Tell It Slant: Parables as Spiritual Direction

Session 3

Spiritualities of Compassion and Poverty (I)

**Introduction**

1. The Danger of “Guruism”

* Weary of giving up our spirituality to others or letting others (models) to shape and take over our own identity.
* True SD always gives space to Holy Spirit to do the shaping

1. Our Needs

* There is no “expert” Christian.
* Although each of us has our own experience, knowledge, and competence, we retain our childlike state, without regressing back to infantilism or digressing to “adolescence.”
* A Christian life is best described as an artist who has a craft and a mind for creativity, it starts fresh everyday, with the help from the Holy Spirit in the community of faith.

**Spirituality of Compassion—The Parable of the Good Samaritan Lk 10:25-37**

1. Three Observations
2. Context of excitement and success in the sending of the Seventy (Chap. 10)

* The disciples have not only heard what Jesus said but have done what Jesus did.
* Jesus affirm their ministry (18f): what they have done.
* With a word of caution (20): who they are.

1. The Parable is provoked by the scribe (scholar) who tests Jesus for authenticity against the authority of the Scripture. He wants a tested Messiah not just a self-pronounced one.

* In Luke, Jesus is tested at three critical points in his ministry:
  1. At the beginning by Satan in the wilderness
  2. The current SD test
  3. At the conclusion of his ministry
* Jesus reminded his disciples that they were with him when he was tested many tests (Lk 22:28).

1. Scribe was tested by Jesus by means of the Parable
2. Segments of the Parable

Segment I Scribe asks the question, “what must I so to inherit eternal life?” (25). Jesus turns it into a dialogue of equals.

Segment II Scribe answers Jesus with Scripture (Dt) and is affirmed by Jesus. Both pass and both are orthodox.

Segment III Scribe asks another question, “who is my neighbor?” He is wishing for justification and looking for loophole. Self-justification by means of defence and excuse. The scribe’s weakness if the deficiency of heart. Jesus responds with the Parable. The Parable does not define “neighbor” for the scribe but create the “neighbor” for him. The key is “will I **be** a neighbor?”

Segment IV Scribe answers the parable question: the Samaritan. Jesus tells to go and do likewise.

Jesus has to move focus of the disciples from doing ministry to being a person who ministers.

**Spirituality of Poverty—The Lord’s Prayer Lk 11:1-13:**

* All Christian spirituality is organic—from the stuff of life.
* Christian life is not by “principles” but by a life of faith that grows in the soil of the way of growing up, the education received, the life crisis, etc.–conditions that are to be shaped by faith.
* Church want to mass produce Christian life as fast as possible.
* Poverty is a condition that we don’t have what we need to life a full life, we are, by nature, all limited.
* Poverty takes different forms: bad parents, bad schooling, bad body, bad brain, exploited, etc.
* Most of us middle class suppress our poverty. It grows like cancer and turns into pride, anger, envy, and sloth, etc.
* Poverty is a foundational condition. If we suppress our evidence of poverty, we become self-ignorance, incapacitate for growth—the scandal of North American Christianity.
* Poverty is the condition in which Jesus teaches us to pray.

Questions for Discussion

1. What made it necessary for Jesus to use this particular parable to approach the expert in Jewish laws.?
2. In the firsts lecture, Dr. Peterson noted the “fig leaves” which are used to hide from others. The scribe hid behind the roles of keeper and defender of religious truth. What are the “fig leaves” which you clutch, stealing from you the ability to respond to Jesus with all your heart , mind, soul, and body?