

EC05
Learning Communities - Scripture
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Brian McLaren

- colossians remixed - sylvia walsh
- truth is stranger than it used to be - brian walsh
- don't see issues as a purely academic, but spiritual
- "i think the scripture is suffering greatly in the hands of their friends"
- our problem may not be the bible, but more the way people are using the bible
- i have noticed a direct proportion between the amount of bible someone knows and how mean they are, it's disturbing
- every single question we ask about the bible in theory has behind it, homosexuality, terrorism, etc. it has a context within our daily life and the theory & practice are never separate

Brian Walsh

- my reason for being here is that mclaren can't talk all day
- plausibility
 - reading: colossians chapter 2 - no one may deceive you with plausible arguments
 - paul is saying, here's what i am about, struggling for you folks and all i want for you is to be encouraged, unity, so that they might have full riches and understanding - or - so that you might have complete and assured understanding
- narrative - seeking ordination the question, what is it that undermines you spiritually? for brian it was betrayal
- paul - he wants to be in flesh, why? because the truth is in flesh, so you can see it, so you can hear me pray
- what makes an argument against scripture, church, etc. plausible?
 - seeing it lived out, people loving, etc.
 - mean christians are the things that make alternatives to the scripture very very plausible
 - you have to serve somebody?
- narrative - guy he met at the book launching of colossians remix, "i bought the book, i read the book, and i became a Christian"
 - he hung out and lived with Christian in an alternative arts community and saw the gospel
 - then read the book that unpacked it for him
- walter b - the key pathology of time our time which seduces us all reduces out imagination corrupts us..
- the scriptures are a light for the path, but often we stare ourselves
- how do we read the scripture to illuminate our path?
- not one verse in all of scripture that teaches us that the Christians eternal destiny is to live eternally with Jesus in heaven.. it's not there
- our ultimate is the resurrection of the body and the new creation
- it's not about us going up, but jerusalem coming down
- Jesus said, as in the days of noah, one will be taken and one will be left.. in noah's day the one who is left behind is what you want..
- scriptures are entering us in the midst of our creative life
- paul writes in the context of the roman empire
 - you can not be ignorant of the image of caesar
 - the way the empire captures the imagination is more through the images and

methodologies

- disney is a power voice for the empire, it's disney and the rest of the production, that captures the imagination much more than the arms of war
- the Jews weaving of alternative images is part of their power
- a dimly burning wick - an alternative image to the empire
- colossians 1: 15-30? a poem by paul, he devalues the currency of the empire by offering the alternative of the imagination
- paul replaces caesar with Christ but replaces the empire with us
- paul say, he makes peace by the blood of the cross, which is what caesar does as well.. turning this moment on his head
- if we are going to make scriptures alive, we need Dynamic Analogy
 - we double discernment, what's happening, in fear and trembling & community of each other we need to engage these sanctified hunches
- rabbi translation of texts would be updated because they felt they were living texts
- lost art of "tar gum" - how might colossians be read today? (there's a translation in a book) - when we see all these images we see on a daily basis, how might this be translated

• q&a

- in the midst of muslim community? how are we different, why wouldn't i just join in there?
 - BW: yes, the proof of the putting is in the eating. Christians want to say the truth is in the gospel, regardless of how we live it.. Jesus says that is not true.. does that give the church epistemological ..
 - BM: we want people to live by the bible whether we live by it or not. if we try to proclaim it without living by it we
- this idea of loving acceptance of everything..?
 - BM: it is important to be to distinguish between acceptance and approval. we are advocating a radical acceptance, not a radical approval
 - BW: paul goes into a heated attack on people in the community with different views
- the how to interpret scripture, infallibility, etc.
 - BW: both brian and i are convinced we need to read the scriptures as a whole. problem with the illiteracy, as "why do we need to read the bible, we already know what it says".. attempting to do this act of double discernment, how did this sound in it's original context. psalm 2 in original context is idolic. allow the people to read the scriptures and allow them to stand there. inevitability is the language of empire.
- battle lines change more when scripture is changed by our culture, (after prodding we are addressing homosexuality)
 - BW: first you need to know that you are spiritually safe. the broader context is that meanings change. in days of slavery, paul speaking to and about slavery spoke differently then and looks differently now to people, we look at paul now. interpretations of scripture change. and that seems to be a good thing that the bible is the conversation and narrative. at the best it's a deepening at the worst it's a distortion
 - BM: talking of niece and her autism. the bible doesn't speak to this disease or many similar conditions. the closest is demon possession. so if we are just allowing ourselves to work with the categories of the bible then we have to deal with her with exorcism. we need to treat more with compassion and mercy. if we were medicating her so that she's a lump on the couch then it's not loving the neighbor, it takes life away from her. homosexuality wasn't so much the topic of the day but maybe more of pedophilia... let's assume i am wrong, but let's at least say that it is possible.

- participant: we need to be humble in saying that, “are we being co-opted by the culture or not?”
- allow the dynamic to go outside the canon (the bible), why do we believe that the holy spirit does not move through people now
 - BM: the issue of canon is a complex issue. if we take a narrative hermeneutic and start adding to it then we stop limiting the possibilities if we keep adding. if you add thomas aquinas to it then you essentially get what thomas’s view of the narrative.
- in our community, our understanding of the gospel is very different from the communities around us, how do we live together when we don’t see the same, and even don’t have respect
 - BM: you have to try, practice Christian virtue
- when the community doesn’t embody the scripture, do we just get rid of? is it relevant?
 - BW: rule one, if the scriptures fit your hermeneutics then you are probably wrong.. most walk away from faith for a lack of embodiment
- human agents that preserved the word of God, why not a golden tablet?
 - BM: that is why many would want to go muslim. the koran is the same as Jesus for us.. the revelation of God. we believe that God actually spoke to us through many. if we had that book we wouldn’t have Jesus. Jesus gives us the metaphor of the cosmos and the father.
 - family story: for me, if my daughter came and said father what should i do, and i told her to go here, marry him, do this.. no father, you are wiser than i.. yes, and that is why i don’t want to decide for you.. i can help you, but i don’t want to decide for you.
 - if God gave us the book that gave us all the answers then we would be stupid. the bible is a very good choice
 - BW: this is our calling that God speaks through us and God reveals.
- what do you do with those parts that you want to scream in horror
 - BW: the violence in the book of judges is not mandated by God. it functions as broken covenants. it is used to justify the monarchy. in Joshua, is the real crisis of if God is okay with war.
 - as a follow of Jesus you cannot use the justification of for war
 - matthew does a reversal of Joshua
 - BM: there is always scholarship involved. we have had scholarship formed in the era of colonialism. and it has helped to favor colonialism. we are getting to a point where we are repenting over the past. would we like to be the people who are new and adapt or do we want to be last?
- BM: closing thought: the bible is not to stop conversation but to start it.