

Exploring Theology Session 2 – Video 1 Transcript

00:01 everybody, welcome. This is session two of the Exploring Theology course. Hopefully by now you will have met for your first session, be it in person or online, and, um, we're going to dive into session two.

00:15 So, um, let me give you a quick, um, outline of what we're going to cover in this, uh, session together.

00:24 for this session, which is entitled, Who Are We, we're going to begin by having a recap of session one. Which, if the timing has worked, will just be just before you get these materials for session two.

00:37 So it'll be fresh in your mind, but I'll give you a recap anyway. Just to make sure we're all on the same page.

00:43 And then after a recap of session one, where the question was, who is God, we're then going to have an opening prayer, two more definitions of theology, and then we're going to read some scripture together, then we're going to look at some questions and reflect on the question, who are we, which is,

01:02 as I say, the focus of session two. And And then I'm going to summarize what the ground we've covered over the course of session two, and then we'll have a closing prayer at the end.

01:15 So format for this evening, for this session. So that's the format for this session. Okay, so let's turn to the recap from session one.

01:23 We started off by looking at some definitions of theology. If you recall, there were the definitions of definitions by McGrath and Beth Felker-Jones, Alistair McGrath and Beth Felker-Jones.

01:32 We then, we explored what came to mind when we thought about who is God, and we looked at some images, and we thought about different ways our, uhm, what comes to mind may have changed over the course of our lives, and some of this you will have discussed in your groups, uhm, when we met together.

01:52 Uhm, we also explored what shaped our answers, uhm, both just in terms of, uh, general everyday kind of things, but then we started to think about it more, uhm, specifically in terms of things like scripture, tradition, reason, and we also thought about experience and worship.

02:10 Then we talked about how do we know someone's identity, because the question here is who is God? Not what is God, but who is God?

02:18 So we thought about questions to do with identity and how we work out, uh, somebody's, um, identity, how we weave those various elements of someone's identity together.

02:28 Then we talked about that in terms of story and we were exploring what God's story, uhm, different ways of telling God's story.

02:37 And then we tried to boil it down to God's story in a sentence. And if you recall, there was that, uhm, one sentence, uh, encapsulation by Robert Jensen that we used.

02:48 And, uhm, there we go. So that was, uhm, what we did, uh, last time. And that was the basis of our discussions when we met together.

02:57 So now, for session two, let's begin with an opening prayer. So this is one of the collects that we have, uhm, that we use, uhm, from Common Worship and goes back to, uh, uh, the Book of Common Prayer.

03:16 And, uhm, it also, uhm, parts of it, especially at the beginning, they go back to St. Augustine. So, let's pray.

03:28 Almighty God, You have made us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in You. Pour Your love into our hearts and draw us to Yourself, and so bring us at last to Your heavenly city, where we shall see You face to face.

03:52 We pray this through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who is alive and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

04:06 let's turn to two more definitions of theology.

04:13 the first one is from Catherine Sonderegga, uhm, she's a North American, uhm, uh, theologian and, uh, she's writing at the moment and, uhm, so this is a quote from her.

04:26 There really is no more beautiful thought in all reality than the thought of God. I believe that theology is ultimately just that, thinking the thought of God and worshipping the reality who is God.

04:52 So that's from Catherine Sonderegga, and then we have this other sort of definition, uhm, so this is, uhm, Evagrius of Pontus, Ponticus is Evagrius, this goes way back, it was very early, one of the early sort of church father theologian types.

05:10 And, uh, so, if you are a theologian, you truly pray. If you truly pray, you are a theologian. So with both of these, let me go back to the, uh, Sondregga thing.

05:25 Uhm, with both of these, both with Sondregga and with Evagrius, separated by thousands of years, they're both latching on to this one key thing in terms of there's a delight in God, thinking the thought of God, but worshipping and worshipping rather, the reality who is God, this key aspect of worship,

05:47 that theology is an act of worship. Uhm, and, uhm, and, uhm, Evagrius saying, you're a theologian, if you're a theologian, you truly pray.

05:59 If you truly pray, you're a theologian. Again, prayer, worship being core to what it is to be, ah, to do theology.

06:08 Uhm, theology sometimes can be can get this kind of, ah, you can have, you might have had the impression before beginning the course, uhm, that theology is something that's got, ah, often that sort of academia in the hollows, it's very abstract, it's very, so on and so forth.

06:23 But no, it's, it's an act of worship. Our theological reflections, our theological thinking, our, that we do with our heart, mind, body, and soul, it's an act of worship.

06:36 And so worship and prayer are essential, uhm, to our, uhm, to our endeavours, our theological endeavours, as I say, it's, one of the aims of what we're doing here together is learning not only how to think theologically, but also how to live theologically.

06:54 And the link between those, as it were, is worship, where worship and prayer. Okay, let's turn to, uhm, on this, uhm, uh, with this theme of prayer and worship, let's, let's turn now to reading some scriptures together.

07:12 And I want, uhm, to start each of our sessions, and we'll do this for each of the online sessions now, for the rest of the course.

07:20 As part of the session, we'll start with, uhm, what's called Lectio Divina. Now, this is a, uh, a way of reading a short passage, passage of scripture, uhm, which is prayerful. Uhm, it's an, again, it's an act of worship.

07:35 We're reading the scriptures in order, with the purpose, with the desire and the hope of encountering God, and, uh, in, in our, in our reading.

07:44 And it, there, for those of you who aren't familiar, uhm, it falls into four. We read a text, uhm, a passage of scripture four times.

07:53 First of all, we read it, that's called the Lectio bit. Uhm, we just read it through, and then we pause.

08:00 And then we read it again, and this is our, when we're reading, we're meditating on the text, we're chewing it and as we do these first two steps, what we're, what we're especially alert for is when there's something in the text, something in the passage of scripture, that goes like, hello, look at me

08:26 , notice me, as it, almost as if it's nodding to us, or if you think about walking along, suddenly you, there's a bump in the pavement, you go, oh, what was that, what was that?

08:35 There's a bump in the pavement there, uhm, so, you're, you're, you're waiting for that, uhm, to happen, and that's understood within the tradition that this is the Holy Spirit drawing your attention to this specific aspect of, uhm, the passage, and then by way of response we read the passage again, slowly

08:56 , and, uhm, as we do, we pray. Uhm, whichever aspects of the text that are jumping out at us or prompting us to pray, we then pray.

09:06 And then finally, we read it a fourth time, again, slowly, and this is our time to contemplate, and by that we mean this engagement with the text, which is where we are truly encountering God, in and through, and through the words of scripture, with a view, then, not that that's an end in itself, but

09:28 that it then sends our heart out, uhm, for how we can live our calling in response to God, to the God that we have encountered in what we've read.

09:41 So, in the rest of our lives. So, uhm, we'll come back to this, uhm, as I say, we'll start each of the sections with a, a time of Lectio Divina.

09:50 So, uhm, we're gonna do that now, and the way I'm gonna, we're gonna do it is I'm gonna read, uhm, the passage, and then there'll be a pause for about three minutes or so, and then, uhm, we'll turn to the meditate, uhm, stage, and then to the pray, uhm, stage, and then to the contemplate stage, and after

10:11 each time, I'll leave about three or so minutes for us just to rest with the, uhm, passage, and, uhm, if you've never done this before, uhm, see how it goes, it will become more familiar as we come back to it, uhm, and we'll do a different passage of Scripture each time, so it's not the same, it's not

10:27 gonna be the same each, each, each session. So here we go, so, uhm, here comes the passage, there we go, so this is from Genesis chapter one, Bye.

10:35 Verses twenty-six to twenty-seven, so this is the Lectio, this is the read, uhm, uh, first time round reading of it, okay, Then God said, let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness.

10:59 And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the So God created humankind in his image.

11:23 In the image of God, he created them. Male and female, he created them. Okay, I'm gonna read it again.

14:17 So this is now the meditate stage. Then God said, Let us make humankind in our image according to our likeness.

14:36 And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

15:00 So God created humankind in his image. In the image of God, he created them.

15:13 Male and female, he created them. See what jumps out at you.

15:28 We're going to turn this is the opportunity to respond to the passage, uhm, and to respond in prayer.

19:02 So please take this opportunity to pray as you feel prompted from your reading. Then God said, Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth

19:41 , and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth. So God created humankind kind in his image. In the image of God, he created them, male and female.

20:02 He created And now we're going to turn to our fourth and final reading of this passage, which is the Contemplate, uhm, reading.

23:08 So I'll read it once again. I'm going to read it more slowly this time. and I'll allow the spirit to encounter us through this reading.

23:28 Then God said, Let us make humankind in our image according to the likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea.

24:08 and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

24:44 So, God created humankind in his image, in the image of God.

25:15 He created them, male and female.

25:29 He created them.

28:45 so, having prayed, having read some scripture, let's continue. We're going to be looking, in this session, at the question, who are we?

28:56 And so, uhm, the question is who are we, but I'd like to begin by approaching it through, uhm, more focusing on the question, who are we as individuals, and then circle back to the question about who are we.

29:20 So, if you, uh, well, uhm, think back to the exercise as I think we did last time. Uhm, different ways of identifying ourselves, uhm, uh, at a sort of a trivial level, I could say that, ah, okay, so, uhm, I'm six foot tall, and I like, uhm, fruitcake, uhm, Genoa cake specifically, uhm, okay, so, little

29:50 things like that, uhm, in a funny way, I don't identify as, uhm, uhm, so, let's start by thinking about some of the things that identify us, and, as last time, what I'm going to do is, if you've got your notebooks there, just open up, session two, Who Are We?, and, uhm, just jot down a few of the things

30:08 that identify you, just see where your mind goes to begin with, and then I'm going to ask a sequence of questions every three minutes or so, just to sort of narrow it down a little bit, and I'm going to ask you a more, sort of, as it were, focused questions, which will help, uhm, guide, uhm, our reflections

30:23 , I hope, so, here we go, uhm, let's begin by thinking about, just in general, just, okay, so, what would identify you, type of thing, and then, uhm, we'll take it from there.

30:37 we're going to, as I say, we're going to start with this, just drop a list of things that identify You don't have to go with your particular, the particular type of cake you like.

30:47 That might be sending you off on the wrong track. But you know, it's whatever comes to mind. Just, just see where, see where you go with this.

30:54 And in about, I don't know, about three minutes or something like that, actually, about five minutes, I'm going to then ask some more precise questions.

31:06 There we go. Over to you. There we go. I wonder how you got on with that.

36:54 I've been writing up my list in my notebook. I'm going to bring it to the session that we're going to have for this.

37:00 And, uh, and, uh, as we did with the last session, if you could bring along what you've been jotting down.

37:06 Uhm, as we go through the questions, there'll be things which you don't have to share, so on and so forth.

37:10 Uhm, but, uhm, as always, you only share what you're happy to share, type of thing. But it's good if we can bring what we've been working on, uhm, to the sessions when we meet.

37:20 Okay, so, that was just like, uh, uh, eh, it was a list of just like, what are the things that come up to mind that identify you?

37:27 And, as I say, I've, I've got things about where I live, my age, my height, uhm, uhm, x, y, and z, all sorts of just, you know, bits and bobs like that.

37:37 Uhm, now, next question is, I'd just like you to think about this, uhm, three things that you would use to identify yourself legally.

37:48 I'll just take a couple of minutes for this because it shouldn't, you know, be too, uhm, stretching depending on your age, it might be a little bit more complicated, uhm, but yeah, three things that you would use to identify yourself legally.

38:00 Actually, I don't think we probably need three minutes, do we, for that?

38:46 So, uhm, let's move on. So, hopefully you've jotted down three things that you would use to identify yourself legally. Uhm, let's go to the next one.

38:57 Three things that your work colleagues, or your non neighbours, will know about you. Three things that your work colleagues, or your neighbours will know about you.

39:10 Just jot down, uhm, three things that come to mind. You might be thinking that, uhm, that I've shifted things slightly, uhm, because we've gone from talking about things that identify you to things that will know about you.

40:31 But those things that your, uh, your work colleagues or your neighbours will know about you are the things that they would, uhm, use to identify you.

40:38 If they said, you know, if, if my neighbour would say, who's Will? Oh, Will is blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

40:45 And that blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, the one who, or whatever it might be that they say, the thing that they know about me is what they're using in order to identify me.

40:54 Hence the slight change in wording. So, uhm, three things. Just take a couple of minutes, a minute more or so for the three things that your work colleagues or your neighbours will know about you.

41:04 Sorry, I'm getting involved in writing down my own list and I'm like, hmm, yes, blah, blah, And forgetting actually that I'm recording this, so.

42:09 There we go. Anyway, um, next one. Okay, so next one to think about. Is three things your good friends will know about you.

42:20 Okay? Three things about you that your good friends will know about you. Draw, as it were, the circle in, more tightly now, and talk about three things that only those most close to you will know about you.

44:32 Three things that only those who are most close to you will know will know about you. And then, finally, three things that only God will know about you.

46:12 Needless to say, you do not have to share these with others when we meet for our session for this, but please take time to think through what may be three things that only God will know about you.

49:19 there we go, that's the, uhm, drawing that exercise to a close. It will be interesting to see when we come together and we discuss this, how you found that progression

from, uhm, just the initial kind of thing of like, okay, so what are some of the things that would identify me?

49:34 And then as you drew the circle in more tightly, uhm, you know, what were your neighbours, what were your work colleagues, what are the things that they would identify you by?

49:42 And then as you get closer and closer and closer, there's, you know, those who, those who loved you dearly, those who were closest to you, and then finally to God. And what are those different things and how they would, how they relate to one another, and, and, and, and so on.

50:02 So that would be, that would be very interesting. And, and, and those aspects of who you are. Uhm, what are, what are they key, what are the key things for who you are when it comes to your neighbors, your work colleagues, when it comes to, you know, those who, your, your good friends, those who, and

50:15 those who love you dearly, and, and, and then to God, how, how you, how, how you, how I, how we think of that.

50:27 And it would be very interesting to explore that. And the kind of things that they and then how we begin to sort of make sense of those different things, and those different aspects of who we are, the different aspects of our identities.

50:38 Uhm, so, I think this is about 45 minutes or something like that, so I'm going to draw the video, this first session, uh, the, the, the, this second, the first video for this second session, I'm going to draw this to a close now.

50:51 And so, just have a pause, stretch through. Stretch your legs, as I said last time, there's no need to watch these back to back in many ways, I would prefer you to space out watching these videos so you've got time to think about some of these ideas and let them settle and, or, settle, percolate, however

51:08 , you know, whatever, remember, I talked about, uhm, slow cooker versus microwave last time, that kind of thing. And, uhm, and then next time we're going to, in the next video, we're going to, and sort of, uh, explore, uhm, how we start to give shape to these, uhm, these different aspects of our identity

51:28 in ways that we, we did touch on last time, but then, with regards to ourselves, so there's an exercise that we're going to do in the next video, but for now, that draws this first video to a close, so go and stretch your legs, have some cake, do whatever it is that's going to help, just, go out and

51:42 enjoy. Enjoy the day, type of thing, and, uhm, I'll see you very shortly, okay, bye now.