

What Good is God when we feel unworthy of God's Grace? Redeemer Lent 2011 Yancey, session 3

Unworthy: all of us, and in good company: Moses, David, Paul were all murderers! Somewhat interesting title this week, as Grace means unmerited, undeserved....by one who by definition is unworthy

All sorts of things stand as obstacles to a life of embracing and living in the freedom of God's grace, but sexuality can be one of the biggest obstacles of all.

- Whose idea was sexuality? God created it! (like everything else, it was good)
- One flesh –our intimacies are so intertwined that we become quite vulnerable to one another—this is where evil takes hold as a perversion (turning in on self and exploiting others' humanity, dignity, and value in the process) One flesh= committed long-term to the well-being of the other (Genesis 2:24, Mk. 10:8)
- Because sexuality holds so much mystery and power, vulnerability and intimacy for us, our "curved in on ourselves" sinfulness is easily acted out in our exploitation of others
- Genesis genealogies and Jeremiah 1 "Know" deep intimacy of the TOTAL person, sexuality is one critical window to such intimacy

Yancey's "What's so Amazing about Grace" quote: "Church? Why would I go to church? I feel badly enough already. They would just make me feel worse!"

Jesus intentionally ate with prostitutes and sinners. Why? See Yancey (What Good is God?) regarding prostitutes being, then and now, the "lowest of the low." (note that this was very much a patriarchal society)

Tamar and Rahab in the Matthew genealogy of Jesus (prostitutes)

ELCA Statement on Commercial Sexual Exploitation (handout, from 2001 but affirmed strongly in 2009 statement)

2009 ELCA Sexuality Statement – the law of love as our gauge for all our actions and policies, and TRUST is key as well. See <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/JTF-Human-Sexuality.aspx> for the whole statement. See the following excerpt:

The complexity of human sexuality

God created human beings to be in relationship with each other and continually blesses us with diverse powers, which we use in living out those relationships. These include powers for action, reasoning, imagination, and creativity.

Sexuality especially involves the powers or capacities to form deep and lasting bonds, to give and receive pleasure, and to conceive and bear children. Sexuality can be integral to the desire to commit oneself to life with another, to touch and be touched, and to love and be loved. Such powers are complex and ambiguous. They can be used well or badly. They can bring astonishing joy and delight. Such powers can serve God and serve the neighbor. They also can hurt self or hurt the neighbor. Sexuality finds expression at the extreme ends of human experience: in love, care, and security, or lust, cold indifference, and exploitation.