Tell It Slant: Parables as Spiritual Direction

Section 1

Introduction to Spiritual Direction

1. Spiritual Direction

* Two approaches:
  1. Historical approach: masters and their writings
  2. Psychological approach: how it works through counselling and psychotherapy
* Biblical approach: parables in the text
* Jesus: spiritual direction through parables
* Spiritual Direction:
  1. Not new to you. It is a way of speaking and living—received and given.
  2. Attends to the ordinary. May be unnoticed. By naming it gives value.
  3. Assumes God has spoken already. Enter into what God has been doing in your life. SD is kind of being there, not taking over, or to interrupt what God is saying to you. What God speaks to us before had a hard time to get through to us.
  4. SD is not the first thing. We begin with the Gospel (response, conversion, etc.) It tests our Christian convictions.
  5. SD is not a specialist activity.
* Not a role or office
* All Christians (lay and clergy) should have access to and provide to others SD.
* Some may be gifted and attract people to themselves thus visible “spiritual director.”
* Schooling is not as important.
* SD requires time and space.

1. SD can only be understood in the context of other forms of speech.

* There are three high profile forms of speech in the church:
  + Preaching (kerygma)
  + Teaching (didache)
  + Witnessing (martyr)

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| Preaching | Proclamation of the Gospel / good news / eloquent / planned |
| Teaching | Explanation of truth / instructions / persuasive / planned |
| Witnessing | Words and life / evidence of Truth / personal and authentic / spontaneous |

* SD lives in mystery not clarity,
* We inhabit in mystery
* SD attends to life on the edge of knowledge.

1. SD needs to be recovered

* Modern culture is good at knowledge, communication, and experience
* Christians have to “raise their voice” to be heard—doing the very things the world is doing.
* But there is a kind of communication that requires listening, conceiving (truth into being in one’s life)
* SD is a Christian communication, not to bull-dozing over others, but to get into the struggles of others

1. The necessity of SD

* SD is necessary for growth and development (what happen in between conversion and heaven)
* SD is necessary in between the focal points of PTW in listening, waiting, quietness.
* SD is necessary during the non-crisis points (valleys) of life
* As grape nuts (breakfast cereal made of flour, salt, and dried yeast) is neither grape or nut, SD is neither spiritual (non material) or direction (action taking)
* SD cultivates a condition of recognition and receptivity that other forms of speech cannot.

1. SD is urgent

* We are always avoiding, distorting, and dodging truth
* There is parallel of first human experience in Ge 2 and 3 and Christian life:

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| Ge 2:25 | Man and woman were living in the Garden when everything is provided for and at the stage of innocent, they were naked and not ashamed. | A new born Christian is fresh and excited about his faith. He loves the word of God and learn how to pray. |
| Ge 3:7 | They found out they are naked, they tried to hide themselves from God and used fig leaves to cover themselves. | Once he has learned the basic, he begins to say and do the right things, he begins to build a thick wall to defend himself from God’s word. He uses “fig leaves” of sound doctrine and various ministry tasks to hide himself from God. |