

Lenten Study Series: Beyond Belief  
Session 3 - "Followers of the Way"

Marianne, David, Jeff

"Death is the great equalizer" - speaking at the memorial garden

Life is more mysterious than just dust

Marcus

-distinction between pre- and post-Easter Jesus

-Jesus of Nazareth vs "What Jesus became after his death"  
(Christian experience & tradition)

-Experiences of Jesus' presence after his death

"Easter faith is about our present relationship to Jesus as a figure of the present"

"I think the truth of the stories is in their ancient, archetypal, religious symbolism - those affirmations that Jesus is the light in the darkness, and so forth."

"Because of the particular shape of the modern period and its concern for history, and so forth, I think the Historical Jesus matters to millions of Christians in our time. He provides a compelling and credible picture of what a life full of God looks like."

-Gospel accounts:

Mark written around 70, John written closer to 100

-all four written in the last third of the first century

Chapter 2

-Language of sacrifice

-Jesus - great high priest and sacrifice - metaphorical language in Hebrews  
→ Contextualize!!

-*Temple theology* was one form of Jewish theology that claimed an institutional monopoly on access to God and forgiveness

"A metaphorical proclamation of radical grace"

-God has already taken care of whatever it is you think that separates you from God

-The Lutheran tradition is founded upon Martin Luther's experience of radical grace - *unconditional grace*

-It seems that we are constantly placing requirements into the religious life!

-Making grace real, living into God's grace - what the Christian life is about!

Chapter 3

-Post-Easter proclamation, "Jesus is Lord," is equivalent to pre-Easter proclamation, "the Kingdom of God is here"

-Jesus lives (in the present)

-God has vindicated Jesus (powers of this world executed him, but God has said "yes" to Jesus)

-Paul's conversion in the mid-30s - Acts 9 - Damascus road experience

-Powers of this world are wrong - Jesus is Lord  
(a subversive claim in the 1st Cent)

"The stories that we do have in the gospels are best understood as parables of the resurrection, rather than being understood either as fabricated accounts of something that didn't happen or misunderstandings that speak about a tomb being empty and maybe they'd gone to the wrong tomb. I think the stories of the gospels are profoundly true..."

-To follow Jesus seriously means to stand against the imperial vision of life in any time or place, and to stand *for* the alternative of the Kingdom of God - a world of justice and peace.

"Love God, and change the world in the direction of God's dream for the world"

Chapter 4

"Followers of the Way" - what the Christian life is all about

Two dimensions of the path:

-an internal path that follows from death to resurrection

-challenge to the powers of this world, confrontation with the domination system, standing for the Kingdom of God

-Discipleship: to follow Jesus, God's passion for the world

-Love what God loves

-It is ultimately so simple, as it is also challenging: to love God, as known in Jesus, and to participate in the passion of God

Marianne, Jeff, and David

Reminiscing

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How do you understand what Borg calls the "metaphorical proclamation of radical grace"?

What are the implications of this material for you personally? For your community? For faith-based institutions as a whole?