

Sunday, 9<sup>th</sup> November 2014

**No Greater Love**

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Calvary  
Christian  
fellowship



## **1. THE FACE OF EVIL TODAY**

1. War and Evil
2. The Individual and Evil
3. Sin and Evil
4. Guilt and Blame Cultures

### **JESUS – NO GREATER LOVE**

**BIBLE READING:** Revelation 2: 12 – 29

## **2. THE FACE OF EVIL IN REVELATION**

### **PERGAMUM – SEAT OF SATAN**

### **THYATIRA – TOLERANT OF JEZEBEL**

## **3. NO GREATER LOVE**

### **TRASHING THE SACRIFICE.**

### **WELCOME TO THE PARTY!**

1. The Bread of Life
2. A Personal Invitation
3. Kingdom Agents
4. Witness to a New Dawn

## SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

### In a family, small group or community

These notes are to help you as a family, community or small group unpack the Sunday teaching. It's a bit unrealistic for a small group to do everything - **so feel free to be selective!**

### OPENER

Who likes watching the news and why?

How do we/could we react to the evil we see?

### POSSIBLE DISCUSSION TOPICS

#### No Greater Love

Think about some of the similarities and the differences between a brave soldier and Jesus – both of whom “laid down their lives for their friends”. In what ways might we be called to follow their example?

#### Guilt culture and Blame Culture

(Listen to Thought for the Day, 4<sup>th</sup> November with Rabbi Lord Sacks (3m) you can easily find the daily clips on the BBC website)

What are the problems of a blame culture?

What are the benefits/blessings/joys that come from a Judaeo/Christian guilt culture as Lord Sachs describes them?

Is this lost from Britain and can we actually reclaim it?

#### Pergamum and Thyatira

Identify and discuss the bad things that were going on in these two churches and try to get to the heart of what was wrong.

Would you say that they were “trashing Jesus’ sacrifice” or perhaps you would put it differently?

Then consider some ways that a church today might also fall into the same trap.

## PRAYER AND WORSHIP

### Welcome to the Party!

There were two specific promises given to the overcomers at each of Pergamum and Thyatira. My interpretation of them is in the notes (overleaf: Welcome to the Party: 1,2,3,4)

Remind yourselves of the specific words in Revelation that gave rise to my interpretations and then **celebrate them** either by:

- talking more about them,
- using them as a springboard to worship (think of songs that celebrate these themes)
- giving thanks in prayer for them

or any combination of the above or any ways that you can think of!

## WITNESS



This is the new logo for the initiative shared with partners at the PPP meeting In October. It's the sharp point of the arrow. If that means nothing to you, ask Karen for the PPP notes and/or order the CD of the meeting at the CD desk on Sunday!

Take some time to make everyone in the group aware of as much as you know so far about the Disciple 2015 initiative. Group leaders will be able to share more after the Enthuse and Equip Meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup>.

# Thought for the Day - 04/11/2014 - Rabbi Lord Sacks

Duration: 02:57

Yesterday the General Medical Council and the Nursing and Midwifery Council issued guidelines telling doctors and nurses to be honest with patients and apologise when mistakes are made. It's the first time such guidance has been given.

What's extraordinary is that such guidelines have to be given at all. Doctors and nurses are among the most caring, dedicated and altruistic people there are. And yes, we've become a very litigious society, but has it really got to the stage when even the best have to be told to be honest, and when in the wrong, to apologise?

Something significant but almost invisible has happened to the West this past half century and to understand it we have to turn to a great anthropologist: Ruth Benedict. It was she who taught the distinction between shame cultures, like ancient Greece, and guilt cultures like Judaism and Christianity.

They both teach people how they ought to behave, but they have very different approaches to wrongdoing. In shame cultures what matters is what other people think of you: the embarrassment, the ignominy, the loss of face. Whereas in guilt cultures it's what the inner voice of conscience tells you. In shame cultures we're actors playing our part on the public stage. In guilt cultures we're engaged in inner conversation with the better angels of our nature.

The biggest difference is that in shame cultures, if we're caught doing wrong, there's a stain on our character that only time can erase. But guilt

cultures make a sharp distinction between the doer and the deed, the sinner and the sin. That's why guilt cultures focus on atonement and repentance, apology and forgiveness. The act was wrong, but on our character there's no indelible stain.

In shame cultures, if you've done wrong, the first rule is, don't be found out. If you are, then bluff your way through. Only admit when every other alternative has failed, because you'll be disgraced for a very long time indeed.

Shame has a place in any moral system, but when it dominates all else, when all we have is trial by public exposure, then the more reluctant people will be to be honest, and the more suspicious we'll become of people in public life, not just in medicine but in politics, the media, financial institutions, corporations, and let's be honest, in religious organisations too.

We need to make it easier for people to be honest and apologise, which means that we too must learn how to forgive.