Sermon: **The Lord does not need swords or spears to save his people** (1 Samuel 17.47)

Football World Cup – Japan (ranked 61) beat Colombia (ranked 16) (2-1). Was this luck?

It could even be described as a David and Goliath situation. Explain 1 Samuel 17 – Philistines v Israel; single combat challenge; Israel scared. David visits brothers.

For David it was simply that God was greater than Goliath. “***One with God is a majority***” (Martin Luther).

David was brave, but it all seems trite, simplistic, unrelated to our situation. So what can we say?

TEXT. We are not in a similar one-on-one contest. So are swords and spears appropriate?

What kind of ‘saving’ do we need? We need saving from the wrong way of using power.

We think that Goliath’s power is what power is about – power over others to get your own way.

* eg domestic violence (physical, emotional, by men *and* women), sexual abuse (underage, rape).
* eg disputes between neighbours, in warfare, Let’s Make America Great = power over others?
* eg in churches where factions stop talking to each other, & shout their slogans over the parapet (abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, EQ-prone buildings).

TEXT – how does God use power? The Cross is love at work.

Martin Luther King: “***Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that***.”

Think how this might change the examples above.

This does mean we should not disagree, or have opinions, but **love** should be at the heart, else we are merely increasing hate, and going against God.

If it sounds wishy-washy, this is mainly because aggressive power is culturally dominant and we find it hard to see how non-aggressive love can work. But aggressive love (if this is a thing) clearly does not work.

Tertullian is quoted as having said***: “See how these Christians love one another”***.

If only we could do this, think what effect it would have? But in reality we haven’t given it enough chance.