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@HerbMontgomery



Herb Montgomery



“The early church had a much less individualistic culture than those many Christians practice privately and personally today. Jesus’ teachings taught followers to love their neighbors as themselves: to consider us all connected to each other and part of one another.”

Enoughism

by Herb Montgomery

Our reading this week is from the gospel of Matthew:

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick

As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. “Bring them here to me,” he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children. (Matthew 14:13-21)

The news Jesus receives at the beginning of our reading this week is the news that Herod has executed John the Baptist.

Matthew’s version then condenses the story of shared food that follows

from Mark. Matthew also connects the story with the Last Supper Jesus shared with his disciples, an indication that the Matthean community commemorated the eucharist to share resources in Jesus memory more than as a reenactment of the penal substitutionary atonement theories common in Western Christianity today.

This story had precedents for Jewish Jesus followers in Galilee. They were already familiar with stories like this from their own sacred texts. Consider the story of how Elisha also fed a multitude:

A man came from Baal Shalishah, bringing the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. “Give it to the people to eat,” Elisha said. “How can I set this before a hundred men?” his servant asked. But Elisha answered, “Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the LORD says: ‘They will eat and have some left over.’” Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD. (2 Kings 4:42-44)

These stories of the feeding of multitudes, repeated in each of the synoptic gospels, enlarges the kind of story in 2 Kings and keeps alive an economic lesson about our shared resources and mutuality (see Mark 6:35-44; Luke 9:12-17; John 6:1-15). The story in Kings occurs in the middle of a famine, but other parallels would also have been familiar to Galilean Jesus followers familiar with the Elisha story. Jesus is affirming these universal truths: we collectively have more, enough for everyone, when we pool

our resources than we do when we live in individualistic isolation with silos of hoarded resources.

The path of life for the future is always one of sharing, cooperation, and a commitment to ensure everyone is taken care of and has enough for them, not only to survive, but to thrive. This is a universal truth that has repeatedly been proven. Whether we speak in evolutionary terms of our species’ survival, or in economic, political, or social terms, mutual commitment to the thriving of all is the path of life.

(One example of a scholarly work that over and over again demonstrates these lessons to be true is *The Spirit Level: Why equality is better for everyone* by R.G. Wilkinson and K. Pickett. See also *How Economic Inequality Harms Societies* at: [https://youtu.be/cZ7LzE3u7Bw?si=S05SI0PwguWJqsT-.](https://youtu.be/cZ7LzE3u7Bw?si=S05SI0PwguWJqsT-))

We have discussed repeatedly over the past few weeks how marginalized and disenfranchised Jesus followers very early in the history of Jesus followers saw in Jesus’ teaching a path of concrete salvation in the here and now. The kind of community that Jesus cast before the imaginations of this listeners pointed toward ways they could thrive together: a kind of salvation. As Stephen Patterson puts it, “The empire of God was a way to survive” (in *The Lost Way: How Two Forgotten Gospels Are Rewriting the Story of Christian Origins*, p. 75, see also *Our Dependence on One Another* at: <https://renewedheartministries.com/Esights/06-30-2023>)

Again, Matthew’s gospel ties this story of resource-sharing and mutual thriving to Jesus’ last supper with his disciples: “While they were eating, Jesus took

bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples.” (Matthew 26:26)

Today many Christians commemorate that supper with a small wafer or cracker and a one-ounce cup of juice or sip of wine from a communal grail. This hardly represents the daily communal full course meals early Jesus followers held, where those with more than they needed shared with those who didn’t have enough.

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. *Every day* they continued to meet together in the temple courts. *They broke bread in their homes and ate together* with glad and sincere hearts.” (Acts 2:44-46, emphasis added.)

When the believers lost sight of the purpose of this meal, or the social location of the church changed, they received correctives like Paul’s letter to the Corinthians:

“When you come together, it is not the Lord’s Supper you eat, for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. Don’t you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!” (1 Corinthians 11:20-22)

Forgetting the communal purpose of the Eucharist and its lessons of sharing our resources with one another when we have more than we need was equated with eating the bread or drinking the cup of the Lord “in an unworthy manner” and being “guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 11:27)

Again, the early church had a much less individualistic culture than those many Christians practice privately and personally today. Jesus’ teachings taught followers to love their neighbors as themselves: to consider us all connected to each other and part of one another. Loving another was a way of loving oneself, because what affected one affected us all. Injustice to



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Finding Jesus is Here!

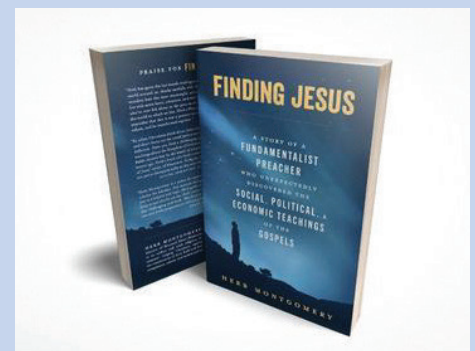
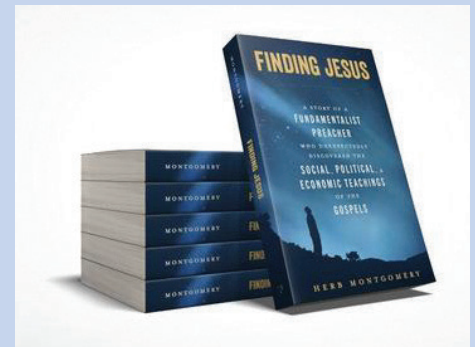
It’s here! Herb’s new book, *Finding Jesus: A story of a Fundamentalist preacher who unexpectedly discovered the social, political, and economic teachings of the Gospels*, is now available at renewedheartministries.com!

Here is what one reader wrote: **“Your book is everything that I have been looking for! I need four more copies to share. I have some people I really need to give this to. I want them to read it, too!”**

Pages: 210;

Price: \$14.95 (USD)

Available now at renewedheartministries.com!



one was a threat to justice for all.

“God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the

apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. (Acts 4:33-35, emphasis added)

Today, what would a community look like if those who had more than

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September's Recommended Reading

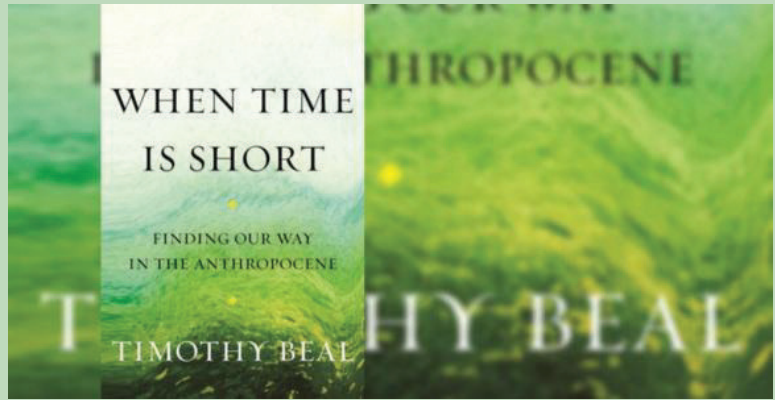
When Time Is Short: Finding Our Way in the Anthropocene

by Timothy Beal

With faith, hope, and compassion, acclaimed religion scholar Timothy Beal shows us how to navigate the inevitabilities of the climate crisis and the very real—and very near—possibility of human extinction

What if it's too late to save ourselves from climate crisis? *When Time is Short* is a meditation for what may be a finite human future that asks how we got here to help us imagine a different relationship to the natural world.

Modern capitalism, as it emerged, drew heavily upon the Christian



belief in human exceptionalism and dominion over the planet, and these ideas still undergird our largely secular society. They justified the pillaging and eradication of indigenous communities and plundering the Earth's resources in pursuit of capital and lands.

But these aren't the only models available to us—and they aren't even the only models to be found in biblical tradition. Beal re-reads key

texts to anchor us in other ways of being—in humbler conceptions of humans as earth creatures, bound in ecological interdependence with the world, subjected to its larger reality. Acknowledging that any real hope must first face and grieve the realities of climate crisis, Beal makes space for us to imagine new possibilities and rediscover ancient ones. What matters most when time becomes short, he reminds us, is always what matters most.



New Weekly YouTube Show!

Just Talking with Herb and Todd

Each week, we'll be talking about the gospel lectionary reading for the upcoming weekend. We'll be talking about each reading in the context of love, inclusion, and societal justice. Our hope is that our talking will be just talking (as in justice) and that during our brief conversations each week you'll be inspired to also do more than just talking.

If you teach from the lectionary each week, or if you're just looking for some thoughts on the Jesus story from a more progressive perspective within the context of social justice, check it out, you might like it.

You can find the latest show on YouTube at: [@herbandtoddjusttalking](https://www.youtube.com/@herbandtoddjusttalking)

Please Like, Subscribe, hit the Notification button, and leave us a comment. This will help us get this new YouTube channel off the ground. Thanks in advance for watching!



New episodes every Friday!

The Jesus For Everyone podcast

A weekly podcast where we talk about the intersection of faith and societal justice and what a first-century, Jewish prophet of the poor from Galilee offers us today in our work of compassion, love and justice.

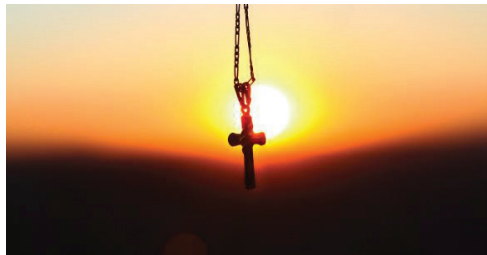
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SOCIAL JESUS

A Blog Exploring the Intersection of Faith and Societal Justice



Last Month's "Social Jesus" Blog Posts on Patheos



Participation, What Taking Up a Cross Doesn't Mean Part 1

For better or worse, they interpreted the cross in terms of participation not substitution or satisfaction.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/participation-what-taking-up-a-cross-doesnt-mean-part1/

Speaking Out, What Taking Up a Cross Doesn't Mean Part 2

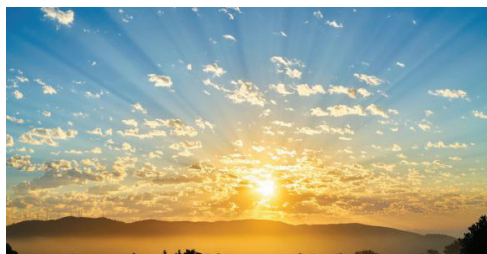
This is a far cry from counseling early followers to passively bear injustice, but a call to keep speaking out when facing pushback.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/speaking-out-what-taking-up-a-cross-doesnt-mean-part2/

What Taking Up a Cross Doesn't Mean Part 3

How we define bearing a cross makes a difference in how we respond to injustice and abuse in our daily lives.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/what-taking-up-a-cross-doesnt-mean-part3/



Here on Earth, Injustice, Oppression, and Violence Being Put Right Part 1

The great hope was the setting right of all injustice, the putting right of all that is wrong with the world, here on earth.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/injustice-oppression-and-violence-being-put-right-part1/

Justice, Part 2 of Injustice, Oppression, and Violence Being Put Right

This title referred much more to someone who would establish justice on Earth, ending oppression for all universally.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/justice-injustice-oppression-and-violence-being-put-right-part2/

Injustice, Oppression, and Violence Being Put Right Part 3

Today, however, it is much more life giving to speak of correcting injustices without using the language of messiahs and heroes.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/injustice-oppression-and-violence-being-put-right-part3/



It's Okay to Discover You Are Wrong, Part 1

This is important to name because using this term as a pejorative slur is historically incorrect and has also been the root cause of harm.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/its-okay-to-discover-you-are-wrong-part1/

Grow and Learn, It's Okay to Discover You Are Wrong Part 2

This sounds a lot like the way all of us grow and learn: through experience and the hard way.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/growing-learning-its-okay-to-discover-you-are-wrong-part2/

A Canaanite Woman, It's Okay to Discover You Are Wrong Part 3

This Canaanite woman uses his language against him to show him how blinkered his understanding is. Who might our Canaanite women be today?

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/caananite-woman-its-okay-to-discover-you-are-wrong-part3/



When Working for Justice Feels Like Walking On Water, Part 1

First, let's acknowledge how strange a story like this is to our post-enlightenment, science informed minds today.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/when-working-justice-feels-like-walking-on-water-part-1/

When Working for Justice Feels Like Walking On Water, Part 2

As strange as this story may be to us today, it would not have been strange at all for those who originally heard it.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/when-working-justice-feels-like-walking-on-water-part-2/

When Working for Justice Feels Like Walking On Water, Part 3

Working for social change, whether within faith communities or outside of them, can be hard and even feel as impossible as walking on water.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/when-working-justice-feels-like-walking-on-water-part-3/

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“Enoughism” continued from page 3

they needed to thrive shared their superfluous resources so those who didn't have enough could also thrive too?

John Dominic Crossan refers to this theme in Jesus' teaching as Enoughism:

“Do not, by the way, let anyone tell you that [Jesus' teaching] is Liberalism, Socialism, or Communism. It is—if you need an -ism—Godism, Householdism or, best of all, Enoughism. We sometimes name that biblical vision of God's World-Household as Egalitarianism but, actually, Enoughism would be a more accurate description.” (*The Greatest Prayer: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord's Prayer*, pp. 3-4)

I like Enoughism.

Practicing a social, political or economic ethic in harmony with the belief that God genuinely loves everyone means we have to ask some questions:

- Are our society's children and dependents well fed?
- Do they have adequate clothing and shelter?
- What about people who are sick? Can they have adequate health care without risking bankruptcy?
- Are elderly people who are past their years of capitalist productivity assured that they will also thrive and be taken care of?
- Are the responsibilities and funding for ensuring everyone in our society has enough food, shelter and clothing distributed fairly across community members?
- Are those who already have very little made to feel pressured to give even more while those who have so much can opt out of giving?
- Does everyone have enough, not simply to scrape by but to thrive and enjoy this life as the beautiful

gift that it can be? Or, instead, do some have far too little while others have far too much, more than they could ever possibly need?

- For those of us with means, what does it mean to use our social, political, or economic wealth to build the kind of human community that Jesus envisioned where everyone is cared for and taken care of?

None of these questions even begin to address the myriad reasons our differences from one another are used to exclude some of us from this kind of care. There are environmental implications of ensuring the earth and all its inhabitants are included in the community of enoughism too.

These are all questions worth asking. Whether we ask them in a religious context or not, our answers will determine what kind of future as human beings we create. Will the future we create today be life-giving or death-dealing for those to whom we leave it?

HeartGroup Application

1. Share something that spoke to you from this week's eSight/Podcast episode with your HeartGroup.
2. Discuss with your group at further length any of the above questions Enoughism calls us to ask..
3. What can you do this week, big or small, to continue setting in motion the work of shaping our world into a safe, compassionate, just home for everyone?

Thanks for checking in with us, today.

I want to say a special thank you to all of our supporters out there. And if you would like to join them in supporting Renewed Heart Ministries work you can do so by going to renewedheartministries.com and clicking **donate**.

You can find Renewed Heart Ministries on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. If you haven't done so already, please follow us on your chosen social media platforms for our daily posts. Also, if you enjoy listening to the *Jesus for Everyone* podcast, please like and subscribe to the JFE podcast through the podcast platform you use and consider taking some time to give us a review. This helps others find our podcast as well.

Also I want to share that we are partnering in a new weekly YouTube show called “Just Talking.” Each week, Todd Leonard and I will be talking about the gospel lectionary reading for the upcoming weekend. We'll be talking about each reading in the context of love, inclusion, and societal justice. Our hope is that our talking will be just talking (as in justice) and that during our brief conversations each week you'll be inspired to also do more than just talking.

If you teach from the lectionary each week, or if you're just looking for some thoughts on the Jesus story from a more progressive perspective within the context of social justice, check it out, you might like it. You can find *JustTalking* each week on YouTube at youtube.com/@herbandtoddjusttalking. Please Like, Subscribe, hit the Notification button, and leave us a comment.

And if you'd like to reach us here at Renewed Heart Ministries through email, you can reach us at info@renewedheartministries.com

Right where you are, keep living in love, choosing compassion, taking action, and working toward justice.

I love each of you dearly. ■

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Sharing, Enoughism Part 1

The path of life for the future is always one of sharing, cooperation, and a commitment to ensure everyone is taken care of.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/sharing-enoughism-part1/

Eucharist, Enoughism Part 2

Forgetting the communal purpose of the Eucharist and its lessons of sharing our resources was to eat and drink in an unworthy manner.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/eucharist-enoughism-part2/

Questions, Enoughism Part 3

Practicing a social, political or economic ethic in harmony with the belief that God loves everyone means we have to ask some questions.

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/08/questions-enoughism-part3/

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The work of helping people find life-giving ways to live out their faith through love, compassion, and justice are needed now more than ever. At Renewed Heart Ministries, we provide resources of faith and healing with the aim of renewing hope and inspiring action as we allow the Jesus story to inform each of us as we work together to shape our world into a compassionate, just and safe home for everyone.

Renewed Heart Ministries is a 501(c)3, grassroots ministry on the margins that prioritizes the needs of marginalized communities, especially those who have been the recipients of misinformed, faith-based harm. Your support enables us to be a life-giving, healing light in our faith communities and continue to be a voice for desperately needed change.

You get to decide what shape our faith communities take and what voices get to be heard.

You can support Renewed Heart Ministries with a one-time gift or by becoming one of our monthly contributors. Your donation can be made online at:

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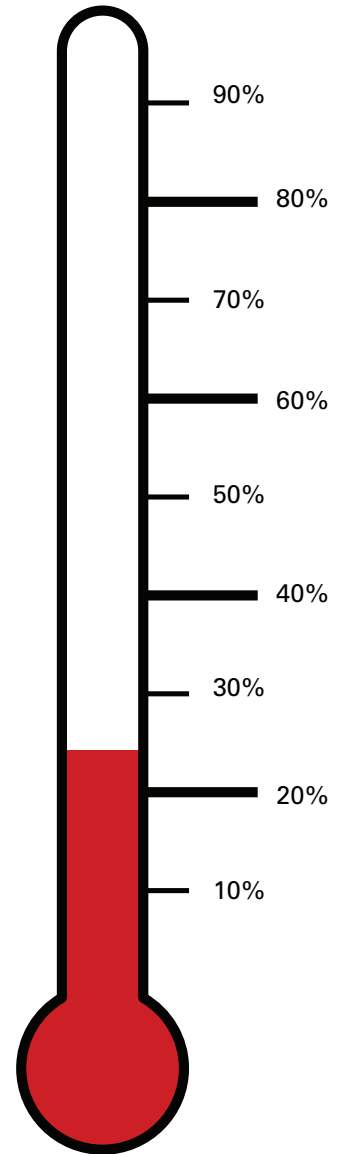
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Whether you give \$5 or \$5,000, every amount helps us to continue our work.

And **THANK YOU** for reading, listening to, sharing and supporting RHM's work. Thank you for the decisions you make every day to make our world a safer, compassionate, just home for everyone. Thank you for your dedication to engaging our world and the care you demonstrate, and for being such an important part of our community.

**2023 Projected Budget
Goal: \$150,000.00**

**Donations Received
Thru July 2023:
\$36,396.51**





Weekly HeartGroup on Zoom Every Wednesday Night!

Each Wednesday evening, Glendale City Church hosts a Zoom HeartGroup led by Herb Montgomery. Our discussion each week will focus on the content in Renewed Heart Ministries weekly eSight articles and the *Jesus For Everyone* podcast published each Friday.

Each Zoom session will be on Wednesdays at 7pm Pacific/10pm Eastern.

To receive the link for the Zoom meeting, email us at info@renewedheartministries.com.



Upcoming Events

SEPTEMBER 23, 2023
Good News Fellowship
Toronto, Ontario Canada
For More Information:
304.520.0030

“Earth creatureliness recognizes the inseparability of environmental justice and social justice. Social justice and human wellbeing are inextricably bound up with ecological and cosmological well-being. Human thriving, ecological thriving, and cosmic thriving resonate with and reflect one another.”

Timothy Beal

When Time Is Short (pp. 72-73)

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