

“Overcoming Evil with Good” with Greg Boyd

Session 2 - The World at War

Greg’s western world view was first cracked while serving at a rural church outside of Minnesota. He had to deal with a young woman who was, in his eventual assessment (and the doctors’), demon possessed.

Up to that point, he thought he believed in the supernatural, but only after confronting it head on did he actually have to define and address it. This sent him onto a search to know more of what the scriptures actually say about spiritual warfare and overcoming evil. He did find many “weird” and “wacko” things in his research, but also found many things to be true. He decided that he needed to find a balance between the crazy and the real, between the false and the authentic.

1) He found Old Testament language to be dramatic and metaphoric

- In referring to ‘waters’ the OT writers were actually speaking about principalities.
- Yahweh was the God who battles the ‘waters’.
- Sea Monsters are also prominent in the older testament. Names like Leviathan, Rahab & Behemoth are common.
 - These are mythological expressions
- Pagan gods are also spoken about very much. The OT seems to borrow pagan songs and attributes them to Yahweh.
- There’s a little bit about demons and Satan, but not that much.

2) He discovered The New Testament introduced a much broader narrative and conversation

- Most Christians don’t appreciate how big the conversation on warfare is.
- Most Christians believe God’s will happens whether we’re involved or not, and if so, why the need for spiritual warfare.
- Jews in the New Testament became more aware of angelic beings, good and bad, than they ever were before.
- Perhaps the most intense expression of warfare is when Jesus calls Satan, the ‘Arcan’ of this world.
 - Satan is the ruler, the prince, the boss, the CEO of this world.
 - 2 Corinthians 4:4 refers to Satan as the ‘god of this age’, which is remarkable for Jews to have said.
 - In 1 John 5:19, Satan is said to have ‘control over this whole world’

In Luke 4 & Matthew 4 Satan offers Jesus ‘the whole world’ (Jesus doesn’t dispute that he can offer him this.)

3) What’s important about all this?

- We know the principalities are there, that the world is saturated with demonic powers.
- We will either acknowledge this or not. We will either help or not.
- Do we believe we’re in a battle? (not of flesh and blood)
- You’re either fighting the powers or being played by the powers

You can’t be a pacifist without having a robust warfare worldview!
This helps us identify who our true enemy is.

Jesus’ ministry of healing and exorcisms are all warfare connected. His ministry, of course, culminates on the cross. Colossians 2:5 says that Jesus disarms the principalities.

Even though the outcome was decided on Calvary, there are still battles to be fought.

Paul urges us not to be ignorant of Satan’s schemes.

[CONTINUED...]

4) Are you aware of what's going on?

- God's presence is real and it's here
- There is an enemy who comes to steal, kill and destroy. Satan is a schemer.
** It is appropriate to pray against this. **
- Be aware of what can be behind the conflict.
- There's often more to the story: identify it and deal with it.
- Look back to what did Jesus do: he healed and delivered

Don't be afraid to shoot in both directions: combine mental health and counselling with prayer and spiritual warfare.

Steps to take:

- 1) Consider doing some reading and research in this area, both biblically and in the area of church history. Some understanding about mental health and psychology wouldn't hurt.
- 2) Pray for discernment in this area.
- 3) Begin to be thoughtful and present in every moment, asking the Holy Spirit to make you aware of what may or may not be going in the spiritual realm.
- 4) Don't become obsessed with all this, while at the same time not being ignorant to it, either.