



## BEAUTIFUL RESISTANCE: Bringing the Church Back to Life

Pastor Derek Sanford

November 14, 2021

### Life Group Discussion

**Encouragement:** How has the church changed from the way it was when you were younger, for better and for worse? (Expect to hear differing experiences because not all went to the same church.) When have you experienced a church most alive?

**Scripture:** Read [Ephesians 3:6-12](#)

This week's sermon suggested that the global church has been tempted to compromise and has lost its influence. Why do you think that is? What do you think verse 10 means? If the church was operating as God intended, what would the impact look like?

Pastor Derek listed three key metaphors for the church:

1. The Church is still the bride of Christ
2. The Church is still the temple of God
3. The Church is still the body of Christ.

How do these metaphors help your understanding of God's vision for the church? How could these metaphors be more evident in your life?

**Prayer:** Based on the needs raised through today's discussion, pray for new life in our church and God's global church.

**Next Steps:** Offer to commit, as a group, to reading the book *Beautiful Resistance* by Jon Tyson or to following the READ plan (find all resources at [www.whoisgrace.com/read](http://www.whoisgrace.com/read)).



## BEAUTIFUL RESISTANCE: Hospitality that Resists Fear

Pastor Scott Michel

November 21, 2021

### Life Group Discussion

**Encouragement:** There are many ways to practice hospitality! How did someone show you hospitality recently?

### Scripture:

[Luke 7:36-50](#) Why do you think the Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner? Who actually shows hospitality in this story? What does this teach us about the way we should offer hospitality?

[Ephesians 2:11-22](#) Who is the outcast or stranger that Paul is writing to, and what brought them into the body of Christ? Who is an outcast to you, and how can you be welcoming to them?

[Hebrews 13:1-3](#) What role does empathy play in hospitality? How can we practically show Jesus' love to others?

**Prayer:** Ask for prayer requests. Encourage your group to pray for God to give them opportunities to practice hospitality. Taking turns, pray out loud for the person to your left.

**Next Steps:** Brainstorm an opportunity for your group to practice hospitality together during this holiday season.



## BEAUTIFUL RESISTANCE: Worship that Resists Idolatry

Pastor Derek Sanford

November 28, 2021

### Life Group Discussion

**Encouragement:** Share some ways God proves He is better than any idol in your life. How have you seen God be “more than enough”?

**Scripture:** Read [Romans 1:18-25](#)

This passage paints a sad picture of what happens in our lives when we worship something other than God. If you're willing, share some struggles you have had with idols in your past or present. What have these struggles (and victories) taught you about God?

In *Beautiful Resistance*, Jon Tyson says idols cause problems through deception, distortion, and destruction. How do you see those three things happening in our society right now? How does recognizing the root cause of these problems help you react to them?

Worship (affirming who God is) and Wonder (affirming what He's done for us through Jesus) are an antidote to idols. Have everyone in the group name one of God's characteristics/attributes. Next, share the amazing things God does for us through Jesus. As a group, how can you encourage each other to incorporate worship and wonder into every day?

**Prayer:** Ask the group to first pray silently and confess to God the things in their lives that are (or could become) idols. Next, with eyes still closed, ask them to hold their hands out open in front of them and ask God to help them release those idols. Finally, still in silence, ask each to pray for the person on their right asking God to help that person release any idols they may hold and stay focused on God through worship and wonder.

**Next Steps:** How can your group encourage each other this week to live in worship and wonder?

A few years ago Pastor Derek challenged the congregation to choose three people to pray for every day at 3:00 for three minutes. Think about your 3 - pray that God will help them understand He is all they need this week.



## BEAUTIFUL RESISTANCE: Honor that Resists Contempt

Pastor Derek Sanford

December 5, 2021

### Life Group Discussion

**Encouragement:** Do you believe you have a unique calling or gifting from God? Take turns sharing briefly about those. Remind that group that it's ok if not everyone has had the opportunity to learn theirs yet!

**Scripture:** [Romans 12:1-21](#)

In Jon Tyson's book, *Beautiful Resistance*, he says, "Contempt is so dangerous for followers of Jesus because it creates a sense of superiority in us, devalues others, and also shuts off the work of God in our midst. Most of us would shudder at the thought that we show contempt to others, but it manifests itself in ways that we may not immediately recognize." (pg 203)

As we read Romans 12, did you notice Paul's specific examples of ways that believers honor or dishonor each other? What do you think it means to honor someone? What is biblical honor rooted in?

What does it look like to resist contempt? (e.g. Seeing others through a filter of dignity. Listening to their stories. Taking an interest in their callings. Celebrating their sacrifices. Acknowledging their gifts.)

Only the Holy Spirit can make it possible for the church to serve God in this way. How will you lean on the Holy Spirit to help you resist contempt?

**Prayer:** Read aloud [Psalm 139: 13-16](#). Ask your group to meditate on its truths – how intentionally and beautifully God has made each one of you. Then, ask everyone to call to mind a person they have a hard time loving, and make a decision to honor them. Read the passage again, but this time insert they/their for me/my: *"For you formed their inward parts; you knitted them together in their mother's womb. I praise you, for they are fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. Their frame was not hidden from you, when they were being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw their unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for them, when as yet there was none of them."*

Spend some time praying for God to bless your person, and for your hearts to be softened toward them.

**Next Steps:** Commit to continuing to pray for your 'honoree' throughout the week, and take one tangible step to show them honor.



## BEAUTIFUL RESISTANCE: Sacrifice that Resists Privilege

Pastor Derek Sandford

December 12, 2021

### Life Group Discussion

**Encouragement:** Have you ever had an experience when you were able to recognize the tangible fruit of privilege in your life?

**Scripture:** [Philippians 2: 3-11](#) and [Luke 18: 18-30](#)

In *Beautiful Resistance*, Jon Tyson wrote, “It could not be clearer from Jesus’ life that privilege is not something to be ignored or enjoyed. It is to be stewarded for the sake of others” (pg 138). What is your reaction to this statement? Have you ever thought about the concept of stewardship in relation to your privileges, or have you often taken them for granted? How does the passage in Philippians illustrate this concept of stewardship?

How does resisting selfishness redirect (or steward) privilege? Would you consider this a form of sacrifice?

How did the rich ruler in Luke 18 respond to Jesus’ answer, and why do you think he responded that way? What did it cost him to refuse? Who would have benefitted if he had surrendered his privilege and status to follow Jesus?

How does this passage relate to the instruction Paul gave the Philippians in Chapter 2 and the example that Jesus himself set before us?

**Prayer:** Use Romans 12:2 from last week’s reading to begin prayer time: “Lord, let us not be conformed to the ways of this world, but let us be transformed by the renewal of our minds, that by testing we will be able to discern what your will is, your good, acceptable and perfect will. Teach us to...”

**Next Steps:** Challenge each person to brainstorm a way to take one tangible step toward blessing someone out of their abundance. Encourage them to share their plans with an accountability partner.

### DON'T FORGET!

Celebrate the season with Pastor Sarah on the MY CHAIR podcast (search “whoisgrace” on spotify or apple or where you listen to podcasts). And join us for Christmas Eve services on Dec 23 and 24 at both Grace locations in McKean and Harborcreek or online/television. Find out more information at [www.hometownholidaylights.com](http://www.hometownholidaylights.com).



## BEAUTIFUL RESISTANCE: Celebration That Resists Cynicism

Pastor Scott Michel  
December 19, 2021

### Life Group Discussion

\*Leader, if your group is not meeting this week, consider sending a message of encouragement/celebration (e.g. [Romans 15:13](#)) and encouraging them to continue in the READ plan through December 24<sup>th</sup>.

### Encouragement:

What traditions and activities fill you with joy during the Christmas season?

### Scripture:

Would you say that you are more naturally inclined to cynicism or celebration? Why do you think that is? Do you feel that your cynicism/celebration is contagious?

Read [Psalm 146](#). The Bible draws our hearts away from cynicism and toward praise, joy, and celebration of who God is and what He has done, is doing, and will do. How does this Psalm stir celebration in us?

Read [Luke 1:39-55](#). How do each of the persons (born and unborn) reflect joy and celebration in this familiar passage? How can the celebration of Christmas push back cynicism in your heart? In the Church?

### Next Steps:

Take turns sharing a story of something God has done in your life so that you can celebrate Him together.

### Prayer:

*God of all ages, in the birth of Christ your boundless love for your people shattered the power of darkness. Be born in us with that same love and light, that our song may blend with all the choirs of heaven and earth to the glory of your holy name. Amen. (Christmas prayer, Revised Common Lectionary)*

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