

00:01 everybody, welcome. This is the sixth and final session of the Exploring Theology course, and as if by magic, Bart has decided to arrive to see, come on, you're going to have to say hello, here we go, there we go, Bart, yes, here we go, traditional, rather than at the end, here's Bart for the sixth and

00:21 final session of the Exploring Theology course, and in this session we're going to be looking at how do we live out our everyday faith.

00:30 we go. Right, okay. Let me move it on to the next slide. And here we go. So we're going to, this is, I'm going to give you an outline, ow, of how this works.

00:40 There we go. You're very familiar with this by now because this is session six. So, we're, we'll start with a recap of sessions one to five.

00:53 Uh, then we'll have an opening prayer. After that one more definition of actually, no, what I think I'm going to do instead of having the definition of theology there is I'm going to pull that back and have that towards the end or at the very end.

01:02 Um, that would be better. Um entitled praying like bees. Um, last time when we were looking at it, we were thinking about eating scripture.

01:14 Well, this time we're going to be thinking about praying like bees. Um and then we've looked at other sources, theological sources, and this time we're going to be looking at experience.

01:24 That's our final theological source that we're going to be thinking about. So then we'll, we'll have a session on experience.

01:31 Then we're going to have some questions and reflections on the question. How do we live out our everyday faith? Um, again, this, as I said before, when we were looking at how do we worship and pray, this isn't so much a how-to as in specific, you know, manual guidance type of thing of how to do

01:50 it. Um, that would be you know, way beyond what we could do in a course like this. And also, the purpose of a course like this is how do we learn to think and live theologically.

01:59 And so continuing in that vein, that's what we're going to be looking at on that, and then we'll come to a summary and closing prayer.

02:07 So we began in our first session with the question, who is God? And if you recall, we had that wonderful quote from Robert Jensen, God is whoever raised Jesus from the dead.

02:17 Having before raised Israel from Egypt, the purpose, well, the focus as it were of Jensen's quote there is recognizing the importance of identity.

02:26 Um, who is God? Uh, there could be any number of reference to that theoretically. And so it's important to actually identify and which God we're talking about.

02:38 And with that, then the, how do you go about identifying? And with that short little statement implicit in that is that there's a story.

02:46 And we were looking at the way we use story to narrate God's life and God's identity. Uhm, and then that sort of pitched us into the question, well what about us?

02:58 That was the focus of our second session when we were looking at who are we? And how our story is also our life is our identities, rather, are also constituted and woven together by, yes, you've got these moments, but then how do you, how do you roll them all together type of thing?

03:15 And that's by telling story. We use narrative. We're narrative beings in that sense. We, we use story to give coherence to our identities across time.

03:24 Uhm, then it was a question of, well, how do these stories relate? And and, how does our story relate to God's story and so on?

03:32 And that pitched us into our third session, which is why is the Bible important? And when we were looking at why is the Bible important, we ended up at a critical point.

03:42 We were looking about scripture as a resource. We in the previous session, who are we? I think it was then, we were looking also at reason and revelation and where we were on that continuum between the two.

03:52 And then with the why is the Bible, we were looking, obviously, as, as, as, as scripture why is scripture important, but we were also, with that, looking at different ways of framing the scriptures, and I talked to you about thinking about the scriptures as being a fi- yeah, no

04:07 , it was reason and revelation was in the session on the Bible, wasn't it? I'm just looking at my notes, yeah.

04:13 And yeah. So , but to go back to I was talking about using the five-act play, wasn't I?

04:21 The, the way of sort of , a way of considering, configuring this understanding of what the overarching narrative, the various movements within that.

04:31 You could think of it as a symphony, but you could also think, think of it as a five-act play. And that we are in act four, and that's going to become particularly pertinent.

04:41 Later on in this session. Then we talked about why is the church important? And we were looking at our understandings of church.

04:49 I think in that session we also looked at the Nicene Creed. We also looked at tradition. I got you to go to your church and look at what was going on in that church.

04:58 And uuuh, was that what I did in that one? I honestly can't remember a thing. We were talking about, oh, yes, that's right.

05:05 We were talking about the various ways of keeping the message on track. Uhm, we were thinking about uh, scripture and creeds and bishops and so on.

05:16 And then in the final session, that's right. We were looking at how do we worship and pray. And we were thinking about the the theological the implicit theology in how we worship and pray.

05:29 And we were thinking about the repetition. And as we had been thinking about with tradition and traditionalism, we were also thinking about ritual and ritualism.

05:38 And how these repeated acts shape us. And remember that image of that metamorphic rock on the west coast of Norway.

05:50 The, the Kallensteinen rock made out of eclogite. And the way that the waves, just over the years, shaped it into that very striking kind of mushroom shape.

05:58 Uhm, and, and I was asking you to go and, and think about yes, it was right, it was in this one, wasn't it?

06:04 I was asking you to think about going to a church service and, and, to go to a church service one that you normally go to, if you go to one normally.

06:13 And look at what you are repeating week in, week out. And how that, the way that, that repetition is shaping us, that worship because that was one of the key things we were looking at in the, the last session, was that worship is also a source.

06:29 And if you remember, we had that phrase, lex orandi, lex credendi. The way we pray shapes how we uh, the way we pray shapes how we, what we believe.

06:42 And we're going to pick up on that in this session as well. So that brings us all to session six, this final session, which is entitled, as I say, how do we live out our every day faith?

06:54 But as I indicated in the summary at the beginning before we go any further we need to pray because all of what we're doing here is a delightful response to a delightful and a joyful, I hope and pray, response to the God who loves us and has revealed himself in the life, death

07:19 and resurrection of our Lord. So how do we live out our everyday faith? That's the question, but first let's pray.

07:26 And as before, I've used a uh, one of the prayers, we call them the collects, they gather everything together and we use them in our acts of worship on a Sunday, many of us.

07:37 And this is one for the weekdays actually. This is slightly different. This isn't a Sunday one. This is one for the weekdays after Pentecost.

07:46 And I'm recording this in the week after uh, Trinity. So we're going back almost a couple of weeks now.

07:52 Uhm, so in the those days after the weekdays after Pentecost, this was the collect. So I'm going to pray this.

07:59 I'm going to say this and pray it. I in wherever you are at this moment, I invite you to say it with me.

08:05 And as we do this, let's commit all the time that we're going to spend together on session six to our Lord in joyful response to who our Lord is.

08:17 Okay. First off, let's just pause for a moment. Um, if you're anything like me, your mind's been going off in 101 different directions.

08:27 And so let's gather our scattered senses and focus intentionally on the presence of our God who is with us.

08:37 And together we say, O Lord, from whom all good things come, grant to us, your humble servants, that by your holy inspiration, we may think those things that are good, and by your merciful guiding, may perform the same.

09:04 Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

09:18 Okay, there we go. Right, on we go. Next session next part of this first video for session six is entitled, Praying Like Bees.

09:29 Now, I don't know what kind of image this comes, brings to your mind, or what you even think of when you think of a bee.

09:34 You might think of a bee like this. Now, this is Barry Bee from the Bee Movie, which was made by DreamWorks about, I don't know, 20 years ago, something like that.

09:44 Uhm, voiced by Jerry Seinfeld. Uhm, that's one image. Another more, perhaps, in-keeping image, but I don't know, because that's making all sorts of assumptions, but this is from the Aberdeen Dictionary.

09:54 Bestiary, which was an illuminated 13th century manuscript, and the first few pages show images from the Garden of Eden, and, and, and, and, and animals being named, and things like that.

10:05 But here you can see bees, bees flying. This is a page entitled, from the manuscript, On Bees, and you can see these bees flying down into their beehives.

10:18 Like, sort of squadrons, just in uni-, you know, the way it's depicted here, it's quite something. Uhm, and okay, so, the bee thing.

10:27 What's going on here? What are we, what are we talking about when we're thinking about praying like bees? Well well, the, the, the connection, obviously, is with honey.

10:38 If we, you remember last time we were talking about eating the scriptures, and we had that passage. It's from Ezekiel talking about, He said to me, O mortal, eat what is offered to you, eat the scroll, and go.

10:49 Speak to the house of Israel. So, I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat. He said to me, mortal, eat the scroll that I give you, and fill your stomach with it.

10:59 And I ate, and in my mouth, it was as sweet as honey. You have this reference to honey. There, and similarly, in the book of Revelation, when, when the angel holds out the uh, the scroll to St.

11:16 John of Patmos to eat, he, the angel says, take it and eat it, it will be bitter to your stomach, but sweet as honey in your mouth.

11:23 Again, another reference. And, and it's not only in these places that we have these kind of references to honey, and so on.

11:29 So in some Psalms, Psalm 19, one of the early Psalms, talking about they are sweeter than honey. Now, what are we talking about in terms of the they?

11:37 If you go back to Psalm 19, it's talking about the law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul, the statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making the wise simple, the precepts of the Lord, the commands of the Lord, the fear of the Lord, the decrees of the Lord.

11:51 It's all these things. And then in verse 10, the Psalms. Psalmist goes on to say, they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.

12:03 And it's not just Psalm 19. We see that we also have Psalm 119, verse 103, which is this long Psalm, isn't it?

12:13 It's the longest Psalm of all. And in that we have these words, uh how sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.

12:25 Again, this image of the word being like honey, sweeter than honey. Um, yeah. So thinking of the sort of the honeycomb image uh, this is something that those in the tradition have picked up on over the years, this image of the honeycomb drawing from the scriptures as we've just seen

12:51 . And so here we have Honorarius of Auten, 12th century theologian. Not much is known about this person, actually. Some think, was he from Burgundy, was he from Germany important in establishing languages, the German language in the things like that.

13:07 But anyway, point was he came up with this. And so he said in one of his writings, the honeycomb is honey in the wax.

13:15 Honey in the wax is the spiritual understanding lying hidden in the letter of scripture. But the honeycomb is dripping while sweet allegory is flowing from the letter.

13:27 Talking about that when we read the scriptures, there is, as it were, the, uh the first surface reading that we get when we come to reading the scriptures.

13:36 And that might be when we're doing the Lectio type of thing. It's just like, okay, so this is what we're immediately seeing in the text.

13:41 And there are questions that ask us, what's going on, what's the situation, what's the context, what's just been said before, what's just been said after that kind of, those kinds of questions come to mind.

13:50 Um, but then there's a level of meaning which is below that, which is perhaps not immediately apparent, but then becomes apparent.

13:59 And this is the kind of meaning that the, the more spiritual meaning of the passage that is, is, is hidden within.

14:06 But if you go in there and it's, it's, as it were, it's in the honeycomb. The honeycomb is honey in the wax.

14:14 The honey is the wax is the spiritual understanding lying hidden in the letter. So initially, it's just, you see the, you see the honeycomb and everything, and you're seeing all the wax, but it's the honey that's in there.

14:23 And so one has to do a little bit of effort to get to the honey itself. Um, so that's one of the ways that we're thinking about honey and also the activity of bees.

14:34 Go back to our bees. These are bees returning, aren't they? They're returning to the hive. They have been flying and they've been going for a little bit flower to flower, pollinating.

14:48 I'm recording this when it's a little bit warm having a bit of a heat wave. So yeah, a bit of water as I go.

14:55 And so they're flying in and the way they're flying in squadron, as I say, so they're returning to the hive and the, the, in, in the bee movie, which I referenced a moment ago these these kind of bees that go from uh flower to flower, pollinating and everything, they're

15:14 referred to as the pollen jocks. So here they are. And this is how it's depicted in the movie. If you've never seen it, it's a fun movie to watch.

15:21 Anyway, I'm going to get distracted. Let's go back to the Aberdeen Bestiary. And so they're returning and everything. And this in the tradition is thinking of of the beehive as a storage facility.

15:33 They've gone off, they've got the pollen, they bring it back. They, it turns, they, they turn it, to be honest, my ignorance, it becomes honey.

15:41 And but it's stored in the beehive. And this is where we're thinking about going in the, in the tradition.

15:48 It's like the bees are bringing it back and they're storing it. So the beehive is like a storage facility and really, reading scripture then gets mapped onto thinking about reading scripture in a way whereby we are storing it in our memories.

16:01 We repeat the scriptures over and over as we're reading them and by repeating them over and over, we're like the bees, we're beginning to store these little bits of honey of scripture in our memories, in the beehive.

16:16 Okay? In, amidst the wax of the honeycomb. And so it, this repeated reading of scripture, taking a passage of scripture and repeatedly reading it helps secure the scriptures place in our mental beehives, as it were.

16:33 Okay? And this is something that was picked up by U***** Morris, who was a ninth century Benedictine uh, theologian, and he talked about divine scripture.

16:43 is a honeycomb filled with the honey of spiritual wisdom. So this is a slightly different kind of thing. I'm just saying we, we go into the scriptures, it's a honeycomb, and amidst it all, you've got the honey of spiritual wisdom.

16:57 So all sorts of metaphors of being like bees and honey and honeycombs, and it's all kind of, they, they, they get used a in different ways in the tradition by various theologians down the ages.

17:11 And it's a helpful image to have in mind when we come to Lectio Divina, because as, as we did with the eating one last time about eating scripture, we can think about, we can think, okay, so when we're coming to it this time, we're going to be doing it like bees.

17:24 We're, we're, we're, we're, we're repeating the scriptures, we're, we're seeking the honey that's hidden in the honeycomb. Comb of scripture, and we're storing it to change, re-angle the metaphor.

17:37 We're storing it in the honeycomb of our mind so that we have that sweetness and that spiritual depth of meaning of the scriptures in our minds that we carry on with us in our daily living and everything.

17:48 Okay. So you all know the Lectio thing. So bear this in mind, as we come to it, as I did last time, these four steps, so read, meditate, pray, and contemplate.

17:59 It's like four readings is the idea. First time you read it, just get the literal meaning and everything. Second time you're meditating on it, you're chewing it over or you're looking for the honey in the honeycomb.

18:10 That then leads you into a response to pray. The word comes alive to you. There is something that you feel that God is saying to you personally, from this passage of scripture.

18:19 It may be a passage of scripture that you have read over and over and over in your life, but then suddenly a fresh meaning hits you between the eyes and you think, oh my word, I never saw that again.

18:31 That's what the spirit does when we read the scriptures. You will, I'm sure, have had that experience. And that's the idea of why we come back to these passages and we give them time.

18:41 We give the spirit time to bring this experience and our attention to something in what we're reading. Okay. And that then issues forth in a response from us, which is one of prayer.

18:52 It's something that then we're left to, by, by what we've encountered in the scriptures for the first time possibly after however many readings of these passages, we go like, oh my word.

19:02 And that issues forth in a prayerful response to that, to, to, to what we've heard. As I was saying, a few weeks ago, sessions ago, it, it might be a prayer, it might be something that we've read which convicts us.

19:13 And we've, and so our response is one of penitence and, and praying to God for forgiveness. It might be something which we just, just elicits joy.

19:23 And we read it and we go like, oh my word, God is so amazing and wonderful. And it just, it just bubbles out of us.

19:32 In a prayerful response. And then as that begins to settle and we've been sitting with the passage and we've read it a few times, we enter a space where our breathing is slower.

19:44 We are sitting with the passage. We, we don't have to keep reading it at this point. It's, it's, it's there.

19:51 We've got to the honey. We've, it's sticking in our brains like honey in a honeycomb type of thing in our mental state.

19:56 Until beehive. And then we are just in the presence of God and we are with God having encountered God in the scriptures.

20:07 That's, that's what we're doing in that fourth step. So I'm not going to read it this time as I didn't, same, same as last time.

20:13 I didn't read it last time. This time we've got a passage from the book of Exodus second book of the Bible.

20:20 We are with Moses on Mount Horeb and it's chapter three. So if you get your Bibles to hand, I'm going to stick it on the screen in a moment.

20:29 Um, if you have your Bible to hand, then brilliant. If you don't, then just look at it on the screen and and read it.

20:39 And as I say, just go through those four steps of reading it read. Meditate, pray, contemplate. And I'm going to give us about 12 minutes to do that.

20:52 And and then we'll continue on our session. So yeah, I'm going to stick the text on and I will take it.

20:59 We'll take it from there. So about 12 minutes or so. Okay. Edit this bit.

32:31 be interesting. When we, when we gather together for this final session, which will be in I hope will be in person it will be in person.

32:41 The idea is the final session is in person. Uhm. The I hope that we'll have the opportunity to share with each other what's jumped out at us in our readings of this passage, and what the Spirit has drawn our attention to.

32:57 Okay, let me move myself back over there, and then we're going to move over onto the next slide. So, now, we're going to be thinking about what are our key sources for theological reflection.

33:08 If you recall, we've been looking at these different sources as we've been going through the Course. Let's put my Bible back down there.

33:14 And you know, we, you're very familiar with these now so the primary uh, source for all our theological reflection is Scripture, within our tradition.

33:26 then we have our tradition, this understanding of handing on the content and the manner in which it we do it across the generations and in our own time.

33:35 Uh, then we then we have reason and reason using our critical faculties and so on and so forth and how that then relates to revelation as broad, you know, revelation in Scripture and revelation in other ways.

33:53 Then we have experience and worship is what we looked at. That last time and experience is what we're going to be looking at this time as we consider the question, how do we live out our everyday faith?

34:04 So the with the word experience that's the key focus in terms of our theological source that we're going to be looking at for this final session.

34:18 And so I want you to consider this question. Just to get us going. And I'm going to give you about five minutes for this and then another question, which will be a little bit longer.

34:28 Okay. So first off, what comes to mind when you think of experience? Um, what's, what comes to mind when you think of this word experience?

34:37 Um, take let's say about three minutes or so on this and then we'll turn to the the bigger, broader question.

34:48 Okay. So what comes to mind when you think of experience? I haven't made it, I haven't said it, but obviously the, the idea, just as with every other session up till now, this is when I'm asking you these questions, the idea is just to, I'm inviting you to just jot down your thoughts in your your

35:48 notebook, you know, I've got mine, and under session six, so, yeah. Same kind of idea as before, yeah. Okay.

37:21 With those initial kind of responses in your mind, what comes to mind when you think of experience? The next thing I'm going to give you a little bit longer I'm going to give you about 15 minutes to think through this question.

37:35 Uhm, and I'd like you to just jot these down and just see where you go with them, okay? Uhm, again given the question I'm going to ask, there is no expectation that you share what you're about to write.

37:51 Uh, you only share what you are happy to and feel comfortable sharing, okay? but in the privacy of your own notebook and your own thoughts, take this opportunity just to see where your mind goes with this next question, which is very simply here we go.

38:08 What have been some of the key experiences of your life? Okay. What have been some of the key experiences of your life.

38:21 I'm going to turn the sound down on my on my, on my computer here so I don't disturb you.

38:29 But yeah, that's, that's the question I'm going to be looking at over these next 15 minutes. And I invite you to jot down your answers to this question.

38:39 Just two, three more minutes on this.

49:49 Okay, I'm going to draw this first video to a close here, but if you want to take more time jotting down what have been some of the, uhm.

52:23 key experiences of your life. Uhm, one of the things that struck me as I've been jotting things down doing this myself is how that, yes, there have been specific key experiences, but there are experiences also which have been repeated many times.

52:38 Uhm that have sort of amalgamated into an experience that sort of weaves itself over time. Over, over, over years uhm, when we meet, I might talk about that, or maybe that already makes sense to you from what you've been sort of exploring in your own kind of consideration of what have

53:00 been some of the key experiences of your life. Okay, so with this I'm going to close video one of this, the final session of the Exploring Theology course, session, session.

53:12 Session six, yes, Mr. Bond and it's sorry, my mind's going off in all sorts of other uhm, directions now because of, because of that Michael Caine and XYZ and too many impersonations which I do very badly and are not in keeping with this video.

53:31 So, Yeah, let's draw this to a close. If you want to take more time thinking this through, then please do.

53:39 Obviously, you can take as long as you like, but, you know, you've probably just got enough down on paper now then to work with.

53:44 And then uh, have a break, have a pause, move around, all that kind of thing. Don't necessarily go straight into the next uh, video.

53:53 But when you're ready I'll see you in video two of session six. How do we live out our lives?

54:00 Our everyday faith. See you shortly. Bye now.