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RHM's Free Resources

*JustTalking* with  
Herb and Todd

NEW Podcast!

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# #1 New Release on Amazon!

***Finding Jesus: A Fundamentalist Preacher Discovers the Socio-Political & Economic Teachings of the Gospels (2nd Edition)***

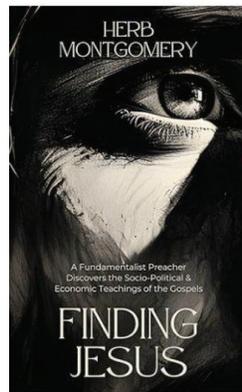
In *Finding Jesus*, author Herb Montgomery delves into the profound and often overlooked political dimensions of the gospels. Through meticulous analysis of biblical texts, historical context, and social discourse, this thought-provoking book unveils the gospels' socio-political, economic teachings as rooted in a profound concern for justice, compassion, and the well-being of the marginalized. The book navigates the intersections between faith and societal justice, presenting a compelling argument for a more socially engaged and transformative Christianity.

Readers will journey through the Gospel narratives, discovering the ways in which the Jesus of these stories challenged the political and religious establishments of his time. Herb Montgomery draws parallels between the societal issues faced by the people of Jesus' era and the challenges of the present day, sparking reflection on the role of faith in addressing contemporary political and social issues.

*Finding Jesus* is not just a scholarly exploration; it is a call to action. It challenges readers to reevaluate their understanding of Christianity's role in public life and to consider how the radical teachings of the gospels can inspire a renewed commitment to justice, equality, and compassion. This book is a must-read for those seeking a deeper understanding of the social implications of Christian faith and a blueprint for building a more just and inclusive society.

**#1 New Release on Amazon available now.**

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## Finding Jesus: A Fundamentalist Preacher Discovers the Socio-Political & Economic Teachings of the Gospels Paperback – February 6, 2024

by Herb Montgomery (Author), Keith Giles (Foreword)

5.0 3 ratings

#1 New Release in Religious Fundamentalism

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In *Finding Jesus*, author Herb Montgomery delves into the profound and often overlooked political dimensions of the gospels. Through meticulous analysis of biblical texts, historical context, and social discourse, this thought-provoking book unveils the gospels' socio-political, economic teachings as rooted in a profound concern for justice, compassion, and the well-being of the marginalized. The book navigates the intersections between faith and societal justice, presenting a compelling argument for a more socially engaged and transformative Christianity.

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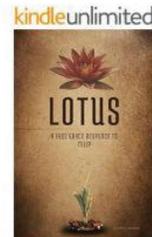
## New Releases in Christian Fundamentalism

#1



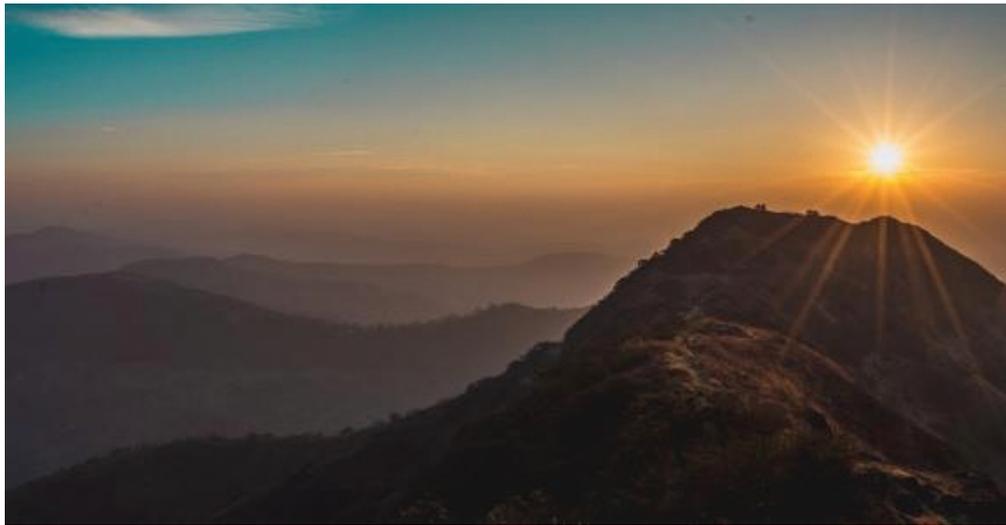
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***“Change does not only come from strong political winds, earth-shaking social quakes, or fire that burns the whole thing down. Change also comes from continued speaking out. What power does one voice have? This story reminds us that our voices, when we speak out together against injustice, can have power for change.”***

## The Power of Our Voices

by Herb Montgomery

Our reading this week is from the gospel of Mark:

After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus.

Peter said to Jesus, “Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.” (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.)

Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”

Suddenly, when they looked around, they no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

As they were coming down the

mountain, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead. (Mark 9:2-9)

This is the earliest version of this story that we still have today, and the one that all other reports of this event in our sacred text are dependent on (see Matthew 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36; 2 Peter 1:16-18).

In Mark’s narrative, Jesus is focused on Jerusalem. He will soon be protesting in the temple courts and quite probably provoking the empire’s violent response. So our story this week prepares us for the rest of the events of this gospel. First, though, this story points us back to Jesus’ baptism:

Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” (Mark 1:11)

Remember, in the book of Isaiah, this language was tied to the one who would establish justice:

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen one in whom I delight;

I will put my Spirit on him,  
and he will bring justice to the nations.  
He will not shout or cry out,  
or raise his voice in the streets.  
A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;  
he will not falter or be discouraged  
till he establishes justice on earth.  
(Isaiah 42:1-4)

Mark then points forward to the resurrection with a detail that would appear later in Mark’s version of the story:

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man *dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side*, and they were alarmed. (Mark 16:4-5, italics added)

The transfiguration story that we’re looking at this week places Jesus in the context of Moses and Elijah for Mark’s Jewish audience. That’s quite possibly the real heart and power of this story for Mark’s intended audience: they would have thought back to this account of Moses:

The LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and commandments I have written for their instruction.” Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. He said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them.” When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the

*continued on page 4*

mountain forty days and forty nights.  
(Exodus 24:12-18)

Moses stood as the great liberator from slavery in the Hebrew stories. And, in his own time, Jesus is leading a Jewish renewal movement, calling people away from the abuses of Rome and Roman complicity back to the justice teaching of the Torah, especially toward the poor and the marginalized. Matthew goes even further in drawing parallels between Moses and Jesus throughout his gospel stories, while Luke will take a different direction. Both build on Mark's version here.

Elijah also held a special place in the minds of those longing for liberation from Rome among Mark's audience.

See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction. (Malachi 4:5-6)

Remember this gospel was written very close to the destruction of Jerusalem by Rome, either during the events leading up to that destruction or in its wake shortly after. Elijah prophetically represents all those who have stood up to and spoken truth to power. Elijah also had a mountaintop experience, yet his experience was a little different from

Moses'. Elijah flees to the mountaintop in fear after standing up to Queen Jezebel. Here's the story:

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep. All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God.

There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too." The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD,

for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. (1 Kings 19:3-18)

The Story ends with Elijah being told "Go back...I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him." Elijah is then told to descend from the mountain and to anoint Jehu as king and Elisha as Elijah's successor as prophet.

In Mark's version of the Jesus story, Jesus is also about to descend from the mountain he's on. When he reaches Jerusalem, he will overturn the moneychangers' tables, speak truth to power in solidarity with those being harmed, and face the imperial response due to all who oppose the so-called Pax Romana. The temple has become a conduit of Rome. It is not Judaism that Jesus is standing up against. He's standing up against the complicity that the elites and powerful of his day are engaged in with the empire to the harm of the masses.

As Moses stood for liberation, Elijah stands for all those who have prophetically called for justice in the face of violent opposition by those in power who are threatened by their calls for change.

I can't help but wonder if Mark's original audience caught the parallels in this week's story of God's voice not being found in the wind, earthquake and fire, but in the still small voice. Could Jesus have been questioning what his own still small voice would ultimately accomplish in the face of systemic injustice in his own society? Could a point of these parallels be to encourage Mark's audience and us today to just keep speaking?



# SOCIAL JESUS

*A Blog Exploring the Intersection of Faith and Societal Justice*



## Last month's "Social Jesus" Blog on Patheos



### ***Differences in John and Why They Matter, Part 1***

This detail magnifies one important difference in John. Narrative location, motives behind the action, and intended outcome, matter.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/differences-in-johnwhy-they-matter-part1/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/differences-in-johnwhy-they-matter-part1/)

### ***Differences in John and Why They Matter, Part 2***

For the prophets, the concern is justice. It's within this Hebrew, prophetic justice tradition that the synoptic Jesus stands. In John's version of this story, this tradition is wholly erased.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/differences-in-johnwhy-they-matter-part-2/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/differences-in-johnwhy-they-matter-part-2/)

### ***Differences in John and Why They Matter, Part 3***

It's not that simple when our stories offer two different options. We have to take some personal responsibility. We have to actually decide.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/differences-in-johnwhy-they-matter-part3/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/differences-in-johnwhy-they-matter-part3/)



### ***Bearing Crosses and the Myth of Redemptive Suffering, Part 1***

This is the myth of redemptive suffering: that our suffering can redeem our abusers and oppressors.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/bearing-crosses-myth-of-redemptive-suffering-part1/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/bearing-crosses-myth-of-redemptive-suffering-part1/)

### ***Bearing Crosses and the Myth of Redemptive Suffering, Part 2***

Too often, the cross we are to be counseled to "bear" is defined as an injustice itself. This is not what the cross stood for in the synoptic gospels.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/bearing-crosses-myth-of-redemptive-suffering-part2/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/bearing-crosses-myth-of-redemptive-suffering-part2/)

### ***Bearing Crosses and the Myth of Redemptive Suffering, Part 3***

This may seem to be a subtle interpretive difference, but it makes all the difference in the world in how we respond to abuse and suffering.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/bearing-crosses-myth-of-redemptive-suffering-part3/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/bearing-crosses-myth-of-redemptive-suffering-part3/)



### ***The Power of Our Voices, Part 1***

The language in this story was not tied to escaping our world but to the power of our voices in establishing justice in our world.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/power-of-our-voices-part-1/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/power-of-our-voices-part-1/)

### ***The Power of Our Voices, Part 2***

Transfiguration in Mark is placed in connection with two voices that represent liberation and speaking truth to power.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/power-of-our-voices-part-2/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/power-of-our-voices-part-2/)

### ***The Power of Our Voices, Part 3***

The way of love calls each of us, alongside of others, to use the power of our voices to speak out against injustice in your world, today.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/power-of-our-voices-part-3/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/power-of-our-voices-part-3/)



### ***A Safe, Compassionate, Just Home for Everyone, Part 1***

In this story, the early followers perceived teachings that would end oppression and establish justice for all.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/safe-compassionate-just-home-for-everyone-part1/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/safe-compassionate-just-home-for-everyone-part1/)

### ***A Safe, Compassionate, Just Home for Everyone, Part 2***

He goes on to state the way apocalyptic literature was used in Mark's culture to "fire the socio-political imagination of the oppressed.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/safe-compassionate-just-home-for-everyone-part2/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/safe-compassionate-just-home-for-everyone-part2/)

### ***A Safe, Compassionate, Just Home for Everyone, Part 3***

This story points to a life-giving path that informs us to take up the work of making our world a safe, compassionate just home for everyone.

[patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/safe-compassionate-just-home-for-everyone-part3/](https://patheos.com/blogs/socialjesus/2023/02/safe-compassionate-just-home-for-everyone-part3/)



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](https://renewedheartministries.com) and clicking donate.

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### ...Voices continued from page 4

Don't think that change only comes from strong political winds, earth-shaking social quakes, or fire that burns the whole thing down: consider the violent events and failed attempts at liberation surrounding Jerusalem in the wake of its destruction. Change also comes from continued speaking out. What power does one voice have? This story reminds us that our voice, when we speak out against injustice, can have power for change. As Elijah was sent back down the mountain, and as Jesus was sent down from the mountain to face the powerful temple state in Jerusalem, we too today are called to speak out in our spheres of influence whenever people, the objects of God's universal love, are being harmed.

Again, this story marks the transition point in Mark's version of the Jesus story. In this moment, Jesus stands with Moses the great liberator and Elijah the prophet who stood up to corrupt rulers in positions of power and experience all that came in that

wake. Jesus will soon leave and turn toward those in power in his own society, time, and place, just as both Moses and Elijah did.

That's what's happening in Mark's gospel at this stage of the story. What is happening at this stage of our stories? Are we conflicted with injustice and harm being done in our world today? Do we also need some encouragement that our voice matters? Are we afraid of the consequences of speaking out?

The way of love calls each of us, alongside of others, to speak out against injustice in your world, today.

## Discussion Group Questions

1. Share something that spoke to you from this week's eSight/Podcast episode with your HeartGroup.
2. Share an experience where your own speaking out ultimately resulted in change? Share and discuss 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.

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](https://renewedheartministries.com) and clicking **donate**.

I want to also say a special thank you this week to Quoir Publishing, Keith Giles who wrote the foreword to my latest book, all the special people on our launch team, and all of you who made this release a success.

*Finding Jesus: A Fundamentalist Preacher Discovers the Socio-Political and Economic Teachings of the Gospels* is available now on Amazon in paperback, Kindle and soon also on Audible in audio book format.

As always, you can find Renewed Heart Ministries each week on X (or Twitter), Facebook, Instagram and Meta's new Threads. 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 us here at Renewed Heart Ministries through email, you can reach us at [info@renewedheartministries.com](mailto:info@renewedheartministries.com).

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

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## Upcoming Events

**MARCH 16, 2024**

**Good News Fellowship**  
Toronto, Ontario Canada

**For more info or the Zoom link, email us at:**  
info@renewedheartministries.com  
**or call:** 304.520.0030



## 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:  
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**RENEWED  
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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.***

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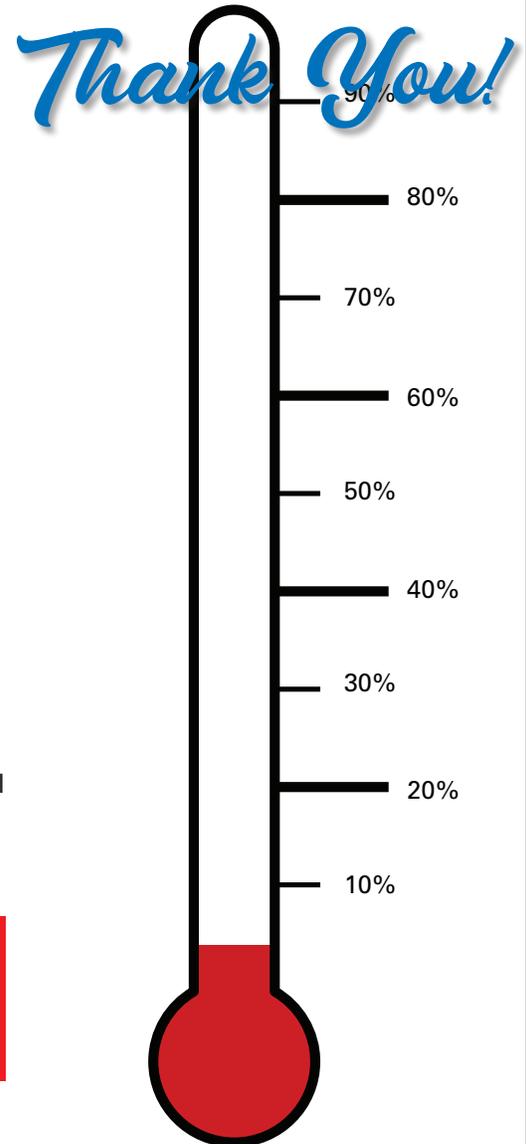
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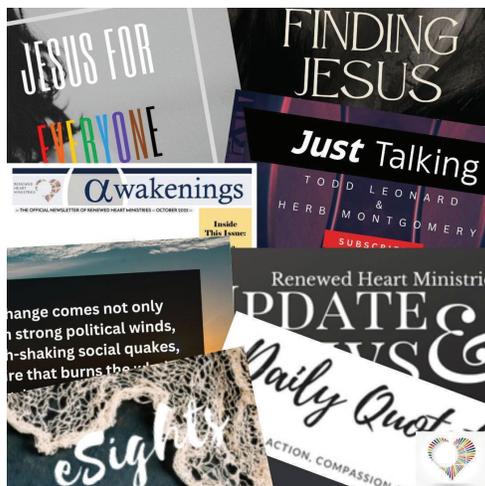
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And **THANK YOU** for reading, listening to, sharing and supporting RHM's work. Thank you for the decisions you make every day to make our world a safer, compassionate, just home for everyone. Thank you for your dedication to engaging our world and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

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

**Donations Received in  
January 2024:  
\$5,158.80**

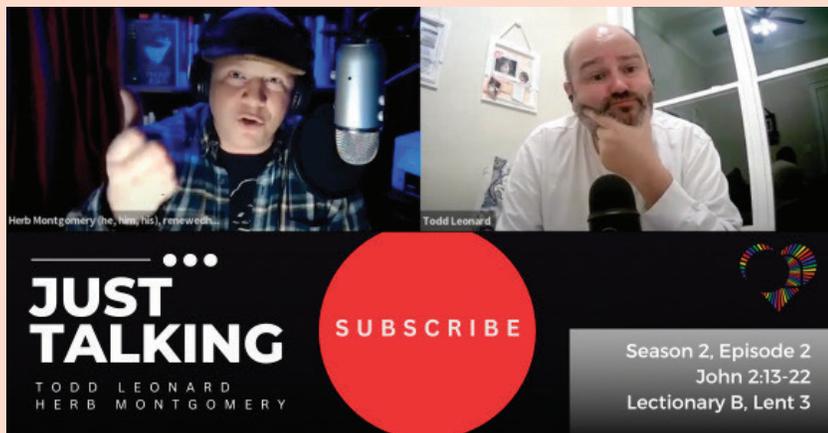




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## *Just Talking* with Herb and Todd

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. All of this will help us get this new YouTube channel off the ground. Thanks in advance for watching!



## Announcing a NEW podcast! *The Social Jesus Podcast!*

*The Jesus For Everyone* podcast is changing it's name and joining a new podcast network over the next few weeks.

We'll announce on our website when this new transition is complete and where the new episodes will be available!