

## LIFE TOGETHER SERMON SERIES

### Week 6: A Community Of Orthodoxy In A Culture Of Ideological Idolatry

#### 2 Corinthians 10:1-5

Ideologies abound. They can be provocative, or thoughtful, or helpful, or confusing, or divisive, and so on. There's always been various ideologies — anarchism, communism, democracy, theocracy, liberalism, capitalism, etc. But the clash of ideologies in this generation is immense.

Ideologies are typically marked by two basic features:

1. **When you take a part of the truth and make it the whole.**  
It can start with a good idea, or a point of truth. But when it is made the whole thing, which distorts it eventually, that's a problem. E.g. Christian nationalism, filioquism, etc.
2. **When you take a good thing and make it ultimate.**  
Something good made the ultimate thing in which people put their faith, or draw their security or happiness from, become de facto gods. E.g. equality, creation care, nation state, etc.

When our ideologies become dogma that ousts God from His rightful place, that means we have taken God's place. But we were created to live God-centered lives, not self-centered lives. Self at the center is idolatry. God at the center leads to heaven, self at the center leads to destruction. **Could ideology be the idolatry of our time?**

This war rages, not outside, but in us — between the Kingdom of God and darkness. As followers of Jesus, we war to make all of our life obedient to Christ. That is orthodoxy.

*orthós = correct, right, true.*

*dóxa = opinion, praise, way, orientation.*

**Or simply, right believing.**

**Orthodoxy = a body of truth that have been passed down by Jesus, through His teachings and His life, that we as followers believe in and embrace as lifestyle.**

Conservative or progressive? Being a community faithful to Jesus means we would find ourselves at odds with aspects of both. We are a people obedient primarily to Christ and faithful to His Lordship. Where our allegiance is more about our ideas of Him i.e. some ideology, more than to God Himself, it ceases to be right. It becomes ideological idolatry.

**Our tension is: How to remain true to Jesus and not let our hearts be swept away?**

In 2 Corinthians 10:1-5, Paul was dealing with some harmful ideologies with the church in Corinth. There were people undermining his authority (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). Paul had no desire to go to them with eloquence but the power of God, because we don't war according to the flesh as the world does (1 Peter 4:1-2; Romans 8:13).

As long as we live in this world, we will be dealing with the works of the enemy. This “destroying” and “taking” in v5 is ongoing, always. The “lofty opinion” connotes tall barriers and fortified opinions that are lifted up with pride against knowledge of God, against right believing, against us living into the way of Jesus. We too are at risk of being swept away by ideologies that seem sound, good, loving and inclusive. But we have to resist putting ‘self’ at the center, remaining vigilant in warfare and faithful in our discipleship to Jesus, by the weapons that have divine power (Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17).

**Our life together as disciples is about the process of transforming idea systems (caught from family, culture, etc.) into the idea system of the Kingdom of God, so that we grow in obedience to Christ and allegiance to His Lordship — a people of right believing.**

The key is obedience that stems from relational trust in the Person of Christ, not just a belief system.

Being such a community means we desire God’s rule; our faith is not a private one (Acts 2:42-47). The call is to the potency of our lives, not by our public power, but us learning to live out that power in public (our way of life), and bearing witness to the truth in a humble, non-defensive posture.

**The practice of reading scripture together is one that forms us as a community of orthodoxy:**

- Read it with others and on your own.
- Pray it, sing it, draw it, listen to it, read it.
- Devotional kind: using guides or reading plans.
- Study kind: get study bible, do inductive study.
- Contemplative kind: Lectio divina, bible art journaling.

We must encourage each other in our intake of scripture, always learning obedience to Christ and allegiance to His Lordship through teaching, correcting, edifying and challenging.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How have you seen ideological idolatry in our culture? (i.e. an ideology that contains some truth or is good, yet embraced in such a way that it exhibits what is contrary to Christian teaching)
2. What is an ideology you can identify in your life that hampers your following Jesus, or causes a dilemma or confusion in your faith? Flesh out how so, with an example or two.
3. Based on 2 Corinthians 10:1-5, how are we to engage in the war we are in? And what does this have to do with ideological idolatry?
4. What does it look like for God’s people to stay faithful to Christ and obedient to His teachings?

5. How can we be a community of orthodoxy (right believing) through the practice of reading scripture? How should this inform our meetings, our posture when we gather, as a LifeGroup?

**Practice:**

For CORD Groups, scripture reading is one of the four practices you commit to with your group mates. It is the “R” of CORD. Discuss how you would like to approach this (see Primer for pointers and suggestions), and how you would like to keep each other on track.