

TALKING ABOUT GOD

Session 2 – How Do You Talk About God

BIBLICAL REFERENCES: *Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 15: 11-24, Romans 8:26-27*

- THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE
- WHAT DOES PRAYER DO?
- THEOLOGY AND STORY

Read also the materials, *Who Is God?* Session 1 & 2

- Borg: When my daughter was 16...I've had experiences like that.
- Cone: When you talk about God you are searching for ultimate meaning.
- Spong: Distinction between the experience of God and the explanation of that experience.
- Borg: That was the God I stopped believing in...God of supernatural theism.
- Imathui: God is any life-giving thing we know.
- Borg: Tell me about the God you don't believe in...absolute atheism...
relative atheism

THE PROBLEM OF LANGUAGE

- Isasi-Diaz: Have to realize you're using images and God is all that and more.
- Hinson: What I call God "Father," I'm following the example of Jesus Christ.
- Borg: Problem isn't so much 'he' language or 'she' language, but third person language.
- Levine: Easier for Jewish people to pray certain liturgical prayers without having to worry terribly much about the deep-seated meanings.
- Visotzky: I fall back on classic rabbinic vocabulary.
- Borg: Is it appropriate to use personal language about God? The answer is yes.

WHAT DOES PRAYER DO?

- Rasmus: My mom is 56 yrs. Old now. And she hasn't gone anywhere yet.
- Borg: To refuse to pray for others would be to claim to know too much.
- Spong: At the least I open the universe to the power of love that comes out of me for that person.
- Hinson: People were praying for me and I was so lifted.
- Imathiu: My neighbor being healed has something to do with me.
- Isasi-Diaz: I do pray to God that I will know that God is with me.

THEOLOGY AND STORY

- Borg: Doctrine are what I call second-order language... first language of religious experience is metaphor and story and symbol.
- Wolf: "Granddaddy, Granddaddy, tell me that story again."
- Spong: Message of Jesus says there is nothing you do that will separate you from the love of God.

Questions for Reflections and Discussion

1. What ideas did you find most striking?
2. What language about God do you find problematic?
3. How do your beliefs about God affect the way you pray?
4. What doctrines or creeds do you take literally?
Can you take them seriously without taking them literally?