

"A Radical Leaning"

Mark 10:13-16 and Mark 4:40

A little girl asked her mother, "Where did people come from?" Her mother answered, "God made Adam and Eve and they had children and that's how all humankind was made."

A couple of days later she asked her father the same question.

The father answered, "Many years ago there were monkeys, which the human race evolved from."

The confused little girl returned to her mother and said, "Mommy, how is it possible that you told me that we were created by God, and Daddy said we came from monkeys?" The mother answered, "Well, dear, it is very simple. I told you about my side of the family and your father told you about his."

A great misconception is that Christians all think the same way about all things - that to be Christian is to believe all the same things.

Marcus Borg who was a historical Jesus scholar did some work on our understanding of the word belief. He said that the association of belief and faith and articles of faith is recent in the church. In today's world rationality, belief, and faith have meant that we believe these particular things to be true. They may be things like the existence of the historical Jesus, the virgin birth, the resurrection of the dead, life everlasting, the inerrancy of scripture etc.

Initially, according to Borg, belief had nothing to do with rational assent to a creed or confession. Rather it had to do with the 'leanings of the heart'.

To believe in something was to lean into it with your whole heart.

To believe was to say this is so important to me; this is where I put my trust; this is of value to me; this is what is 'be-loving' to me. To believe is to 'be-love'. To believe is to put your heart into something.

This understanding of belief is illustrated beautifully in the story of Jesus and the little children. Jesus invites the children to come to him after the disciples try to chase



them away. Then taking the children on his knee and blessing them he says: "I assure you that whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it"

How can a child have faith?

I watch my grandson Keegan lean into his mother with complete trust. Actually it is beyond trust, even something beyond human description. When our own kids were small - and something went wrong they would come and sit on our laps. They just needed to touch us, be held by us, have us hold them. They just needed to lean into us. Ten minutes later - they were fine - we felt exhausted. There was transfer of energy, of strength, of life, of love.

That's how I see Keegan leaning into his mom and his dad. And it reminds me of Jesus words:

I assure you that whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will never enter it

Jesus invites us into a radical leaning. A leaning into God.

When the disciples were in the boat with Jesus and the storm blew in and they were afraid, Jesus asked them "after all you have seen and experienced why are so you afraid?". "Where is your faith?"

So, on the count of three, come on let's lean. One, two and three ...