

## **"Overcoming Evil with Good" with Greg Boyd** **Session 3 - Living in Revolt**

### **Key Thoughts:**

The main purpose of having the Holy Spirit in our lives is that we become more like Jesus. This is at the heart of the Gospel message. Entering into a relationship with God means changing the way we live now. Our purpose is to create disciples, not just believers who are waiting to get into heaven.

As each of us attempts to be more like Jesus, it is important that we understand who Jesus was in his context. He was radically counter-cultural. The way Jesus spoke to and included women, the people he chose to spend time with and talk to (including tax collectors and prostitutes), and the ways he broke down socio-political boundaries by helping non-Jewish people all went against the religious structures to which he was expected to conform. But Jesus came to point out that religion minimizes the sin of the one in power and maximizes the sins of other people so that they continue to need the system.

A human being who is fully under the reign of God looks like Jesus. This gives us an example, and creates contrast to expose the problems that exist in any given culture or context. Ideas that don't align with God are spiritually influenced by darkness. Therefore, Jesus lives out spiritual warfare by revolting against these systems. The kingdom Jesus came to set up always looks like sacrifice, and involves loving all people at all times. Every decision we make is a vote to further support the kingdom of God or not.

As we aim to be transformed, we are not alone in the process. The Holy Spirit partners with us to develop the Fruits of the Spirit in us. But the depth of our relationship with and transformation to be like Jesus can be limited by our view of who God is. Many people have an image of God as angry or disappointed, but then, out of fear, feel that they have to say He is loving, because otherwise God will get angry with them. This leaves them with a mediocre view of God at best. It also actually changes the physiological structure of their body, as constantly making fear-based decisions over activates our amygdala and erodes our brain. 2 Cor. 3:12-4:6 explains how, when we turn to Jesus, a veil is removed from us so that we can better see what God looks like. The more we see and know God, the easier it becomes to have a concrete idea of what it means to be like him and how He views us. Col. 2:9 says that, "for in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (NIV), which means that Jesus came to fully reveal God's love for us, not conceal his anger. God loving us is what leads to our transformation.

A life of fullness and worth is the life of someone who has been met by Jesus. The extent of our value that is not being met by God is the extent that we are allowing to be met by other things (people, work, stuff, etc.) that will ultimately disappoint us. If we fear God, we will not allow him to fully meet with us. This is why the first thing the devil goes after is our image of God. In Western culture we are also immersed in a culture of consumerism, capitalism and individualism. The influence that this has on our lives is real, but we are responsible for our own actions. As we tend to normalize our own experiences, we must find ways to gain perspective of how our perception has been changed. We must be aware of where we are finding satisfaction, worth, and value apart from Jesus and actively choose differently.

### **Questions to consider:**

- If every decision we make ought to reflect kingdom values, how does your life look different because you follow Jesus?
- How do you view God?
- How have you seen God's transformative spirit at work in your own life?
- In what ways does your life align with culture? In what ways do you live counter-culturally?

### **Steps to take:**

- 1) Find time to talk to and pray with someone you trust about your answers to the above questions.
- 2) Find ways that you can actively get involved with peacefully working against the influence of the spirit of darkness in your neighbourhood and community.