

Good morning, I, Grantley have the joy of sharing with you this morning.

This morning I would like to talk about Defiant Grace: The Radical Power of the Opposite Spirit

Years ago, I learned about a life-changing principle: operating in the opposite spirit. To walk in the opposite spirit means to identify the dark or negative motive behind someone's behaviour and deliberately respond with the exact opposite force.

Jesus did not just teach this radical strategy; He lived it. In Luke 6:27–28, He commands us: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." Far from being a call to passive surrender, this is a masterclass in spiritual warfare.

We see this play out vividly at the Last Supper. Luke 22 reveals that a petty argument broke out among the disciples about who was the greatest. In ancient Jewish culture, washing feet was the work of the lowest slave. Because there was no servant present, an awkward standoff ensued—no disciple wanted to look like the inferior one by volunteering.

Instead of ordering someone to do it, Jesus completely flipped the script. John 13 notes that Jesus, knowing the Father had put all things under His power, got up, wrapped a towel around His waist, and began washing their feet.

Where the spirit of the room was self-exaltation, Jesus brought the opposite spirit of humility. Shockingly, He even washed the feet of Judas Iscariot, who had already plotted to betray Him for cash. Judas brought a spirit of harm; Jesus answered with a spirit of ultimate blessing, later handing Judas the piece of bread reserved for the most honoured guest.

When Jesus spoke about turning the other cheek or walking the extra mile, His original audience understood that He was teaching a brilliant form of non-violent resistance, here are two examples:

- The Backhanded Slap (Matthew 5:39): In a right-handed culture, striking someone on the right cheek required using the back of the hand. This was not meant to injure; it was a degrading gesture used by masters to slaves or Roman soldiers to commoners to say, "You are beneath me." By turning the left cheek, the victim effectively says, "Your attempt to humiliate me failed. I am your equal. If you want to strike me again, you will have to punch me like a man." For a Roman soldier or a master to punch a social inferior in public was a major taboo that would deeply embarrass his own status.
- The Second Mile (Matthew 5:41): Roman military law allowed a soldier to force a civilian to carry his heavy pack—but strictly for one mile only. If a soldier broke this rule, he faced brutal disciplinary action or demotion. By cheerfully continuing to walk past the mile marker, the civilian instantly shifts the power dynamic. The soldier is plunged into panic, forced to beg and argue to get his pack back before a superior officer spots them.

Jesus took acts of social and military oppression and turned them into moments where the victim reclaimed their divine dignity. This is not lying down and taking a beating. It is an active, brilliant resistance that the perpetrator has absolutely no answer for.

This same counter-cultural power is transforming our world today:

- In the 1980s, Iranian teenager Hamraz Shariat was executed by a firing squad on a minor political charge. His brother, Hormoz a new believer from Muslim background where revenge is the norm wanted bloody revenge but wrestled with God's command to forgive. When Hormoz cried out, God answered him with a higher strategy: "The best revenge is to see one million souls go to heaven instead of hell." In 2001, Hormoz founded Iran Alive Ministries. Today, his satellite network broadcasts the Gospel 24/7, reaching an estimated 6 million regular viewers inside Iran.
- In 2012 when a Muslim radical firebombed a church building in Egypt, the church fought back using the weapons of love and forgiveness by the congregation singing a song in the burnt-out building forgiving the

perpetrator and then releasing it on social media. In 2017, following the horrific ISIS Palm Sunday suicide bombings at Coptic churches in Egypt, Father Boules delivered a viral sermon titled "A Message to Those Who Kill Us." Instead of responding with rage, he told the terrorists: "You gave us Christ's death—the biggest honour we could have. You shortened our journey to Heaven. And you filled our churches with people who never usually come." He closed by telling the killers that the church loved them and was praying for them.

Operating in the opposite spirit isn't just for global stages; it is for our everyday lives.

A black Christian friend once asked me a searching question: "When you are at a braai and people start talking negatively about us black people, do you defend us or just remain silent?"

I had to confess my silence. But that conviction sparked a resolution. Now, whenever negative or prejudiced comments are spoken, I refuse to get angry. Instead, I graciously drop something remarkable, beautiful, and positive about my black brothers and sisters into the conversation. I fight the darkness with light.

The next time someone hurts, insults, or devalues you, slow down. Ask yourself: What is the negative spirit driving their actions? Then ask God: How can I shock this situation by responding in the exact opposite spirit?

Let Us Pray

Father, thank You for the example of Jesus, who restored dignity to the vulnerable and disarmed the powerful with love. Help us to accurately represent Your Kingdom values. Give us the wisdom to diffuse anger with kindness, and the courage to speak light into negativity. May Your name be glorified through our radical grace. Amen.

Have a blessed day