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Podcast

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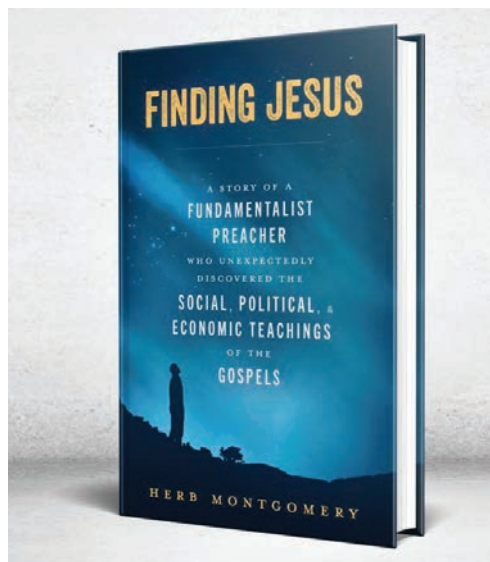
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@HerbMontgomery



Herb Montgomery



It's Finally Here!

Here is just a taste of what people are saying:

"Herb has spent the last decade reading scripture closely. He also reads the world around us, thinks carefully with theologians and sociologists, and wonders how the most meaningful stories of his faith can inspire us to live with more heart, attention, and care for others in our time. For those who've ever felt alone in the process of applying the wisdom of Jesus to the world in which we live, Herb offers signposts for the journey and the reminder that this is not a journey we take alone. Read *Finding Jesus* with others, and be transformed together."

—Dr. Keisha Mckenzie, Auburn University

"In *Finding Jesus*, Herb Montgomery unleashes the revolutionary Jesus and his kindom manifesto from the shackles of the domesticated religion of empire. Within these pages we discover that rather than being a fire insurance policy to keep good boys and girls out of hell, Jesus often becomes the fiery enemy of good boys and girls who refuse to bring economic justice to the poor, quality healthcare to the underserved, and equal employment to people of color or same-sex orientation. Because what the biblical narratives of Jesus reveal is that any future human society—heavenly or otherwise—will only be as good as the one that we're making right here and now. There is no future tranquil city with streets of gold when there is suffering on the asphalt right outside our front door

today. Finding Jesus invites us to pray 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' on our feet as we follow our this liberator into the magnificent struggle of bringing the love and justice of God to all—right here, right now."

—Todd Leonard, pastor of
Glendale City Church, Glendale CA

"Herb Montgomery's teachings have been deeply influential to me. This book shares the story of how he came to view the teachings of Jesus through the lens of nonviolence, liberation for all, and a call to a shared table. It's an important read, especially for those of us who come from backgrounds where the myth of redemptive violence and individual (rather than collective) salvation was the focus."

—Daneen Akers, author of
Holy Troublemakers & Unconventional Saints and co-director/producer of
Seventh-Gay Adventists: A Film about Faith, Identity & Belonging

"So often Christians think about Jesus through the lens of Paul's theology and don't focus on the actual person and teachings of Jesus. This book is different. Here you find a challenging present-day application of Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom of God and the Gospel. Rediscover why this Rabbi incited fear in the hearts of religious and political leaders two millennia ago. Herb's book calls forth a moral vision based on the principles of Jesus' vision of liberation. Finding Jesus helps us see that these teachings are just as disruptive today as they were when Jesus first articulated them."

—Alicia Johnston, author of
The Bible & LGBTQ Adventists

"Herb Montgomery is a pastor for pastors, a teacher for teachers and a scholar for scholars. Part memoir and part theological reflection, *Finding Jesus* is a helpful and hope-filled guide to a deeper understanding of who Jesus is and who he can be. Herb's tone is accessible and welcoming, while also challenging and fresh. This book is helpful for anyone who wants a new and fresh perspective on following Jesus."

—Traci Smith, author of
Faithful Families



Matching Donations for November and December!

As 2022 is coming to a close, we are deeply humbled and thankful for each of you who reads, listens to, and shares RHM's work. We are also grateful for the actions you continue to take to make our world a safer, compassionate, just home for all. Thank you for being such an important part of our community, and for your continued support.

Thanks to a kind donor we are able to match every donation for the months of November and December. All donation during these last two months will be matched, dollar for dollar, making your support of Renewed Heart Ministries, and the work we do, go twice as far.

Your support enables RHM to continue providing much needed resources to help Jesus-followers find the intersection between their faith and labors of love, compassion, and justice in our world today.

As 2022 ends, we invite you to make a donation to Renewed Heart Ministries to make the most of this very kind offer.

You can donate online by clicking online at renewedheartministries.com and clicking "Donate."

Or you can make a donation by mail at: Renewed Heart Ministries, PO Box 1211 Lewisburg, WV 24901

Thank you in advance for your continued support.

This coming year, together, we will continue being a voice for change.

**Available December 1 at
renewedheartministries.com**



A Shared Table 2022

During the months of November and December, become one of our monthly sustaining partners and receive a handmade **Renewed Heart Ministries Shared-Table Pottery Bowl** made by Crystal and Herb as a thank you gift for your support.

To become a monthly sustaining partner, go to renewedheartministries.com/donate and sign up for an automated recurring monthly donation of any amount by clicking the "Check this box to make it a monthly recurring donation" option. Or if you are using Paypal, select "Make this a monthly donation."

In January 2023 we will be starting out

the new year by sending out these lovely bowls as our gift to you to thank you for your support.

In the gospels, Jesus teaches a gospel of loving our neighbors, being committed to caring for one another, a gospel of a shared table of inclusion, especially of the marginalized. Jesus modeled this gospel by a life spent healing hurts in our world, and challenging the systems responsible for that harm.

Jesus 'gospel of a shared table is what this pottery bowl represents.

Our prayer is that each time one of our bowls is used you will be reminded of Jesus 'gospel of love, caring and sharing. They also make a great gift or an excellent conversation starter, as well.

Thank you for partnering with us to further the work of love, compassion, justice, and taking care of one another.

Together we are working toward a safer, more compassionate, and just world both for today and for eternity.

If you are already one of our sustaining partners making a monthly automated donation each month, we want to honor your existing continued support of Renewed Heart Ministries, too. You'll receive one of our Shared Table Pottery Bowls as a thank you, also, for your continued support.

From each of us here at RHM, thank you for your support of our work.

We wish you joy, peace, happiness, and blessings as we enter this year's holiday season. Your support sustains our ongoing work in the coming year.

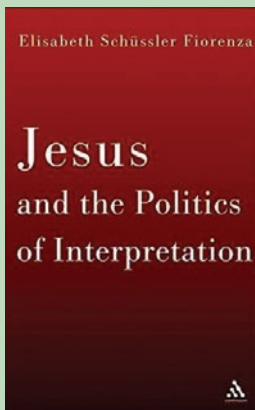
Both within our society as well as our various faith communities, together we will continue being a voice for love and inclusion.

RHM's Recommended Reading for November

Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation
by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

Jesus and the Politics of Interpretation seeks to interrupt the rhetorics and politics of meaning that, in the past decade, have compelled the proliferation of popular and scholarly books and articles about the historical Jesus, and that have turned Jesus into a commodity of neocapitalist western culture.

In this spirited book, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza continues her



argument begun in *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet* (Continuum, 1995), now with a focus on the politics of Jesus scholarship. It is no accident, she maintains, that scholars in the U.S. and Europe have rediscovered the historical Jesus at a time when feminist

scholarship, critical theory, interreligious dialogue, postcolonial criticism, and liberation theologies have pointed to the interconnections between knowledge and power at work in positivistic scientific circles.

It is also no accident that such an explosion of Jesus books has taken

place at a time when the media have discovered the "angry white male syndrome" that fuels neo-fascist movements in Europe and the U.S. The answer to this commodification of "Jesus" is not a rejection of critical scholarship and Jesus research but a call for their investigation in terms of ideology critique and ethics. By claiming to produce knowledge about the "real" Jesus, Schüssler Fiorenza points out, mainstream as well as feminist scholars refuse to stand accountable for their reconstructive cultural models and theological interests. Hence, she calls for an ethics of interpretation that can explore such a scholarly politics of meaning, rather than the ideological discourses on "Jesus and Women" that are fraught with both anti-Judaism and anti-feminism.

It's an excellent read!

No effort invested in working toward a safe, compassionate, just world that is home for everyone is in vain. We never know what new concession from those who wield power is just around the next corner.



Persistence Toward Justice

by Herb Montgomery

Our reading this week continues from the gospel of Luke:

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"

And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8)

Historical Jesus scholars attribute this week's parable to the Jewish Jesus although they also allow for the possibility that the author of Luke created the story given the overall focus of the gospel of Luke. The story only appears here in Luke's version of the Jesus story. And the message encourages persistence.

The widow in the story demands justice.

In the patriarchal culture of Jesus' society, a widow had a fragile economic status, and the justice tradition of Judaism had ways of addressing that.

"A father to the fatherless, a defender of **widows**, is God in God's holy dwelling." (Psalm 68:5)

"The Most High watches over the foreigner and sustains the fatherless and the **widow**, but the Most High frustrates the ways of the wicked." (Psalms 146:9)

"The Most High tears down the house of the proud, but the Most High sets the **widow's** boundary stones in place." (Proverbs 15:25)

"Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the **widow**." (Isaiah 1:17)

"Your rulers are rebels, partners with thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the **widow's** case does not come before them." (Isaiah 1:23)

"...To deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making **widows** their prey and robbing the fatherless." (Isaiah 10:2)

"...If you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the **widow** and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm..." (Jeremiah 7:6)

"This is what the Most High says: Do what is just and right. Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the **widow**, and do not shed innocent blood in this place." (Jeremiah 22:3)

"In you they have treated father and mother with contempt; in you they have oppressed the foreigner and mistreated the fatherless and the **widow**." (Ezekiel 22:7)

"Do not oppress the **widow** or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor. Do not plot evil against each other." (Zechariah 7:10)

"So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the **widows** and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,' says the Most High, the Almighty." (Malachi 3:5)

I share this lengthy collection of passages so that we can begin to get the cultural context for our parable: what we would today describe as Jesus' concern for social justice. Working for social justice is at the heart of what it means to follow the Jesus of synoptic gospels. It is a central theme of the Hebrew prophets' justice tradition, and it is to this tradition that Luke's version of the Jesus story adds its voice.

It strikes me as very odd today when I hear Jesus followers making fun of or speaking derisively of those who work for social, political and economic justice in our time. The Jesus of our stories was speaking throughout Galilee's villages to communities whose entire social fabric was being impacted by Roman imperialism. This impact enriched the elite at the expense of the masses. In Jesus' audience, then, there would have been widows who knew this story by experience. Jesus wasn't giving them

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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

Articles posted each week at patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/



Choosing the Common Good (Part 1 of 3)

"We miss a lot in this story if we don't understand it in terms of how much Roman imperialism harmed the masses in Judea and southern Galilee."

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2022/10/choosing-common-good-part1/

Choosing the Common Good (Part 2 of 3)

"We must read this week's story within this context. This backdrop also gives new insights into the political, economic, and social meaning of the gospels."

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2022/10/choosing-common-good-part2/

Choosing the Common Good (Part 3 of 3)

"Our doing better is not an act of charity. It's the work of reclaiming our own humanity through acknowledging, valuing, and honoring the humanity of others."

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2022/10/choosing-common-good-part3/



Faith Based Complicity in Social Harm (Part 1 of 3)

"This week's passage is about a lot more than just humility. It's also about complicity with political harm."

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2022/10/faith-based-complicity-social-harm-part1/

Faith Based Complicity in Social Harm (Part 2 of 3)

"Though religiously observant in their own eyes, they were still politically complicit in the concrete harms being committed against the vulnerable in society."

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2022/10/faith-based-complicity-social-harm-part2/

Faith Based Complicity in Social Harm (Part 3 of 3)

"Are we building systems that give life to those who marginalized and vulnerable or are we engaging in political activity that has our religious community's approval but is actually deeply destructive?"

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2022/10/faith-based-complicity-social-harm-part3/



Persistence Toward Justice (Part 1 of 3)

"Persistence in working for societal justice is at the heart of these kinds of sacred stories."

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2022/10/persistence-toward-justice-part1/

Persistence Toward Justice (Part 2 of 3)

"From start to finish, the entire context of our story is of establishing justice on Earth, ending violence, and restoring what oppression has stolen."

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2022/10/persistence-toward-justice-part2/

Persistence Toward Justice (Part 3 of 3)

"No effort invested in working toward a safe, compassionate, just world that is home for everyone is in vain."

patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2022/10/persistence-toward-justice-part3/

“Persistence...” continued from page 4

a spiritual focus on post mortem bliss to pacify them while they continued to suffer. Jesus’s story would have inspired them to continue, to persist, to keep on going in their striving for concrete, temporal justice. They would also have prayed for God to match their persistent efforts by making a way for them. This parable is about prayer for sure, but it’s not only about prayer. The phrase we read in the introduction is to “always pray and not give up.”

If you are working toward justice and you find yourself feeling as if you are swimming upstream against our society’s strong currents, *don’t give up!*

Also noteworthy is the unjust judge’s motive in this story.

His motive is not fidelity to God or concern for what people may think of him. The judge in the story is concerned that this widow may “eventually come and attack me.” The language for **attack** here would have been used to describe slapping someone in the face or giving them a black eye. So the judge acquiesces to the widow’s demand for justice for fear of her demands might turn violent. This reminds me of the political motives that lead to partial victories of the civil rights movement during the Johnson presidency. Faced with the demands of the King’s nonviolent movement versus the potential violence of other movements if changes weren’t made, the government partially heeded demands for change. Nearly 60 years later, we still have a long way to go to repair the harm born from our national sin of racism.

The author of Luke ends this section with a reference to the “Son of Man” and a question about where faith can be found. Again, this language is not concerned with post-mortem bliss but with present world realities. The title “Son of Man” comes from Jewish apocalyptic literature, specifically Daniel 7. In Daniel 7, world empires are depicted as monstrous beasts that will one day stand trial before the throne of justice to face judgment for their atrocities. In the end, the son of Man comes and gives liberation to the people.

“But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power

and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High.” (Daniel 7:26-27)

So, from start to finish, the entire context of our story is of establishing justice on Earth, ending violence, and restoring what oppression has stolen.

Lastly the question is asked, when the son of Man comes, will there be faith on the earth?

My challenge this week is not to switch tracks at the end and hear faith in terms of religious or metaphysical claims. Contextually, given the focus of our story, faith is synonymous with persistence in praying for and working toward justice here on our earth. It’s about concrete change in our present systems. It’s about persistence in our reordering this present world.

This week’s story moves me to do two things. In matters where I, like the judge in this week’s story, have the power to change things and make our world a safer, just place, this week’s story moves me to do so. In matters where, like the widow, I don’t have the power to change things myself, this week’s story moves me to make those with the power continually uncomfortable until they do.

I don’t know about you, but there are seasons when I get tired swimming against the various currents of injustice and voices that perpetuate them in our society, both inside of and outside of Christianity. I do believe it’s okay to rest sometimes, and we can accomplish more in the long run if we take time to rest today.

There is also a time to persist rather than to quit. My mother used to remind me when I felt like giving up, “It’s always darkest just before the dawn.” This week’s reading encourages Jesus followers not to give up. No effort invested in working toward a safe, compassionate, just world that is home for everyone is in vain. We never know what new concession from those who wield power is just around the next corner. Keep going!

HeartGroup Application

1. Share something that spoke to you from this week’s eSight/Podcast

episode with your HeartGroup.

2. What are some ways that you balance rest and persistence in your own justice work? Share some of these with your group.
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.

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.

And if you’d like to reach out to us 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. ■

**Are you taking
advantage of
all of RHM’s
free resources?**

**Sign up today
so you don’t miss a thing!**

Visit us at:
renewedheartministries.com
and click “Sign Up!”



Renewed Heart Ministries is a nonprofit organization working for a world of love and justice. We need your support to impact lives and provide the kind of resources and analysis RHM offers.

Intersections between faith, love, compassion, and justice are needed today more than ever.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to Renewed Heart Ministries, today.

To do so online go to renewedheartministries.com and click "Donate." Or if you prefer to make a donation by mail, our address is:

Renewed Heart Ministries
PO Box 1211
Lewisburg, WV 24901

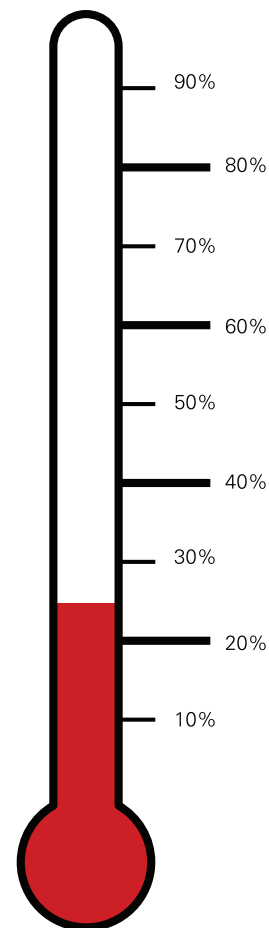
And to those of you out there who are already supporting this ministry, I want to say thank you. We continue being a voice for change because of your support.

**2022 Projected Budget Goal:
\$185,000.00**

**Donations Received
September 2022:
\$3,902.30**

**Donations Received
January through September:
\$45,154.75**

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



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. The time of each Zoom session will be on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. Pacific/10:00 p.m. Eastern.

Email us at: info@renewedheartministries.com for the link for the Zoom meeting.

Upcoming Events

November 26, 2022

Good News Fellowship

(via Zoom)

Toronto, Ontario Canada

304.520.0030



Renewed Heart Ministries is a not-for-profit group that is passionate about rediscovering, following and helping others rediscover the teachings and sayings of the historical Jesus of Nazareth. We believe these teachings have an intrinsic value in informing the work of nonviolently confronting, liberating and transforming our world into a safe, more just, more compassionate home for us all.

Everything we do here at Renewed Heart Ministries is for free. Even the many educational events that we hold in various venues. You can support our work either with a one-time gift or by becoming one of our monthly contributors by going to RenewedHeartMinistries.com and clicking the **donate** tab at the top right.

Or you can mail contributions to:
Renewed Heart Ministries
P.O. Box 1211
Lewisburg, WV 24901

Also, please sign up for our free resources and remember, every little bit helps.

And to those already supporting the work of Renewed Heart Ministries, your generous support makes it possible for us to exist and to continue being a presence for positive change in our world. So with all of our hearts, "Thank You."

Together we are making a difference, till the only world that remains is a world where only Love reigns.



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.

renewedheartministries.com/Podcasts

