

**Freeing Jesus: Chapter 6—Jesus as Presence
And Conclusion--The Universal Jesus
Wed Night Study
October 25, 2023**

Opening Prayer

Lectio Divina---Matthew 28:16-20

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him, but they doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am **with you always**, to the end of the age.*

1. Word/phrase 2. Feeling/image 3. What is God saying in this passage?

Where do you experience the presence of Jesus most?

In prayer? Scripture? Worship? Music? Nature? Community? Silence?

Why?

Bass' daughter asks: Mama, where is God? Where does Jesus live? Pg. 228

Bass then talks about the bowels/guts being the place where God dwells.

How does reading this chapter help you answer the question of where Jesus lives?

What did you think of Bass' assertion that Jesus is God's presence through the Spirit—you cannot separate Jesus from the Spirit? Pg 222.

The scripture words for spirit are *ruach*, *pneuma*, and *shekhinah*—and Jews would have been familiar with the idea of '*presence*', *shekhinah*. (these are all *feminine* nouns).

She says that Western Christianity often prefers the transcendence of God (distance) more than the immanence of God (closeness). Western Christians prefer hierarchies and dualism, and have persecuted those who celebrate the immanence of God as witches and heretics Pg. 232.

Bass says that God with us and within us is a radical immanence---Jesus is God in a body.

Unfortunately, evangelical and some other Christians see the body as bad, a hindrance.

They see a conflict between body and soul. And women's bodies are especially bad.

She says that the birth of Jesus was real, and messy.

Jesus had a body for a reason.

Jesus cares so much for our bodies that he healed bodies.

The body of Christ includes all bodies, esp. the outcast and oppressed.

Bass talks about the shekhinah presence of Jesus, as the feminine aspect of God. She says that Jesus has a feminine side. We can see Jesus as Mother. In the O.T. God is referred to as a Mother Bear, a mother eagle, a woman in labor, a nursing mother, and Jesus in the N.T. is seen as a hen gathering her brood (Matt 23:37). Pg. 238

Christian mystic Julian of Norwich of 1390 wrote extensively about Jesus as our True Mother, when she got seriously ill at age 30 and had fifteen visions or 'Showings'. She wrote about Mother God, and Mother Jesus. She wasn't the only writer to see the word Mother as a fitting image for God. Also Anselm of Canterbury and Bernard of Clairvaux.

What does it mean to you that Jesus can be found in ordinary life, ordinary activities? Pg. 243

On pg. 251 Bass says that Jesus is not Lord above the earth, he is the earthy lord, the birthing one, the rock, the shekhinah, God with us. What do you think of that?

SMALL GROUPS:

1. What do you think of God or Jesus as Mother? Do you think that God has a feminine side?
3. Do you tend to think more about the immanence (closeness) or transcendence (distance) of God? Why?
4. What do you think about Jesus as mystery? Not as a riddle or puzzle to solve, but as revelation?