

A Refresher Course on the Bible

Class #4 – October 2, 2022

Fall 2022

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The Bible

- Nurtures us in WISDOM
- Written FROM FAITH FOR FAITH
- The Word of the Lord
- Jesus is the Word Made Flesh - the clearest REVELATION of God
- Jesus is what can be seen of God embodied in a human life
- We seek to spend a lifetime trusting, loving, serving, following Jesus – with all our doubts and uncertainties
- Who is Jesus – for each of us, for the world?

ADAPT

Do you allow automatic updates to software on your phone and computer?

Did you get a flu shot recently?

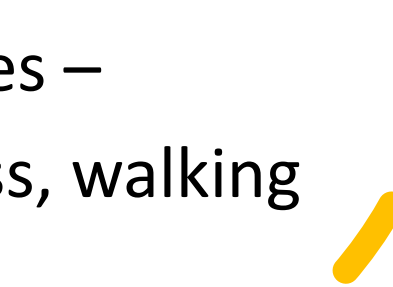
Adapting is critical to almost everything

Religious traditions also adapt –

To grow and serve, to trust and follow Jesus – we keep re-imagining faith and discipleship

We keep asking – what must we preserve and what must adapt?

Christian Faith – following Jesus

- WISDOM – not merely following rules
 - WISDOM – not merely adhering to a set of beliefs
 - WISDOM – worshipping and serving –
 - People of the WAY – Jesus' Way –
 - No more talk of many gods – monotheism!
 - God reigns – in Jesus – and we seek to follow in faithfulness
 - Love God and love what God loves –
 - Promoting justice, loving kindness, walking humbly -
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New Testament challenges and changes

- Who is Jesus and what does it mean to follow?
- The Acts of the Apostles
 - We cannot be spectators and admirers only – we are called to be the church
 - The story of Jesus lives out in Jesus' followers
 - God remains central – but God's people remain central too – and that means us!
- Letters to Churches
 - We keep learning ways to adapt – trusting God and serving God
 - Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, etc
- We adjust and change OR we kill the tradition by refusing to change
- God's steadfast love, abiding care, presence, and promises – we respond!

Holy Spirit

Jesus promised – I will be with you - and the coming of his Spirit

Acts 2 and more

Ordinary people become extraordinary disciples and servants

The Spirit bestows gifts and fortitude – “some will become”

God – the Spirit - showers us with important characteristics and goals: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness

Wherever we see anything helpful and good, healing and wholesome, that is the Spirit of God at work in the world

Where do we find HOPE?

- Genesis 1 – when we affirm WHO made the world
- Genesis 12 – when God calls and goes with God’s people
- Exodus 15 – when God guides the people from slavery
- Deuteronomy 8 – when we recall God’s demands and guidance & care
- Isaiah 43 – when God demonstrates again – God will not leave us
- Jeremiah 32 – when Jeremiah buys a field in a time of terror
- Psalm 23, 27, 90, 139, and more
- Romans 8 – nothing separates us from God’s love
- Revelation 21 – new heaven and new earth and death will be no more

Importance of Christian Community

- We are always better together
- Faithfulness all through Scripture is embodied best with others – sharing food and combining resources, singing and celebrating, working together, helping one another, spreading peace, love, and joy
- We depend on each other – and community - for correctives, interpreting Scripture, sorting out difficult issues
- KOINONIA – it is more than fellowship –
- “Life Worth Living” – “Flourishing” – What matters? Miroslav Volf
- To Whom are we accountable? What is life about?

Diana Butler Bass – Three- Word Theology

from “The Cottage” - musings

***God is love
Love your neighbor
Here am I
Be not afraid
Peace on earth
Love one another
Do unto others
Faith, hope, love
Pray like this
Go, do likewise
God will provide
Love is patient
Love your enemies
Seventy times seven
Thy Kingdom come
Love never fails***

From the Iona Community

We believe in God:

**who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others by the Spirit.**

We trust in God.

We are called to be the church:

**to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope.**

In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.

We are not alone. Thanks be to God. Amen

Questions

- How do we deal with Fundamentalists?
- How do we deal with other religions?
- How well do we live – the life worth living?
- What are your priorities?
- To whom are you finally accountable?

Resources –

- Rob Bell – **What Is The Bible? - How an Ancient Library of Poems, Letters, and Stories Can Transform the Way You Think About Everything**
- Peter Enns – **How the Bible Actually Works**
- Marcus Borg – **Reading the Bible Again for the First Time**
- N. T. Wright – **After You Believe**
- Rachel Held Evans – **Inspired**
- John Pavlovitz – **If God Is Love, Don't Be A Jerk**
- Walter Brueggemann – **A Gospel of Hope**