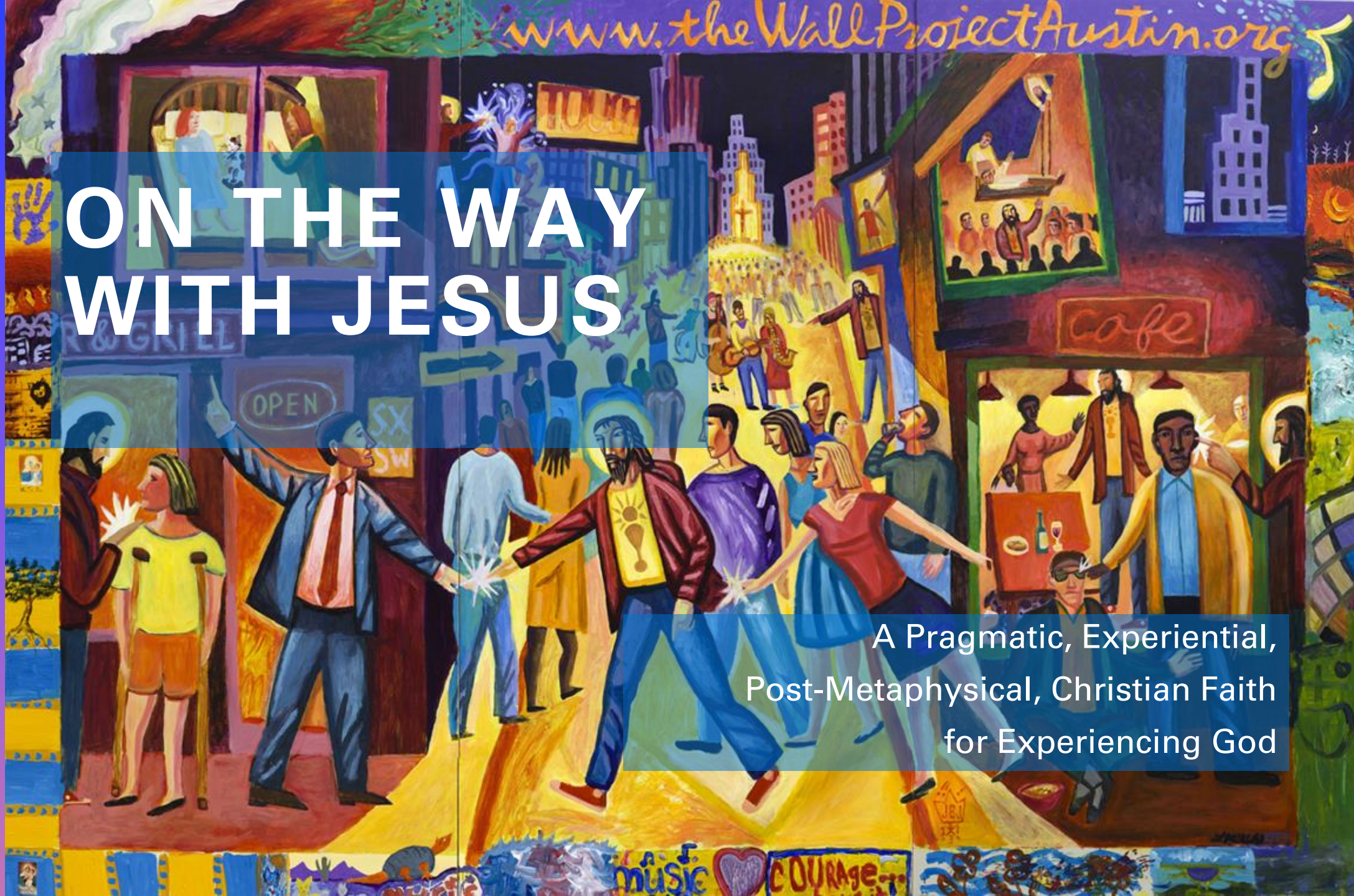


ON THE WAY WITH JESUS

A Pragmatic, Experiential,
Post-Metaphysical, Christian Faith
for Experiencing God



ON THE WAY...

Acts 9:1-2

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to **the Way**, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

τῆς ὁδοῦ: The Way, The Road,
The Journey

Acts 18:24-26

Now there came to Ephesus a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. He was an eloquent man, well-versed in the scriptures. He had been instructed in **the Way** of the Lord; and he spoke with burning enthusiasm and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue; but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained **the Way** of God to him more accurately.

A total of 7 times Acts calls the church "the Way."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE CHRISTIAN?

Believe something about God?

- Why do we place such importance on what we believe?
- Why are the thoughts in our heads so defining?
- Believe: origin of the word is from the word for Love (German word for love is Liebe)
- To believe is to hold something dear, to give your heart to something (Borg)
- What do you give your heart to?

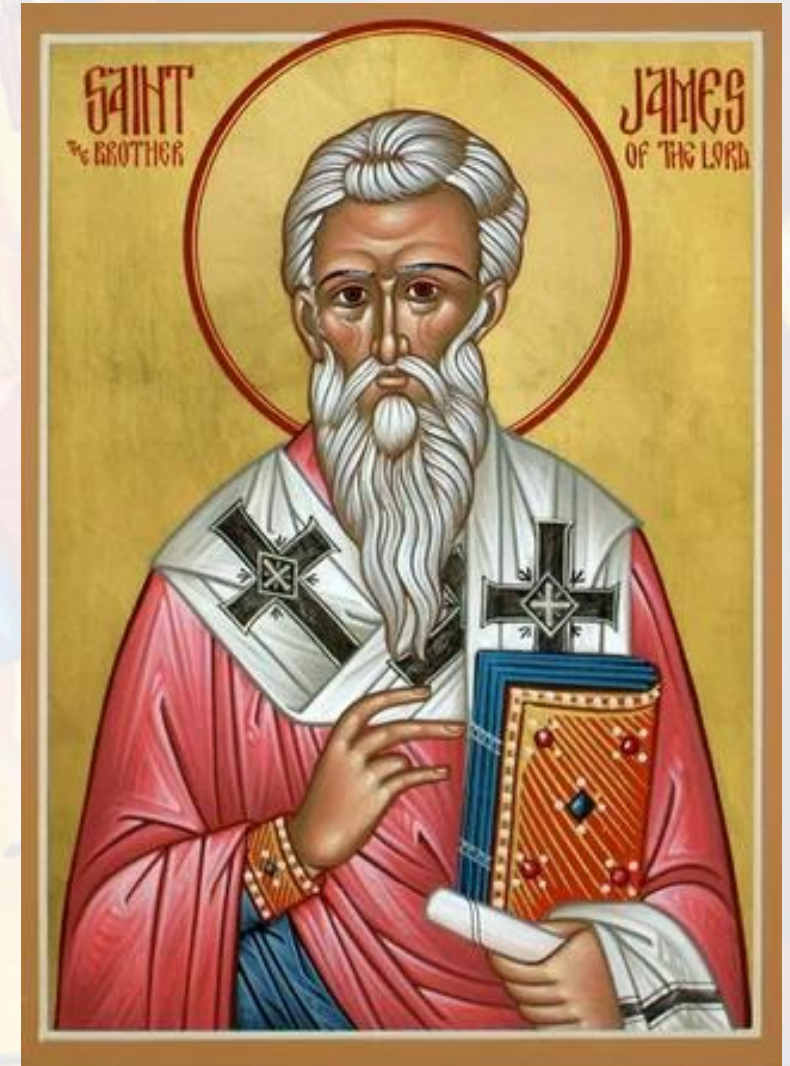
Faith in Jesus?

- Is faith about believing something to be true?
- Is faith about intellectual, rational, or mental positions?
- Is faith only for the intelligent and educated who can understand?
- Faith: from Latin *fidere*, to trust
- Faith is trust in God expressed in actions of love and mercy
- There is no faith, no trust, if it doesn't lead to living a life of love.

FAITH ACCORDING TO JAMES

James 2:14-18

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith.



THOUGHTS ON THE WAY

The earliest disciples were called followers of The Way, which is important because Christianity was never meant to be just another religion, but a Way. It's both a journey and the path you walk on. It's not static but in constant motion; it's not just one choice but a lifetime of choices.

We've not reached our destination, our best life, our God-given potential, but we are always on the way and we are called to make a way for others to join us. We are called to follow not formulate—follow the way of the One who is The Way, The Truth, and The Life.

In Matt 4:19 Jesus said "Come follow me," to his first disciples, and he says the same to us today. It's a walk with him and we're all just on the way. It's not always easy but it's always that simple.

In what ways may you have overcomplicated what following Jesus looks like?

<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/15537-the-way/day/1>

LET THE MYSTERY BE | IRIS DEMENT



MORE THOUGHTS ON THE WAY

The history of committed Christian community is a story of roads. The first followers of Jesus called themselves “the Way,” a name that echoes Jewish halakha, the “way of life” enshrined in the Torah, as well as the disciples’ belief that Jesus was “the way” to God the Father.

The earliest community that formed in Jerusalem after Jesus’ execution was composed of the original disciples and pilgrims who had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate the holy days. United by the conviction that Jesus’ resurrection was a sign of covenant renewal and the new creation, these Jews marched through the Red Sea of baptism into a radically new way of life, one in which all possessions were held in common, there were no needy persons, and all members were “of one heart and mind.” The spirit of ancient Israel engulfed the Holy City, and for a brief period of time the utopian community of the Jubilee was reconstituted.

Eventually, war drove all the Christians and Jews from the land. Still, the traces of that original movement were so impressed in their memory that the disciples who fled Jerusalem continued to establish countercultural communities of economic sharing, scripture study, participatory worship, and service to the poor.

These first Christians wended the path pioneered by Jesus. They were not the only people to live intentionally; in the early centuries of the Common Era there were other fraternal associations of mutual aid, organized by profession, religious devotion, or simply voluntary adherence. Christian communities differed from them, as Tertullian observed in the third century, in their charity to the underserved (Apology 39.5–6).

<https://www.plough.com/en/topics/community/church-community/the-way-two-millennia>

Plough is the publishing house of the Bruderhof Christian community, part of the Anabaptist tradition.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE CHRISTIANITY AS A SET OF RITUALS, PRACTICES, PRAYERS, AND PUBLIC ACTS?

1. Worship
2. Baptism
3. Communion
4. Love of neighbor
5. Liturgy
6. Sharing / giving / charity / generosity
7. Group prayer
8. Welcoming
9. Confession and forgiveness
10. Silence
11. Listening to/for God
12. Civic involvement
13. Living in community big and small

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE WAY?

Greek Philosophy and Christian Theology

Christian theology is inextricably linked with ancient hellenistic philosophy. Although the very earliest beginnings of Christianity were not related to Greek philosophy in any substantial way, by the time Christianity became a fully institutionalized religion, Greek philosophical concepts had integrated almost fully with Christianity.

The apostle Paul speaks widely against Greek philosophy in the Bible. The book of Acts records his interaction with a group of Epicureans and Stoics, and in 1 Corinthians 1:22 and Colossians 2:8, Paul warns vociferously against Greek thought entirely. It wasn't until Christianity had spread a bit more during the Apostolic Age that Greek philosophy would take hold of the religion.

However, the time before this Hellenistic turn was not, as some early historians thought, a time of pure Christian thought. Instead, those early Christians mostly did without philosophizing at all. It wasn't until Greek influences took over that any of Christianity's serious adherents spent time working out what exactly the gospels meant. By that point, most academic Christians were well trained in Hellenistic philosophy.

By the second century, the more learned apostles of the church had already started to combine Greek methods of thought with Christian theology. Clement of Alexandria even explicitly mentions in AD 203 in his *Stromata* that hellenistic philosophy, by virtue of being true, must have been deliberately handed to the Greeks as a primer before Jesus came to walk on Earth. Clement supposes that it is through Greek thought that we should view all of Christianity.

By AD 313, this idea had spread to nearly every part of Christendom, which the early Christian historian Eusebius records in his *Praeparatio evangelica*. Eusebius considers Christianity and Greek philosophy so closely linked at this point that his book on teaching pagans about Christianity includes several passages of ancient Greek philosophy.

<https://classroom.synonym.com/>

WHAT HAPPENS IF WE PLAY A DIFFERENT GAME?

Is Greek philosophy necessary for Christian faith?

- Greek philosophy is one way, one language translation, one set of rules for expressing the Christian faith.
- It is permissible to do so, as the Christian faith must always be translated into some cultural understanding.
- Greek philosophy is not necessary for Christian faith. It can be set aside and other ways can be used.

What if we focus on Christianity as:

- Experiential
- Enacted
- Pragmatic
- Mystical
- Poetic
- Ritual
- Ethical
- Communal
- Humble



METAPHYSICS?

- The study of reality
 - What is it?
 - How does it work?
- Explores issues of
 - Substance
 - Existence
 - Causality
 - Ontology
 - Nothingness
- As 18th-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant puts it: Metaphysics is a dark ocean without shores or lighthouse, strewn with many a philosophic wreck.
- Metaphysics was actually coined by Andronicus of Rhodes, a bibliographer of Aristotle's work in the first century BC. Andronicus was looking to categorize the works that came after Aristotle's writings on 'Physics', and thus simply grouped them with the title 'After Physics' — or, 'Metaphysics'.

WHAT IS METAPHYSICS?



INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS

ACADEMY OF IDEAS

ORIGINS OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY



- Thales and Pre-Socratic Philosophers (6th century BC)
 - Focused on metaphysics
 - Materialists: Believed that the material world is all there is
- Socrates (5th century BC)
 - Concerned with ethics
 - Sought truth by asking questions (Socratic method)
 - No writings from Socrates exist; what we know comes from his student, Plato
- Plato (5th – 4th centuries BC)
 - Opposed the earlier materialism
 - Realism, Essentialism, Idealism
- Aristotle (4th century BC)
 - Expanded on Plato
 - Developed the concept of logical reasoning
 - Established his own school, the Lyceum, in competition with Plato's school, the Academy.
 - Metaphysics: substance, essence
 - Ultimate reality is found in physical objects with form and matter united
- Theory of forms: things in the world are representations of ideal forms that transcend this world
- All chairs are imperfect representations of the ideal Chair, which actually exists elsewhere
- Ultimate reality is found in ideas

ORIGINS OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

- Plotinus (3rd century AD)

- Built on Plato from a religious perspective
- Taught the existence of an ineffable and transcendent One from which the rest of the universe “emanates” as lesser beings
- Was highly influential on early Christian theology, especially Augustine
- Philosophy later known as Neoplatonism

- Neoplatonism

- The One (or The Good): the first principle, transcendent, perfect, the spring of water from which all rivers have their source; beyond being
- Emanation: lower things emanate from higher things
- 3 hypostases (being, essence)
 - One
 - Nous (intellect, mind)
 - Soul (world soul, lesser souls)
 - “The Soul, indeed, is the word [or logos] and actualization of Intelligence [or Nous], just as Intelligence is word and actualization of the One. But the Soul is an obscure word. Being an image of Intelligence, [Soul] must contemplate Intelligence, just as the latter, to subsist, must contemplate the One.” — Plotinus, Ennead 5.1.6.45–48

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

- Logos: Reason, Word
- Ousia: substance, fundamental being; essence
- Homousios: one substance
- Hypostasis: being
- Divine triad of God, ideas, world-spirit
- Trinitarian formula: God is one essence in three substances (3 hypostasis in one ousia)
- Latin terms for Greek concepts
 - Substance
 - Persona
- Christ is one homousios with the Father

PHILOSOPHER'S SONG



Yes, Socrates,
himself, is
particularly
missed...

A lovely little
thinker But a
bugger when
he's pissed.

NICENE CREED

- And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds (æons), Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, **consubstantial with the Father;**
- Καὶ εἰς ἓνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, **ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί·**

COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON

- THEREFORE, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge
- one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
- at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood,
- truly God and truly man,
- consisting also of a reasonable soul and body;
- **of one substance with the Father** as regards his Godhead,
- and at the same time **of one substance with us** as regards his manhood;
- like us in all respects, apart from sin;
- as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages,
- but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the Godbearer;
- one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten,
- **recognized in two natures**, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation;
- the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union,
- but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and **coming together to form one person and subsistence**,
- not as parted or separated into two persons,
- but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ;
- even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us,
- and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.



JUMP AHEAD: END OF METAPHYSICS

- Wittgenstein: end of metaphysics; it's all about language games
- Levinas: ethics instead of metaphysics; wisdom of love rather than love of wisdom; importance of the Other, relationship
- Jean-Luc Marion: A God whom we can conceptualize would not be God; metaphysics is idolatry
- John Caputo: language is inherently metaphysical; applying concepts to God does violence

PHENOMENOLOGY

- Phenomenology is the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experience (Sokolowski 2000, 2).
- Phenomenology is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced from the first-person point of view. (Smith 2008)
- What if, Husserl argued, we put aside the question of 'the world' entirely, and look simply at consciousness? Whether something exists or not is both moot and distracting. Husserl introduced the concept of the 'epoché', – from the ancient Greek, meaning 'suspension of judgement'. We 'bracket' the world, what is important is not whether this tree exists, but how we encounter it, how it affects us. The job of philosophy is to describe these affects, and to build concepts from them which we can later extend outwards.

SUMMARY SO FAR

- Early church was called “the Way;” a community of faith in following the way of Jesus
 - Greek philosophy/metaphysics became the primary language of theology in the formation of Christian doctrine
 - Metaphysics is one option for thinking about God/faith; it is not required or necessary
 - Experience, action, relationship, and enacted love are other ways of understanding God/faith
- <https://rsc.byu.edu/new-testament-history-culture-society/greco-roman-philosophy-new-testament>

FAITH AND TRUST

Hebrew

- **חסה chasah**: to lean on someone or something
- **בטח betach**: to cling
- **יחלל yachal**: to hope/to know
- **אמן aman**: to be firm
- **אֱמוּנָה Emunah**: faith, support
- The basic, root meaning of emunah is trust and reliance, not intellectual acquiescence in the truth of certain propositions
- Action of being faithful to God

Greek

- **Πίστις pistis**: trust, faith, faithfulness



FAITH IN ROMANS 3:21-22

NRSV

But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

NRSV Updated Edition

But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed and is attested by the Law and the Prophets, the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ[a] for all who believe (footnote: or trust).

FAITH AND THE TIGHTROPE STORY



FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

Anselm (1033 – 1109)

- “Theology is faith seeking understanding.”
- NOT: Theology is understanding seeking faith.
- Not trying to believe in something established through reason or philosophy.

Anselm insists that he does not seek to understand in order to believe, but he believes in order to understand, and unless he believes he cannot understand.

So it is not a case of proving first and then believing; rather, it is only when we encounter the living God in faith that we are in a position to grasp the truth of Christian faith.

Anselm understood his faith to be seeking understanding; that is, with the starting point of his faith and through the gift of God’s grace, he aimed to understand the faith and the God of his faith. He was not seeking reasons why he should believe, but having believed, he was striving to understand and actualize the faith he already believed.

ABRAHAM AND SARAH

Genesis 12:1-5

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan.



ABRAHAM AND SARAH

Genesis 15:1-6

Genesis 15:1-6 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." 2 But Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." 4 But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." 5 He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness.



FOLLOW ME

- Mark 8:34-35 34 He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.
- Luke 9:23-24 Then he said to them all, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. 24 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.
- John 1:43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me."



- John 21:20-22 Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; he was the one who had reclined next to Jesus at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" 21 When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about him?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!"
- Disciple: pupil, follower

ORTHODOXY AND ORTHOPRAXY

Orthodoxy

- Literally: Right praise
- Correct belief
- Traditional beliefs of a religious group
- In Christianity: the traditional doctrines one must accept over against heresy

Orthopraxy

- Literally: Right practice
- Correct action
- Traditional actions and rituals of a religious group
- Praxis is a key to understanding the Byzantine tradition, which is observed by the Eastern Orthodox Church and some Eastern Catholic Churches. This is because praxis is the basis of the understanding of faith and works as conjoint, without separating the two. The importance of praxis, in the sense of action, is indicated in the dictum of Saint Maximus the Confessor: "Theology without action is the theology of demons."

LIBERATION THEOLOGY AND ORTHOPRAXY

For liberation Christology, as for liberation theology in general, praxis is the foundation and touchstone of theory. This means, according to these theologians, that one can really know who Jesus is, one can know the meaning of his titles, only in the concrete following of Jesus, only in the practice of the Gospel. Furthermore, liberation theologians hold that it is not necessary to have crystal clarity and certainty in one's theory or doctrine about Jesus before one commits oneself to living his message. Orthodoxy, in other words, will flow from, and constantly have to be reexamined in, orthopraxis.

(Paul Ritter)

The position of the liberation theologians is that in order to encounter the God of the Bible, we cannot simply do theology in the academy. Rather, we must live the gospel in a rather literal and radical way with and for the poorest and the most marginalized in society. The emphasis is on orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy

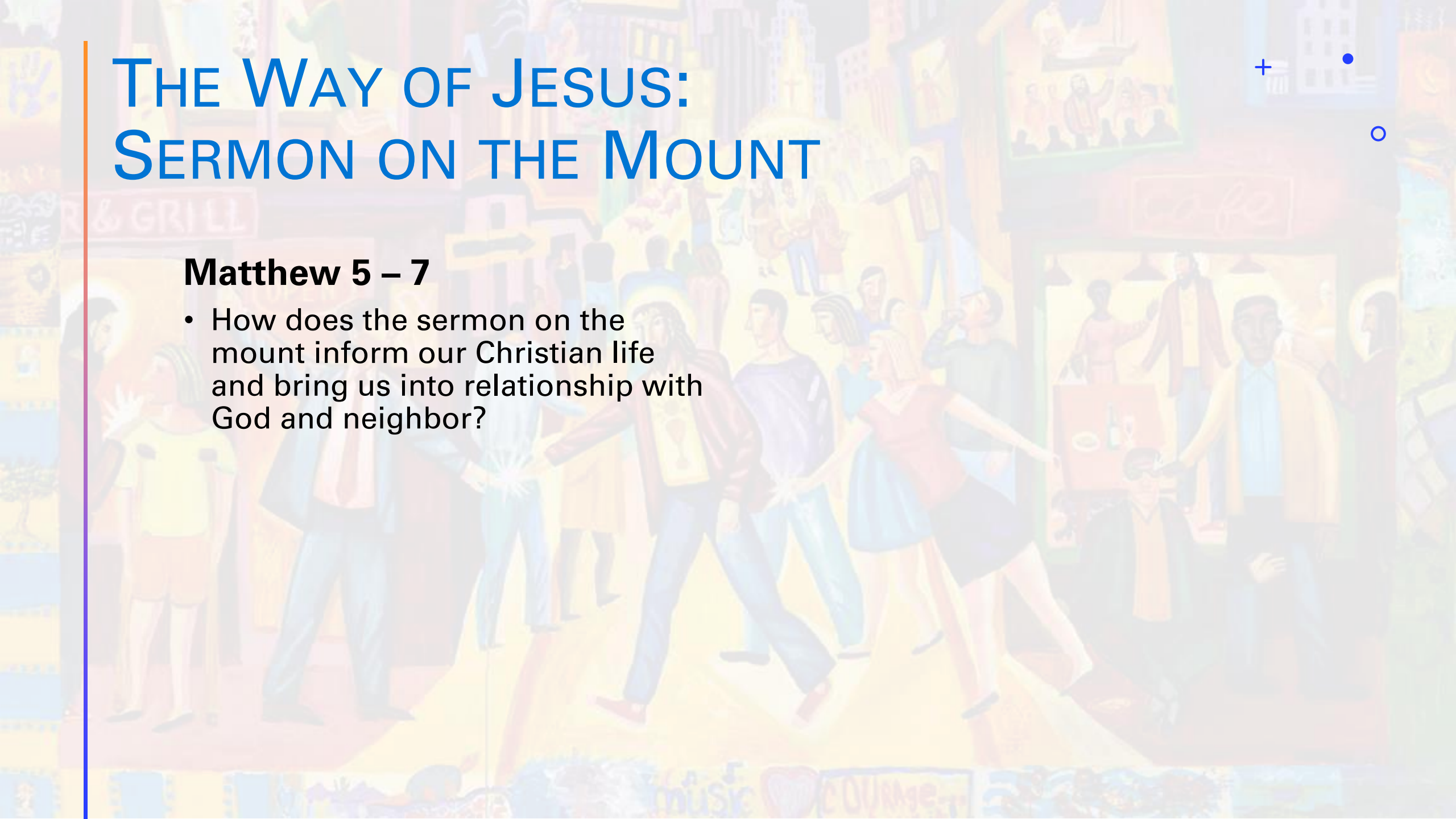
(<http://liberationtheo.blogspot.com/>)



THE WAY OF JESUS: SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Matthew 5 – 7

- How does the sermon on the mount inform our Christian life and bring us into relationship with God and neighbor?



ANABAPTISTS AND THE SOTM

Congregations in the Anabaptist traditions have long held that living out the Sermon on the Mount is doable and that, furthermore, it is our calling. We've cherished some assumptions about that notion. One is that it takes a community, a church that is voluntary, visible, and in which there is mutual accountability in order to make the Sermon a way of life. We cannot do this on our own.

Another assumption is that it takes a peculiar people, a sectarian understanding, to live the way of the Sermon. It is not for mainstream or popular churches which are, by nature, overly influenced by what is practical or notions of the common good that include the necessary, if lamented, use of coercion in order to keep evil within bounds. The Sermon is for those traditions who favour being faithful over being effective in the world at large.

<https://canadianmennonite.org/stories/sermon-mountain-living-it-out-mind-and-heart>

Who are Anabaptists?

- Mennonite
- Amish
- Hutterites
- Brethren
- Bruderhof



PLOUGH AND THE SOTM

How do we respond to the Sermon on the Mount? The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is the first step on the way of discipleship, and it is of decisive importance that the church consider this deeply. If we fully grasp the Sermon on the Mount and believe it, then nothing can frighten us – neither our own self-recognition, nor financial threats, nor our personal weakness.

The dedication demanded in the Sermon on the Mount is not a new law or moral teaching. Instead it is forgiveness. Its vital element is the light and warmth of the Holy Spirit. Here is Christ: the essence of salt, and the strength of the tree that bears good fruit. The Sermon on the Mount shows us the character of a community, which shines like a light for the whole world.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a high-tension moralism, but we must grasp it as the revelation of God's real power in human life. If we take our surrender to God seriously and allow him to enter our lives as light, as the only energy which makes new life possible, then we will be able to live the new life.

<https://www.plough.com/en/topics/faith/bible-studies/not-a-new-law>



DIETRICH BONHOEFFER



SERMON ON THE MOUNT: SALT AND LIGHT

Matt 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. "You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.



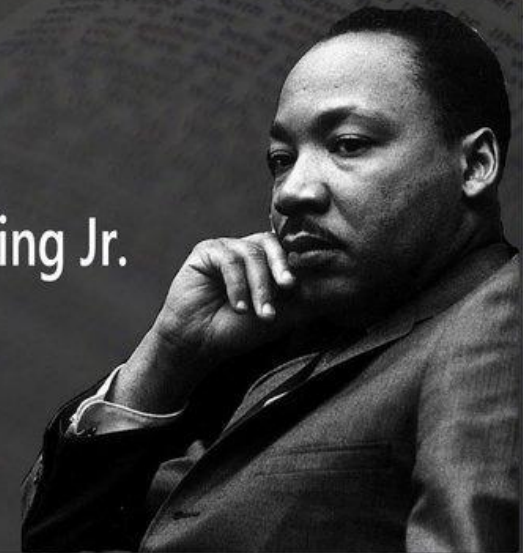
SERMON ON THE MOUNT: LOVE ENEMIES

Matt 5:43-48

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

*"Love is the only thing
that can turn an enemy
into a friend."*

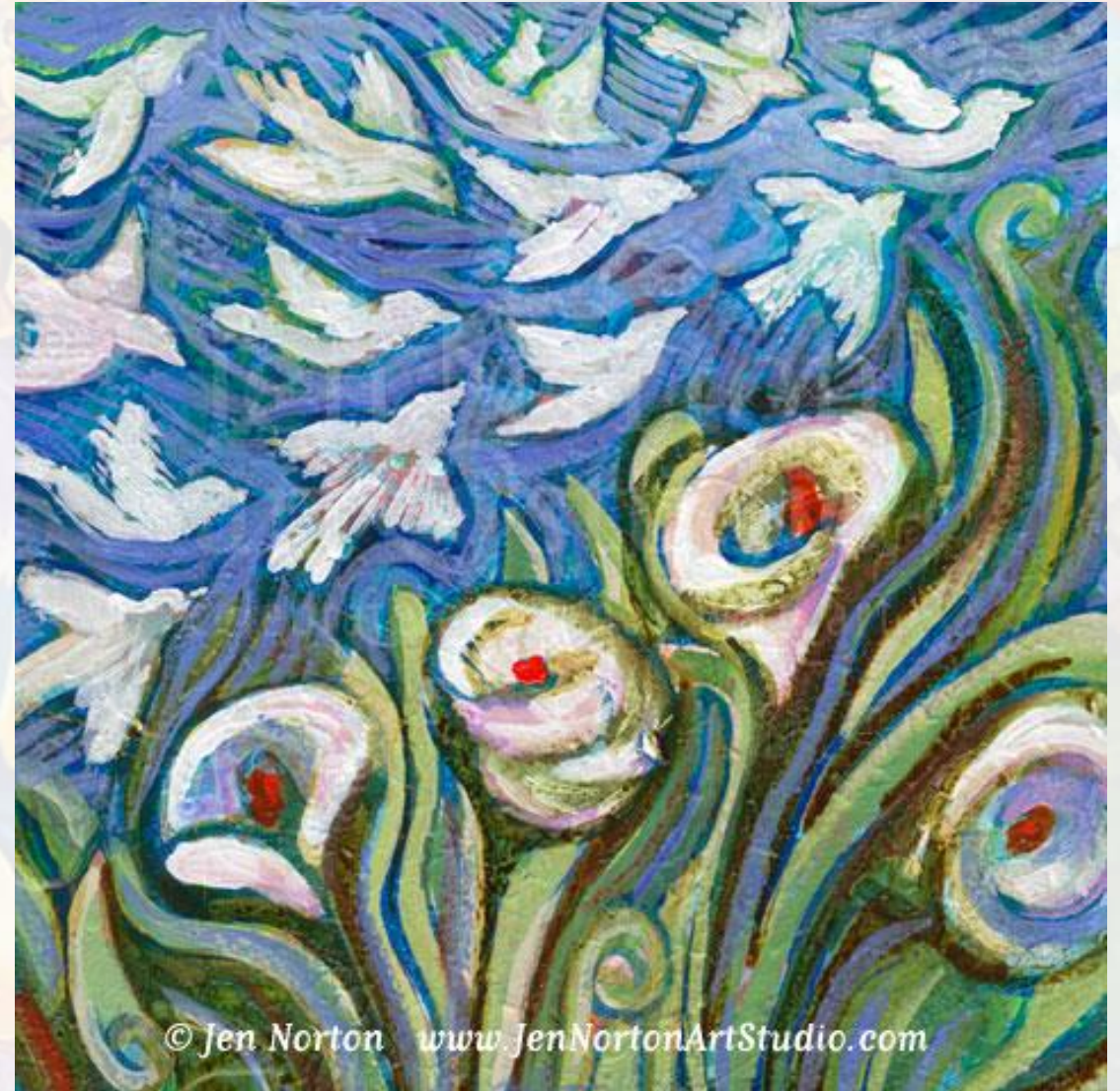
- Martin Luther King Jr.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT: DO NOT WORRY

Matthew 6:26-34

Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you-- you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. "So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.



© Jen Norton www.JenNortonArtStudio.com

SERMON ON THE MOUNT: WHAT DID HE SAY?



SERMON ON THE MOUNT: DO NOT JUDGE

Mathew 7:1-5

"Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbor, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT: NARROW GATE

Matthew 7:12-14

"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.



SERMON ON THE MOUNT: HEAR AND ACT

Matthew 7:24-29

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell--and great was its fall!" Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.



DIVERSITY OF WAYS (DAVID RHOADS)

	The Two Ways	Human Condition	Vision for Human Life	Transformation
Matthew	Law interpreted by Pharisees OR Law interpreted by Jesus	Blind hypocrisy	Righteous integrity	A relationship with Jesus of blessing and forgiveness
Mark	Saving one's life out of fear OR losing one's life for others	Fearful saving of self	Courage to live for others	New life, sight, and empowerment in the face of death through Jesus
Luke	Society without mercy OR society with mercy	Society without mercy is oppression	Society with mercy is liberation	Human repentance, divine forgiveness, and empowerment of the Spirit
Paul	Justification by works of Law OR justification by faith	Life under Law	Life in response to grace	Grace as the means to righteousness

EXAMPLES OF DIVERSITY OF WAYS



	Trajectories in the Church	Examples of Living This Way
Matthew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +Great traditions of ethical reflection +Quakers and Mennonites and Sermon on the Mount +Love of enemy and non-violent action +Roman Catholics and church +Methodists and commitment to moral perfection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +People engaged in a process of being “discipled” by Jesus +Covenants of spiritual discipline, getting support to make their words match their deeds +Sages to help people chart the Christian life (leadership) +A place for moral discourse +Expressing righteousness in the world +Eager to discern all forms of hypocrisy in their lives and in society, repenting +Healthy use of confession and forgiveness, beginning anew through the power of grace +Strong sense of church as family of God, relationships mattered, the need for community “rules” to empower life together, practicing forgiveness
Mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +Those who have lived courageous lives of service +Mother Theresa, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, MLK +Missionaries +Non-violent struggle to free self and others +The ordinary people in daily life who live to serve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +Outgoing mission rooted in God’s activity in the world +Focus on commitment and action +Seek to be leaven in the world +Active in daily life to serve others and transform +Shared leadership, no one lords over others +Oriented toward building up faith/courage to live as God’s people
Luke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +Church’s commitment to transform society +Social Gospel +Care for the sick, poor, lowly, children, aged +Wesley: Call for the wealthy to share +Liberation movements +Status of women in the church +Spirit-centered groups: Pentecostals, charismatic renewal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +Rooted in a profound experience of God’s compassion +Opposed to all forms of injustice in society +Act on behalf of vulnerable people +Life together would mirror God’s vision: community, sharing, mercy, prayer and worship +Reflect the universal character of the Gospel +Emphasis on the power of the Spirit to act in mercy
Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +Augustine, theology, sin, grace +Reformation, Luther, Calvin +Justification by grace through faith +Reconciliation among various groups +Freedom under grace, no coercion +Neighbor-centered ethics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +Rooted in God’s unconditional acceptance of all +Everything would reflect grace and offer thanksgiving +Relationships and love over moralisms +Unity in diversity, no worldly divisions would divide the church +Seek righteousness in the world +Be and experimental community of living God’s

BONHOEFFER: RELIGIONLESS CHRISTIANITY

We are moving towards a completely religionless time; people as they are now simply cannot be religious anymore. Even those who honestly describe themselves as 'religious' do not in the least act up to it, and so they presumably mean something quite different by 'religious'...

"And if therefore man becomes radically religionless—and I think that is already more or less the case (else, how is it, for example, that this war, in contrast to all previous ones, is not calling forth any 'religious' reaction?)—what does that mean for 'Christianity'?"

The questions to be answered would surely be: What do a church, a community, a sermon, a liturgy, a Christian life mean in a religionless world? How do we speak of God--without religion, i.e., without the temporally conditioned presuppositions of metaphysics, inwardness, and so on? How do we speak (or perhaps we cannot now even "speak" as we used to) in a "secular" way about God? In what way are we "religionless-secular" Christians, in what way are we those who are called forth, not regarding ourselves from a religious point of view as specially favored, but rather as belonging wholly to the world? In that case Christ is no longer an object of religion, but something quite different, really the Lord of the world. But what does that mean? What is the place of worship and prayer in a religionless situation?

BONHOEFFER: PRAYER AND FAITHFUL ACTION

The Christian needs to be alone during a definite period of each day for meditation on scripture...and for prayer...even during times of spiritual dryness and apathy. It matters little what form of prayer we adopt...or how many words we use.

The Church is the Church only when it exists for others...not dominating, but helping and serving. It must tell men of every calling what it means to live for Christ, to exist for others.

BONHOEFFER QUOTES

“May God in his mercy lead us through these times; but above all, may he lead us to himself.”

“We are not to simply bandage the wounds of victims beneath the wheels of injustice, we are to drive a spoke into the wheel itself.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer
(1906-1945)



Lutheran World Relief

