course it exists. Have you never been cold?" The other students snickered at the young man's question.

The young man replied, "In fact sir, cold does not exist. According to the laws of physics, what we consider cold is in reality the absence of heat. Every body or object is susceptible to study when it has or transmits energy, and heat is what makes a body or matter have or transmit energy. Absolute zero (-460 F) is the total absence of heat; and all matter becomes inert and incapable of reaction at that temperature. Cold does not exist. We have created this word to describe how we feel if we have no heat."

The student continued, "Professor, does darkness exist?"

The professor responded, "Of course it does."

The student replied, "Once again you are wrong sir, darkness does not exist either. Darkness is in reality the absence of light. Light we can study, but not darkness. In fact, we can use Newton's prism to break white light into many colors and study the various wavelengths of each color. You cannot measure darkness. A simple ray of light can break into a world of darkness and illuminate it. How can you know how dark a certain space is? You measure the amount of light present. Isn't this correct? Darkness is a term used by man to describe what happens when there is no light present."

Finally the young man asked the professor, "Sir, does evil exist?"

Now uncertain, the professor responded, "Of course, as I have already said. We see it everyday. It is in the daily examples of man's inhumanity to man. It is in the multitude of crime and violence everywhere in the world. These manifestations are nothing else but evil.

To this the student replied, "Evil does not exist, sir, or at least it does not exist unto itself. Evil is simply the absence of God. It is just like darkness and cold, a word that man has created to describe the absence of God. God did not create evil. Evil is the result of what happens when man does not have God's love present in his heart. It's like the cold that comes when there is no heat, or the darkness that comes when there is no light."

The professor sat down.