

# **JUST BECAUSE IT'S SIMPLE - DOESN'T MEAN IT'S EASY: CHRISTIAN HOPE AND FAITHFULNESS**

ST. MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH- OCT 23, 2022  
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# WHAT IS REQUIRED TO BE GROUNDED IN CHRISTIAN HOPE?

- Willingness to make audacious claims
- Alice laughed. 'There's no use trying,' she said. 'One can't believe impossible things.'

I daresay you haven't had much practice,' said the Queen. 'When I was your age, I always did it for half-an-hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast.'

- Scripture summons us to glad, obedient risk



# ASKING AND IMAGINING

- “Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:20-21





# FAITH

- “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1
- Reliance and trust in a future giving God versus certitude





# WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES BEING A CHRISTIAN MAKE?

- Class will use "A Gospel of Hope" by Walter Bruggeman as a framework
- Themes today will include:
  - Abundance and Generosity
  - Alternative world view of faith
  - Anxiety and Freedom



# ABUNDANCE AND GENEROSITY

- Baptized people have signed on for a life of abundance
- Jesus took, blessed, broke, and gave
- If our lives are oriented in this way, we reject scarcity and embrace abundance





# WHAT DOES A LIFE OF GENEROSITY LOOK LIKE?

- Trust in God's generosity that is so rich we don't need to be greedy because there is always more coming.
- We don't have to be self-sufficient because nothing is gained from that perspective.





# WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE FORGET ABUNDANCE?

- We lose wonder.
- We become driven by scarcity of food, of love, of life.
- We have to start looking out for ourselves and forget others.





# SCARCITY UNDERMINES AN ABILITY TO TRUST ABUNDANCE

- When we start fear we don't have enough, we are not fully trusting in God.
- What if our exhaustion is rooted in anxiety that mistrusts God's provision and so we are unwilling to have sabbath?
- We spend ourselves in the futility of acting as if we are God.



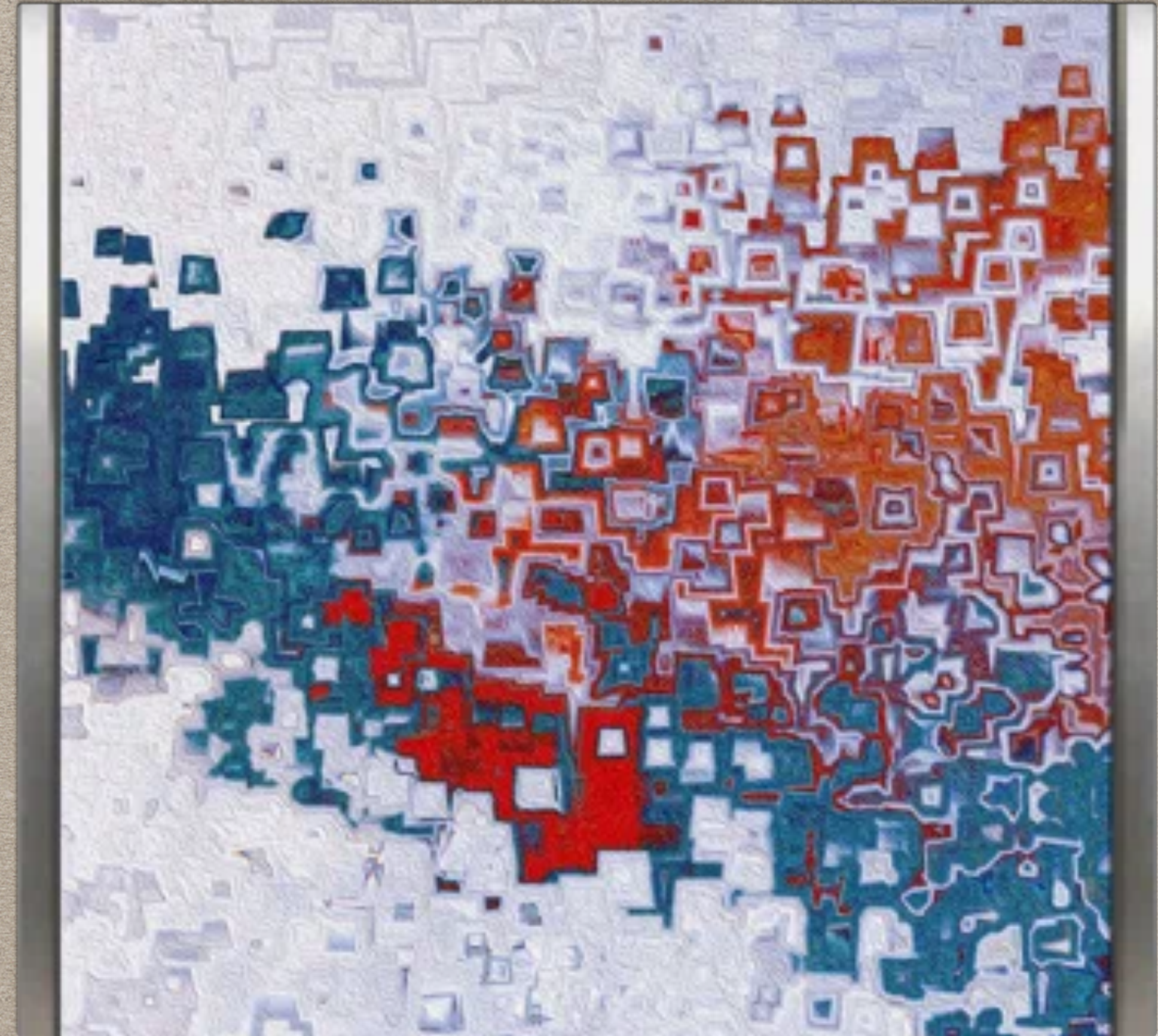


- Believe the myth of self-sufficiency, which cuts us off from God's generosity and abundance
- We become isolated and not part of community
- We start to believe that what we have is ours, not gifts we have received or miracles to which we need to respond.
- God's generosity invites our own generosity.



# REMEMBERING IS KEY SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

- "When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, Do not say to yourself, 'My power and the might of my own hand have gained me this wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today."
- Deuteronomy 8:12-14, 17-18





# WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE WORLD OF FAITH?

- Biblical faith cannot be understood solely through analytical, scientific or objective sense of life.
- Scripture contains explosive moments when the holiness of God touches down and changes everything.
- These moments are often full of threat and risk when our worlds are shattered and everything changes.



# WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY LIVES IN TENSION

- Acknowledge the reality of the world we are experiencing
- Challenge the dominant view of what that world is and means
- God is doing a new thing, do we notice?





- Fearfulness when things are “falling away”
- Alternative is an act of imagination that is seeded by memory
- Imagination in the community of faith is to receive, entertain, and host images of reality that are outside the given.
- Work of the church is to battle the world’s definition of what is believable



# THE MESSAGE OF THE CROSS

- The cross is not a one-time event
- Meant to be a pattern of living
- Involves risk and self-giving
- We have been summoned into a different community that refuses to conform to the powers of the world and yet doesn't lose hope.





# ANXIETY AND FREEDOM

- Being unafraid is part of the vocation of being a person of faith
- Spirit visits our lives with the freedom of God.
- Community gives us the opportunity to practice generosity and love for one another.



# ANXIETY ROBBS US OF FULLNESS OF LIFE

- We are fatigued from getting through the day that we do not have energy left for singing and dancing
- We are double minded
- We are gripped by fear at least some of the time
- Burdened by the present so that it feels all encompassing



# JESUS OFFERS A DIFFERENT MODEL

- Do not fear, the world is trustworthy
- Become a servant
- Help to reveal the cost of fear and destructiveness



- Exhaustion comes from living in a state of alienation from our true selves.
- When we are fearful we are not free, because our energy is directed towards protection of self.
- As baptized people we are called to work to make the world whole.



