

**The Battle plan
Matt 28:18-20/#LoveUnleashed**

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19)

I hope as we move into 2018, you understand that we are not engaged in a simulated battle up here on the hillside at COD. That’s not what we are doing and that’s not why we are here. This is not a manufactured, weekend battle for entertainment, we are engaged in a real battle. We are not up here because we have nothing better to do. We are not up here because this increases our odds of getting our bills paid and helping our kids turn out better. We are up here because we are in a very real battle, with a very real enemy, with much more at stake than we can ever imagine. This battle is fierce but the battle plan is clear.

What’s the battle plan? Jesus leaves us with no ambiguity in His calling on our lives—listen to what He says,

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20).

We are in a battle and the battle plan, our calling as a community is to go and make disciples of all the nations. That’s the bottom line of this whole thing. To miss this is to miss the life that Jesus recreated us for. To miss this is to miss the joy and fulfillment that Jesus is offering. To miss this is to miss the great adventure with Him.

The Bible, however, describes three areas of life that will keep us from this plan and harm us and our relationship to Jesus Christ in 2018.

Satan	The World	The Flesh
<p>Satan is a glorious angelic creature who rebelled against his Creator and became the chief enemy of God and as a result, the chief enemy of man. The Bible calls him Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12), Ruler of the demons (Matt. 12:24), God of this world (2 Cor. 4:4), Accuser (Matt 4:1), Prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), Roaring lion (1 Pet. 5:8), Serpent (Gen 3:1), Dragon (Rev. 20:2), Adversary (Job 1), Tempter (Matt 4:3), Beelzebub (Matt 12:24), Wicked one (Matt 13:19).</p> <p>Satan’s grand sin was his prideful and blasphemous aspiration to be like God, and His greatest weapon against us is deception.</p>	<p>The Greek word, cosmos is translated “world” in the New Testament 185 times. It can mean the created world (Acts 17:24). It can mean the inhabited world (John 3:16). In those senses, the world is good. But there is another sense where Satan is the ruler of this “world” (John 12:31), and Satan’s hope is to build a counterfeit system that effectively leaves God out (Luke 11:18).</p>	<p>Satan and the world keep us stuck but there is also the enemy within us, that we call the flesh that we are so intimately aware of. There are two important Biblical terms: soma and sarx. Sometimes soma (body) and sarx (flesh) mean the same thing but often the soma is the physical part of us that is composed of tissue, skin, bone, and various organs and systems and the sarx or flesh is often described as the sinful tendencies or habits that reside in our soma and are opposed to God. As Ed has often said, the flesh is that very real part of me that wants to live life without God and really make it work. The flesh is the traitor within us that lowers the drawbridge of our life in a very insidious way to invite sin, temptation and treachery into our lives.</p>
<p>Jesus makes some amazing claims about the character of Satan: “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own <i>resources</i>, for he is a liar and the father of it.” (John 8:44b). Satan’s native language is lying. His primary tool</p>	<p>This “world,” as John points out, is characterized by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17).</p>	<p>Probably the most relatable verses in all of Scripture are found in Romans 7, “For I want to do the good, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want but I do the very evil I do not want” (vs. 18b-19)</p>

<p>in accomplishing his agenda is through <u>lies</u>. That is why Peter tells us to “be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).</p>		<p>This is what causes Paul to say “Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?” (vs. 24)</p>
<p>Paul says, we need to stand against the schemes of the devil. Why? Because our struggle is not flesh and blood. It’s not! Our struggle, the struggle is always has been and always will be against powers, world rulers of darkness, spiritual forces of evil (Eph. 6:11-12).</p>	<p>In the turning point in the Book of Romans, we are told in a very dramatic way “<u>do not be conformed to this world</u>, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2).</p>	<p>Paul says beginning in Romans 8, “There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...for the life-giving Spirit of Christ has set us free from sin and death” (vs. 1-2) In Romans 6 we are reminded that we have died, been buried and have been raised with Christ (vs. 3-5), in order for us to “reckon” ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus (vs. 11). The Christian life is a presentation of our body parts as instruments of righteousness through the power of the Holy Spirit through the direction of Jesus Christ.</p>

Do you feel stuck? If you feel stuck, this is what we are asking you to do this year.
 If you aren’t already, would you enter into discipleship?
 If you aren’t already, would you enter into prayer with us?
 Discipleship and prayer is where the movers and shakers of the kingdom of God live.

As a community we are committed to moving ministry forward through prayers. In September we started a process as a team, asking God, what He wants us to ask for in 2018. Church of the Open Door is convinced of this promise and believes that God always moves ministry forward through prayer.

Here are the 5 prayers that God has laid on the hearts of our team in 2018:

- Father, please keep us one.**
- Father, please give us 100 stories of grace released.**
- Father, please give us all the joy of regular giving.**
- Father, please move 40 of us to lead Gospel of John groups.**
- Father, please retire the Worship Center mortgage by 2025.**

We will continue to pray for the unity of this church because it is through relationships that we will succeed or fail as a community. We are asking God to give us all the joy of trusting Him in our finances. As we reach into our neighborhoods and circles of influence we are asking the Father to give us 100 stories of grace released in people’s lives and opportunities to introduce folks to the message of grace through the Gospel of John. Finally, we are asking Him to miraculously retire the mortgage on the Worship Center by 2025 so we can move forward into the San Gabriel Valley and around the world.

The battle is real, the enemy is real and Jesus’ unique calling on our lives is crystal clear, Jesus says, *All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age* (Matthew 28:18-20).