

School · of · the · Prophets

Theological Animation for Discipleship ©

The School of the Prophets (SOPs) 18 October 2009

Session 2, Introduction to Radical Discipleship

Rough Notes and Summary of Rev Dr John Hirt's talk©

Definition of Terms

Radical - from the Latin word '*radix*' meaning 'root'. Thus, Radical Discipleship is about going to the "root truths" of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Hermeneutics – from the Greek word '*hermeneuo*' meaning 'to interpret or explain'. Hermeneutics is a way to analyse texts via textual interpretation ... looking at the "behind", the "within" and the "infront" of the text.

Second Naiveté – This is Paul Ricoeur's term. It has to do with reading, or coming to the text as if we don't already know what the text is about, or what it is saying, etc. Consequently we need to come to the text expecting of the Holy Spirit that we will learn and experience new and fresh meanings for faith and life.

Dating of Mark's Gospel

We do not know who Mark the Gospel writer was, and the dating of the Gospel of Mark is uncertain. Many biblical scholars believe that Mark was written in 55-75 CE, which makes it one of the church's earliest documents. This is important because here we are fresh up against the early church's understanding of what it means to follow Jesus.



Hermeneutical Issues

Christian philosopher Paul Ricoeur has identified (see above) a three part reading strategy:

Behind of the Text - The political/social/cultural/geographic situation that the text came from; the reasons why the text was written.

Within of the Text - What the text is actually saying to the first followers of Jesus.

Infront of the Text - What the text means for us today. Scripture is not just about, "Once upon a time". Our interest lies with the, "Now in our time" of what it means to radically, authentically follow Jesus today.

Scripture is not a "photograph", it is a "constructed theological portrait"!

Understanding the Bible

We always come to Scripture with the understanding that it is the Word of God, but even so, there is no "plain reading" of Scripture – hermeneutics are in play. It is always important to understand that the gospel writers were not giving us "flat" history. They were theologically at work in what they wrote. Their purpose was and is to convert us to the way of Jesus (see Jürgen Moltmann's book: The Way of Jesus Christ).

For more information regarding School of the Prophets

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The Call Narratives in the Gospel of Mark

Biblical Texts - See, Mark 1:14-15, 1:16-18, 1:19-20, 2:14

The Story Setting (Mk. 1:14-15)

After John is arrested, Mark gives us a summary of Jesus' message: proclaiming the Good News of the rule and reign of God in the world! The location of the call narrative is important. NB, Jesus is in Galilee (not a centre of power). He is not in Jerusalem (the centre of power). This is important for our understanding of discipleship - the Kingdom breaks in from the margins!



Each of the Call Narrative has three Parts

1. **Sense of immediacy** - Notice that, Jesus is in motion, moving with a purpose. He is headed to Jerusalem for a confrontation with the powers. Jesus calls the disciples while he is on this journey, those who follow Jesus follow where he goes (discipleship is costly).
2. **Unconditional nature** - Jesus calls Peter and Andrew, James and John while they are at *work* as fishermen. God meets us in the everyday. "Follow me and I will make you fish for people" (v.17). There is no conversation, there are no negotiations, only the sovereign act of God's grace in Jesus - discipleship is all of grace (costly grace).
3. **Unqualified obedience** - "And *immediately* they left their nets and followed him" (v.18). James and John even left their father behind, unfathomable in Jewish culture.

"Discipleship is class betrayal" - Johann Baptist Metz

A Theological Taxonomy

Basically, this session was an examination of three different theological positions, **Fundamentalist**, **Liberal** and **Mainline** with preference being given to a mainline position.

The theological taxonomy given in Session 2, and audio from Sessions 1 and 2 are available on the SOPs website©:

www.schooloftheprophets.org.au

Closing Notes:

In the journey to Christian self-understanding, here are some mainline theologians to read and discuss

Athol Gill	see, his book, Life on the Road
Ben Myers,	see his blog, "Faith and Theology" (one of the web's top blog sites!)
Thorwald Lorenzen	see, his book, Resurrection, Discipleship, Justice
Paul Ricœur	French philosopher best known for his work in Hermeneutics
Graham Ward	see, his book, The Politics of Discipleship
Jürgen Moltmann	One of the greats, a German Protestant mainline theologian who has not written a bad book. See his, Jesus Christ for Today's World.
Ched Myers	Californian author and activist, co-founder of the Bartimaeus Cooperative



SEE YOU AT THE NEXT SOPs MEETING:

School of the Prophets – Session 3

When: Sunday 29 November 2009, 2pm - 4pm

Where: Ultimo University Church, Cnr Bulwara Rd & Quarry St, Ultimo
(Stand by for some "Zizek!")

www.schooloftheprophets.org.au