

BEYOND BELIEF – SESSION 1
“CENTERED IN THE SPIRIT”

Chapter 1

Marianne’s introduction:

The nature of the Bible and Historical Jesus - Borg brought things to our attention “Hearing Marcus again for the first time”

Looking afresh at Christianity

What is real? How should we live?

Marcus:

Significance of Jesus for the Christian Life

Two ways to see the relationship between Jesus & the Christian life:

#1 “A believing way” of seeing Jesus and the Christian life - believing in Jesus, above all

#2 “Taking seriously what Jesus took seriously” - what was Jesus up to? And letting our lives be shaped in the same way

Chapter 2

Christological language of the Christian tradition

We can say: In Jesus, we see more fully than anywhere else what the spirit of God in a person looks like, without saying he’s the only way or even the best way

Two primary focal points about the life of Jesus:

a) spirit-filled & b) compassion-filled

A mystic has frequent and vivid experiences of God; knows the sacred
Jesus invited his followers into the same relationship with God

Spirituality: becoming conscious of and intentional about a deepening relationship with God

Chapter 3

“What is prayer?”

Jewish Sabbath Prayer:

*Days pass and the years vanish,
and we walk sightless among miracles.
Fill our eyes with seeing and our minds with knowing
Let there be moments when Your Presence,
like lightning, illumines the darkness in which we walk.
Help us to see, wherever we gaze,
that the bush burns unconsumed.
And we, clay touched by God,
will reach out for holiness, and exclaim in wonder:
“How filled with awe is this place”*

The word for compassion is related to the word for “womb”

“Be compassionate as God is compassionate”

Compassion + justice

Justice is the social dimension of compassion - it has to do with how we structure society

Christian life is about this two-fold relationship:

Our relationship to God and compassion in the world of the everyday.

Paul - 2 Cor 3:18

Speaks of Transformation at the centre of Christian life

Marianne’s closing comments

“Marcus was a son of the church - brought up Lutheran”

Having authentic experiences

Looking for Jesus with the head and heart

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Which ideas from this session did you resonate with? Which did you find challenging?

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