

Midweek at Renewal | Just Imagine

Session 1: Knowing & Enjoying God

I. Introduction

A. Goals – answer the questions:

1. **Who** am I?
 - a) What fuels my identity? My sense of meaning?
 - b) Follow the anger or anxiety in your life.
2. **Where** am I headed?
 - a) Novelist Walker Percy: *“I have learned that the most important difference between people is between those for whom life is a quest and those for whom it is not.”*
 - b) Where is your life going?
3. **How** will I get there? Or, **what** am I hear for?
 - a) Rankin Wilbourn: *“Your life is a quest to discover, and more and more live into, the person God originally made you to be; for the image of God to be restored in you; for Christ to take form in the contours of your life. That is your horizon and that is a beautiful thought.”*
 - b) But what does life look like each day for me in this light?
4. What can I **hope** for?

B. Resource – Union With Christ by Rankin Wilbourne

C. Co-teachers

1. Lindsay Freeman
2. Laron Tripp

II. Imagination

- ##### A. **Imagination is that distinctly human capacity by which we image anything and everything that is not immediately visible to our eyes.**

B. Imagination is required to know God because he is invisible:

1. Col. 3:2 - look for a reality beyond what we can see

“Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.”

2. 2 Cor. 4:18 - imagination is crucial to fully inhabit the Christian life

as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

3. Luke 22:19 - Remember

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

4. 1 Tim. 6:16

who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion.

5. Judges 3:7 - They forgot...a failure to imagine

And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asheroth.

6. Walter Brueggemann: *“The key pathology of our time, which seduces us all, is the reduction of the imagination, so that we are too numbed, satiated and co-opted to do serious imaginative work.”*

C. Reshaped by a new story

1. Church-kid cynicism for the bible, The Message is helping me to feel the drama and thrill of scripture
2. Harry Potter readings
 - a) a life of adventure in God’s kingdom
 - b) Loyalty, friendship, love
 - c) Heartache, danger, risk
 - d) No Place Left book

D. Union with Christ Tells a New Story of You (ME)!

1. You have a new identity in Christ

- a) Rooted in a history that predates you (Eph. 1:3-5 — Foundation...)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will

- b) Your life is anchored in life, death, & resurrection of Jesus

- c) You were lost, but now you're found in him (Phil. 3:8-9)

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ [9] and be found in him

- d) Citizen of heaven - Phil. 3:20

- e) Every blessing in him is yours - Eph. 1:3

- f) You will see him one day, face-to-face - 1 Cor. 13:12

- g) Been given everything for life & godliness - 2 Pet. 1:3

2. **But living in this new reality requires imagination!**

- a) John 15 - living on a source outside of you to sustain you -- Jesus' lifeblood flows within you (vine and branches)

- b) Eph. 5 - Relationship with Christ like the most intimate of human relationships, marriage – your identity now includes another

- c) 1 Cor. 12 - Like body parts to head (without the head, life isn't possible)

- d) 1 Peter 2 - stones into temple: we become integrally connected to everyone else who is in union with Christ, together we become the presence of God to this world

E. But Why? I've made it this far...

1. Isn't there more to it than this?
2. Trouble connecting what you know to how you feel or live each day?
3. Feel stuck?
4. Union with Christ is at the heart of it all
5. Rankin's analogy:
 - a) Mean & critical parents
 - b) Felt like a disappointment
 - c) Find a dusty trunk in the attic
 - d) Discover papers - abducted as a baby
 - e) Real mom - painter in Paris
 - f) Dad - Nobel Prize-winning scientist and a pro baseball player
 - g) "Of course, this explains everything!"
 - h) Discover you're fabulously wealthy, lavish inheritance
 - i) You would come down from that attic with new eyes for everything, a life totally invigorated
 - j) It had always been true if you! But it didn't change your life until your eyes were opened to it.

F. Conclusion — **Isn't there more to it than this?**