

**Freeing Jesus Chapter 4—Lord
Wednesday, October 11, 2023 at FPC Matawan**

Opening Prayer

Lectio Divina—Luke 2:8-14

*Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah,^[b] **the Lord.** ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host,^[c] praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”^[d]*

(3 readings---word/feeling or images/what is God saying?)

***When you think of Jesus as Lord—what words, images and phrases come to mind?**

***What did you learn about the ‘lordship’ of Jesus in this chapter?**

Early Christians proclaimed their faith by saying “Jesus Is Lord”

On pg. 120 Bass talks about the ‘lordship’ of Jesus.

Lord—kyrios in Greek---meant lord or master—the one who owns you!

Slaves called their masters ‘lord’

Students called their teachers ‘master’ or ‘lord’

Workers called their employers ‘lord’

The problem—The Roman Emperor was considered “lord” of the world, so when people claimed Jesus as Lord, they often refused to say Caesar is Lord. If Jesus is, Caesar is not. “Jesus as Lord” was subversive, empowering, and liberating!

As Bass was in college, she joined a revival movement and a ‘base community’, committed to radical faith in Christ. She learned through Bonhoeffer and others that following Jesus is not just about the afterlife, but also about dying to self in *this life*. pg. 123,

She joined a street ministry for the homeless, and was arrested with some prostitutes, but then let go because she was a “Jesus girl”. She felt like she had failed.

Bass had a *problem with the idea of being a ‘slave’ to God*—isn’t that terminology offensive to those who have been enslaved? She was labeled a *heretic* for her complaints! Pg. 128.

During mission trips to Mexico, where people live in tires and trash dumps, she had a revelation: *“it dawned on me that Jesus’s lordship was **far more** than surrendering control of my own life to God. It had something to do with this place, bringing this under his lordship too.”* pg. 131.

She studied Gutierrez and liberation theology, Oscar Romero of El Salvador, God’s preferential option for the poor, and the freedom of the oppressed.

She realized that many evangelicals did not defend the poor, and they focused more on heavenly salvation, than earthly liberation. They frequently encouraged obeying the government as a God-ordained order.

She realized that Jesus is Lord is a *political statement!* Pg. 134 because Jesus came to reign over all the earth. The kingdom of God he proclaimed was about the whole of creation. *“Jesus was the One who embodied divine authority and had arrived on earth to take back the planet for the Father.”* Pg. 136

Bass was exposed to different theologians that emphasized actions over belief, including her friend John Fugelsang who **described Jesus as** *“a radical non-violent revolutionary who hung around with lepers, hookers, and crooks; wasn’t American and never spoke English; was anti-wealth, anti-death penalty, and anti-public prayer (Matt 6:5); who was never anti-gay, who never mentioned abortion or birth control, never called the poor lazy, never justified torture, never fought for tax cuts for the wealthiest Nazarenes, never asked a leper for a co-pay; and who was a long-haired, brown-skinned, homeless community organizing, anti-slut shaming Middle Eastern Jew”.* Pg. 138

FIRST SMALL GROUP

1. What do we think of the terms slave/master/lord today?
2. In what ways is Jesus’ lordship about ALL of creation?
3. What do you think of John Fugelsang’s description of Jesus? Pg. 138

Bass learned that the Trinity was not explicitly mentioned in Scripture, but rather extrapolated from it. Pg. 139. And that Jesus as Lord demanded something of her—to personal submission, but also to see the earth as the Kingdom. Pg. 142.

Bass went on another mission trip to the Netherlands, where she scrubbed a kitchen, and was loved, accepted and ‘evangelized’ by the homeowner.

She says that ***SHE got saved that day!*** Pg. 145-8.

Bass learned about the ***Kin-dom of God*** from Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, who argues that kingdom is a corrupted metaphor today, of oppression and violence, and ‘kin-dom’ suggests a liberating family of God. Even mystic Julian of Norwich spoke of ‘our kinde lord’, kinde meaning kin.

She says that the kitchen in the Netherlands, the night with the prostitutes, and the tire city in Mexico were all the closest she has come to the kingdom (kin-dom) of God. Pg. 151

Later Bass left the Bible church and evangelical world, seeking more justice in politics and a deeper religion.

She writes: *"It was no longer enough that Jesus saved us from the world; we wanted Jesus to fix it. We did not want to go up to the kingdom of heaven after we died (or at the Rapture). Instead we wanted the kingdom to come down to us."* Pg. 156

She became an Episcopalian and noticed many other evangelicals doing the same. Pg. 154

At the end of her chapter, she notes the change in American religion and politics. Jerry Falwell emerged with his organization the Moral Majority, and her Scottsdale church put out an American flag next to the crosses, and Ronald Reagan was elected. Evangelicals thought the liberals were bad, not real Christians. This left her and her friends bewildered. Pg. 157-9.

SECOND SMALL GROUP

1. In what ways are we 'saved' by those we serve? Have you been blessed by someone you were trying to serve and bless?
2. What do you think about the 'kin-dom' of God vs. kingdom of God?
3. In what *positive ways* can we respond to the strange mix of politics and Christianity today?

What was the most impactful in this chapter?

Closing Prayers