

Mars Hill Pastor's Conference – Session 1 – Rob Bell

Monday, January 22, 2007 9:00 am

- Elder spoke, introduced Bell
 - Congregation nominates elders
- Colossians 2 - Thankful
 - Vs 6
 - “Be thankful”
 - Chapter 3
 - “Thankful”
 - “Be watchful and thankful”
 - Eu – well, good
 - Charizomai – to grant, give
 - Charis – grace, gift
 - Eucharist
 - Ritual involving the body and blood of Christ that we do at the center of our faith – to be thankful has its roots in this word. God has given us a gift of life in Jesus, and in our deep debt of gratitude we take part in the “eucharist” or us giving thanks for the good gift. Then we in turn go to the world and give ourselves to the world, we imitate Jesus.
 - Jesus’ Death – body broken, blood poured out (the eucharist)
 - Sometimes, driving home, he’s tired – but it’s a tired in his bones
 - This is because you are a eucharist – your body is to be broken and blood spilled out to be a living eucharist for the world – that’s why it can be so exhausting
 - Only works when there are people willing to break themselves open and pour themselves out
 - There is a cost – someone must be broken for someone else to be fed
 - “oh that fed me” “oh that gave me” – every time they say that it came from somewhere (it came from you!)
 - What does it mean for a church to be a eucharist for the world? Community?
- 2 Corinthians 4 v 7
 - “treasure in jars of clay....hard pressed but not crushed....we always carry around in our body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body...for we who

are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake...so that life may also be revealed in our mortal bodies" (living eucharist)

- Continuous process, always happening
- The life of Christ is somehow integral with the death – they are connected – you can't have the life without the death of someone
- V 12 "so that death is at work in us but life is at work in you"
- 1 Corinthians 11
 - V 23 "for I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you...." Paul is quoting this in the context of a church (he quotes the last supper) When we read this we read it literally, correctly = ritual. Communion Sunday. Maybe this is instead what we should do. Give your life, allow yourselves to be a living eucharist. Perhaps Jesus is an example of a living eucharist. Be a eucharist for the world.
- Genesis 12
 - "a community of people who would be a gift to the world with no strings attached with no agenda, people who would love, period"
 - V. "Go from your country....I will make you a nation....bless you....you will be a blessing....all people on earth will be blessed through you"
 - "The only organization that exists for the benefit of its non-members."
 - This is why something seems wrong when a church has turned in on itself. We have a very fine tuned radar regarding this.
 - If our church was taken away from our city/town/area, who would protest?
 - Lead pastor recently met with mayor of Grand Rapids – "what are the greatest needs of the city?" The mayor had a tear – never heard a church with that approach
 - What does your town need? Where are the greatest needs?
 - This gift will cost – it is a eucharist
 - Not love comma – love period
 - Who is my Herm? Who is most hostile? Most skeptical? What would a eucharist look like for them? What would an agenda free, un conditional loving eucharist look like for them? What would it take? Names are helpful. Give names.
- 1 Corinthians 9

- Very outside triumphal thinking, hard to catch the subtlety
- World ruled by Caesars, military might
- V 19 "though I am free and I belong to no one I have made myself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible....I become like a Jew.....become under the law though I myself am not under the law..."
 - Contrast between Jews and Gentiles
- V 22 "to the weak I become the weak to win the weak I have become all things to all people..."
 - Parallelisms – to give the opposite or show something else – HE LEFT OUT STRONG – he doesn't become strong to win the strong!
 - I didn't pretend like I had it all together, and I didn't use power and coercion
 - The power of the eucharist is in its weakness – not about how bigger, stronger, faster you are. Not about the size of your steeple.
 - "It's all relative to the size of your steeple"
 - AA meetings are churches – there is no rubbish, people coming because of a shared awareness of the end of their rope – there is a power there that cannot be explained (weakness is the strength)
 - Accomplisher's Anonymous?
 - The eucharist is about the path of dissent – the death of your ego
 - Humanity over perfection
 - When it becomes about perfection something dangerous happens
 - "All we have to give you is ourselves" Agenda free. No other organization in the world can say that.
- Ephesians 2
 - In Ephesus = masters and slaves both becoming Christians, awkward because it transcends standard divisions within culture – master and servant, Jew and Gentiles all show up in the same place? A statue maker? They all end up in the church basement to appolo
 - V. 11 – "formerly you were born as the uncircumcised....at that time you were excluded....now you who were once far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ...his purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them on the cross..."
 - There actually was a wall the Gentiles couldn't cross

- The Eucharist is about the new humanity
 - Culture divides us in thousands of different ways – church is this place where people who have nothing in common have something in common. The only thing these people can have in common is Jesus.
 - War protestors and mothers of soldiers in Iraq – can they take communion together? Or will we be divided like culture?
 - Unity in Christ trumps all the ways we've cooked up to divide ourselves
 - Leo – 91, Marge passed at 88 = celebrated 70th wedding anniversary; her obituary said she loved the drums at Mars Hill! High school and college students gave the couple a standing ovation for their 70th anniversary
 - You lose something when the bandwidth is limited to what bell calls "the goatee and earring" group. Target marketed is wrong. Demographic people ask what their target audience is and they're like "people", "Sinners". There is something larger about our role in a larger sense.
 - When "they" and "them" have a face everything changes. When you know someone on welfare or poor, everything about them makes sense. Roughly 2000 verses in the bible.
 - Rejecting the cult of cool
 - What's cool is 91 and 88 year olds being married for 70 years. The Mohawk next to the polyester suit. The cult of cool is dangerous. What's cool is when they find something that transcends their own petty differences.
 - The beautiful thing about suffering – cancer – it doesn't matter if you have money or not, there is a bond there – fellow sufferers
- 2 Corinthians 11
 - V 28 "besides everything else I face daily my concern for the churches....who is not lead into sin that I don't feel the burn...."

- In the new humanity you start caring about things you didn't otherwise care about
- All of a sudden you experience new things when driving down the highway. Now all of a sudden things bother you.

■ Acts 8

- First couple chapters in acts
- V. 9 "simon had practiced sorcery....bosted as someone great....all people gave him attention....rightly called the great power of god!....followed him....believe phillip and were baptized, simon even.....astonished by great signs and miracles...."
- V. 18 "when simon saw the spirit was given by laying on of hands.....simon offered money for the same gift....peter answered may you money perish with you because you...."

• The Eucharist is not a product.

- What's it cost to get in on that action? The Eucharist can not be commodified. You have to wrestle with and discover what it looks like for there to be a Eucharist in your area. You already intuitively know.
- Desperatepreacher.com is not the answer for you church
- How are we a Eucharist for these people, in this place, at this time? What does it mean in our context?
- This is why church plants can so desperately struggle. What worked there isn't here!
- Many places ask "What is working" Which means "what is big" which doesn't mean good! Means more problems
- Speaking for John Maxwell
 - Be very careful about bigger and better, more headaches
- There is this illusion that if something is big you must copy it, but it's taking the easy way out.
- What's true period? What are the deep deep streams that all of us ought to be swimming in? But how you figure out how your stream flows in your community is the hard work that you have to do.
- It will be shrill, lacking a bass note, no soul, it will be shallow. When people buy and sell it gets very very dangerous. It looks like Simon who wanted to buy and sell the gift of the holy spirit! The Eucharist can

not be commodified. Do the hard work and ask the hard questions – if no one is broken open no one will be healed.

▪ Hebrews 12

- V. 18 “you have not come to a mountain (Sinai) that can be touched and is burning of fire...to a trumpet blast....because they could not bear....the site was so terrifying....but you have come to mount zion.....you have come to thousands upon thousands in....you have come to God....and to the sprinkled blood....better than that of Abel”
- We're inviting you to something as old as the world. Please don't give me something that I'll have to change in six months.
- The magnetic draw of the tribe – an ancient desire to be a part of a tribe, part of a people – people are hard wired to be a part of something old and tribal and ancient – so deep within us we can't even put language to it, we just know it
 - Gangs have this element
- The Eucharist is ultimately a mystery...
 - Try marketing stories! There is a profound mystery to what it means to be a church.
 - Manage Mystical – These two dimensions which are always in conflict in a church
 - Keeping the lights on, training, diapers, making sure there are outlets for amps, curriculum spell checked, tax free status, etc....but also a deeply mystical organization....it seems to bounce back and forth, pendulum swings, it's a continuum...
 - Often church history is a pendulum back and forth – be mature enough to realize this
 - The problem is when the church tries to play by the same rules as everyone else. We don't have to. All we have to give you is ourselves.
 - There are at least two absolutes about the Eucharist:
 - Who is Christ to you? Your own journey is an absolute
 - The church is a Eucharist because you and I are a Eucharist
 - A paycheck can really mess things up.
 - All of a sudden you don't know what's you and what's the job.

What's your heart or obligation?
Job descriptions can really mess things up. Reading the bible can really be confusing. When you're reading for devotions it becomes working.

- If it doesn't start in you it won't work
- *Christ in us. Christ through us. What you need is the freedom to take care of yourself. If you need a day to walk in the woods, if you find Christ in the woods, you must do what it takes. If you are going through doubt, then really doubt. Go the whole way, give yourself to it, because if you are going through a theological crisis go through it – because you set it aside at your own peril; it's your Eucharist which kick starts the whole thing.*
- *The stage can really mess things up. Sometimes the most powerful message is "me too". If you have it all together you have less and less to share with me.*
- *Pastors who have compartmentalized where the congregation is and where their heart is – split.*
- 2 Absolutes:
 - Your own journey, whatever it looks like
 - *The reason you like the psalmist is he is writing from where he actually is*
 - *What feeds your soul? Do you have rhythms and patterns that feed your soul? He has met pastors who don't take their vacation time – what are you doing? Give it to someone smart. "I haven't had time for a Sabbath" – even God takes a Sabbath!*
- Luke 5
 - V16 *"but Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed"*
 - If there is a eucharist and the body is broken, blood spilled, then there has to be time where the body is put back together and the blood poured back in
 - An absolute: letting the body be put back together and the blood be poured back in

- The question is what is sustainable? Not how much you can get done or taken care of.
- There is a supernatural weight to church leadership – your friends who sell insurance don't understand when you talk about a vacation. Your work has an extra gauge on your dashboard. It is the weight of Eucharist. You carry a certain weight of the bride of Jesus. Unless you've carried it you don't understand.
- There is a loneliness to leadership that can't be explained. Unless people have been there they don't understand it.
- Sometimes it's "I don't have the passion I used to", maybe you stop taking risks, it manifests in all sorts of ways – wears you down
- Tremendous transfer of spiritual energy – sometimes EGR (extra grace required) are pulling, you can actually see it coming from you "There goes one more round of golf"

10 MINUTE BREAK

- Questions – Submitted by visitors
 - **What if the pastor you work with might be working for the other side?**
 - Resist and he will flee.
 - **How do we stay away from the breakdowns that seem to accompany church leadership? (Haggard, etc.)**
 - Deeply connected to questions of rhythms, patterns, feeding the soul, etc.
 - The issue of sustainable
 - You can do anything for six months, almost anything for a year, some people can go years, but the scripture don't give short bursts as the measure of maturity. Very few pastors have been trained to think in the form of a marathon – most think of production and not discipleship. Production paradigm as opposed to a discipleship understanding, following Jesus. The mainstream church is in danger of gaining the world and losing its soul. How many signed up for a revolution and have ended up running a spiritual business?
 - You are chafing against an entire system that, until you step out of it, sounds normal. The greater the crowds are in Jesus' ministry, you can directly chart the more you have Jesus withdrawing and spending time alone. In several cases "there

were giant crowds" and he withdrew to quiet places. The greater your responsibility is the greater the Eucharist, the greater the need to withdraw. The more we're needed, the more we're at the center and it feels good, the less we withdraw. "I'm needed." Which says more about ego than mission.

- We must embrace our limits to reach our potential. You are only responsible for what God has for you, not saving the world.
- Planned 07, working on 08, what's possible. What's clear, expectations, etc. Identify what you can and can't do.
- Do you want to live from your soul or not? It may cost you reputation, prestige, etc. if you follow Jesus.
- "Don't" let Rob do 8 weeks in a row. Even if he can do it it will be pulling from another source."
- Sabbath is a gift. It isn't a list, legalism just traps you again. Legalistic loses the joy of whatever you simply enjoy doing. What's life giving, what's fun? If you're at the church late at night you will pay somewhere. What's doable, what's not?
 - Example: I will not preach next Sunday because I won't be at my best next Sunday because I'm learning it's not best. I'll need to be put back together."
 - The key to this: you have to do this with spouse and family: but do it with your leadership, those you are open with, make expectations known. Take your calendar and show it to those you report to. Here is what you want me to do, here is what I've been doing. The problem is I'm getting pulled here and here. "Can you please tell me that I can't do x y and z?"
 - Your kids don't care the size of your steeple. Your spouse doesn't care. They want you fully present, rested and healthy. They don't want you giving your best energies to the other bride, the church, and them getting the scraps. There's a connection between the church as a bride and your bride.

- No one would listen to a rabbi who isn't giving to his wife – if his family life wasn't well they wouldn't think his ideas work.
 - You have a pastor's heart: that's what got you into this. You have a heart to be transformed. If you don't learn to control that valve, though, will burn you out and get you out of it. Saying yes to everything will burn you out. If you don't learn how to be like Jesus and say no, I must go to Jerusalem, it will consume you. What is your Jerusalem? What have you already said yes to?
- The stage is lethal. The stage is it's own sort of narcotic. The stage can blatantly become a certain sort of drug. Being needed becomes normal. Real life becomes not as exciting. But the next event is coming. Real life becomes waiting for the next big thing. We live for the next thing. Things like taking out trash, lunches, become the "stuff I do". But this split life is toxic. What has to happen is if you don't find God in the everyday then the stage is going to become hollow and empty.
- You'll never be able to proclaim God in the small places if you can't find them in the small things. We don't live in the mountain, we live in the small places, in the everyday.
 - How can making breakfast become a holy sacred thing?
- When somebody falls, a public moral failure, you and I see the public moral failure on the stage – but the cracks started way back, a time ago – a struggle that they did not have a community that they were free to voice it in. Was never spoken.
- Who do you have that you can tell anything to?
 - The big stuff always starts way way back. Humanity is the goal, not perfection.
- **How do you reconcile the mega church? And become a beacon of truths for others?**
 - Bell has lots of skepticism for mega churches. He has dates. Stories.
 - A megachurch will chew you up and spit you out.

- The only way it works is to live with integrity – if people leave it frees up seats, easier to get out of parking lot (John 6 – like Jesus says “a little too big of a crowd for me” so “eat my body drink my blood”)
- If you've drawn a crowd you can run from it so long – or you can grow up. If the spotlight is going to shine, who am I going to be standing next to. Influence is like currency – how will you spend it?
- “If this is how it's going to be, I'm going to do as much as I can do to manipulate this platform for the oppressed and the poor, and I want to do whatever I can to get your money so I can give it to the people who need it.”
- How does a megachurch have a soul?
 - What does it mean to have integrity? Elders here at Mars have integrity, right on the journey.
- What are my rhythms and patterns? What are the hard days?
- **What are you struggling with right now?**
- **What's with not having a church sign?**
 - You found us. (threw the paper away)
 - It's not a church. It's an old mall. It's just a gathering place. It's not a church. It's a building. We even tell kids, it's not a church, it's an old mall, run! We want to equip you so that you can leave, because the action is not here – the action is out there. Theologically, the understanding is that every Christian has a context already, already has friends, coworkers, neighborhood, etc. they already have a context – the issue is this person, being trained and equipped to have radar for what God is up to in the world they're already in. What happens is the church can send people the message that the real action is in the building – Monday, Wednesday, Sundays, etc. time they didn't spend in the world. So then churches have to have special training sessions to teach people how to be relevant. Sometimes what can happen is the church can actually be at odds with the community, because all the people who would be changing the community are extracted out of the very community they are supposed to be blessing. How do we have church services that end with a giant “Go”!
 - If you can resolve this sermon in an hour and fifteen minutes then this sermon didn't do its job. It should

equip you so that the only way you can resolve the message is to go and work it out. It can't be a self contained message. "Who, this week, are you going to go and bless?" facing outside

Numbers: 2000 + visitors at the conference

Mars Hill Pastor's Conference – Q&A – Rob Bell and Don Golden Monday, January 22, 2007 2:00 pm

- **How can you help us with steeple envy?**
 - The person who teaches and the person who leads are usually different people – it may be best to separate those roles
- Dan brought ignorance: what is a church? First members meeting was the one that he led at Mars. He recommends not knowing anything about the church.
- Who is Jesus among you? Why did he come to town? How are you going to organize yourself in response? What does it mean to have Jesus today in this world?
- **I'm a pastor in an affluent community. We know no poor or homeless personally. How do we connect and serve besides sending checks?**
 - First, shake in your boots. Recognize that God came for the weak and if you don't have the names of poor people, if you don't know people who need you or could benefit from you, how could you know Jesus? You need to get saved by finding people that you can help.
 - What would it be like if a church in America, with all of its resources, what if we viewed our role and responsibility the same way African churches do? What if our life became the church too?
 - Recognize and then go find Christ where he is always found, among the weak.
- **I am a Christian education director at a church, in seminary, if I survive, I hope to be a pastor. However my pastor has taken it upon himself to mentor me, says to keep my opinions quiet and "survive the system". I don't believe this is worth my time or the kingdom's, what should I do? What do you do if your church represents the exact antithesis of what we're talking about today? When is it time to stay and push reluctant Christians and when is it time to leave? Value of staying at a church and working to fix it from the inside out?**
 - You can't take people where they don't want to go. Not everybody is restless. For some people it works how it is. When we try and drag them where they don't want to go we end up exerting lots of energy to bring them where they have no desire to go.
 - They aren't ready. The old thing still works for them.

- Rob believes it's one of the ways to respect people to let them have their desires.
- Seeker insensitive!
- First and foremost, how can we all be unified. But some people, in response to the stirring they have in them, have to be set free to explore.
- Whatever you're interested in doing, start it in your living room. If you can't get something started in your living room, even just a book group, I hope you don't get a building.
- Suggests experiencing bonding and community-building groups for leadership before even starting a church. Again, start in your living room.
- "I would wonder if your pastor's heart tells you that there's more ministry to be done at the local bar than at your church. Maybe you need to go do that. It would be beautiful to have a pastor behind every bar."
- "If you need to leave the church to find your faith then do it. Working out your salvation is more important than working out a role in church, inc.
- **Structure? Volunteer, leadership? How do you balance mission/free flow of the spirit with the business?**
 - No deacons.
 - Elder Issue
 - Model is absolutely critical – need so that elders aren't in your "business" all the time. They speak through one staff member, Don.
 - Who is Jesus among you? Why did he come to town?
 - Human repositories of this truth. Eventually all work leads its way to a dinner table where (often) that fellowship/leap of faith...these people personify and support their work.
 - "I don't know how you could work in ministry, how I could do my job, if I didn't have a group of elders supporting me. Groan with all of creation (Romans 8) for something that is not there."
 - Structure/Balance
 - Ven Diagram – picture one with three circles
 - Cause – God's emergency response
 - Congregation – it's a relational family
 - Corporation – if you get big enough
 - If you have all corporation and all congregation you have the megachurch. Providing excellence in religious goods and services.

- If you have cause and corporation you have missional corporations.
- If you have all cause and congregation you have Mars Hill.
- Corporate, in a sense, is a good word. (said Rob); corporate is something Mars struggles with
- February 18th – start talking about something that will take Mars higher – “XYZ”
 - “joining the god of the oppressed to make a measurable change in the world”
 - What is the cry of the oppressed? What can we marry ourselves to and organize ourselves around?
 - Helping everybody we reach take the next step in their spiritual journey.
 - Has the opportunity to engage in community with each other.
 - Has the opportunity to serve in the great causes of our day.

Mars Hill Pastor's Conference – Breakout Session 1 – Narrative Theology
and how we read the Bible – Matt Crick

Monday, January 22, 2007 3:00 pm

- Thinking through the scriptures as a story
 - Not a “self help book” or an “owner's manual for life”
 - Dynamic story, living and breathing thing that we are called to engage in and meditate on as an act of worship and not as duty or obligation
 - What god gave us was not a systematic theology but a beautiful living story
 - Those different things are helpful in the different areas of study, but what does it look like to first approach the text as a beautiful story that god has invited us into
 - We need to study it in and out and know it so well that we can know and live faithfully from the story he has written and in the story he continues to write.
- Played clip from beginning of Dead Poet's Society when Robin Williams tells the students to rip out the introduction to the poetry books
 - Words and ideas can change the world
 - We don't read poetry because we're students; we read poetry because we are part of humanity. We read the powerful words and we may contribute a verse. What will our verse be?
- N.T. Wright
 - The Last Word
 - Draws the similarities between scripture and a Shakespearean play
 - What if we didn't have the rest of a 5 act play? We only had the first 4 acts. Would we archive the play? Or would we call together the Shakespearean scholars and they would immerse themselves in the acts and try to finish it.
 - 1. Creation
 - 2. Fall
 - 3. Israel
 - 4. Jesus
 - 5. Church Mission
 - We are given 1-4 and the beginning of act 5. The end of act 5 is the new creation.
 - We are called to immerse ourselves in the first four acts and to know the text well enough to continue the story.

- Talking about bookends – creation and the end
 - One thing the church has done that has hurt us is we often have a theology rooted in the fall – we start in sin, total depravity, we live in a fallen world. At Mars Hill we try our best to center our mission/theology in creation. Over and over again God declared the goodness of creation.
 - Although we know it's not the way it should be, God created the world and everything in it.
 - When we root our theology in creation we have a longing and a hope for a new creation.
 - Rob mentioned the story beginning in a garden and that the new creation (an empty tomb in a garden) takes place in a garden. Mary mistakes Jesus as the gardener – how appropriate.
 - No longer thinking: I can't wait to get out of this horrible world and exist in a heavenly created world – this isn't how we were created. We were created with bodies, we were created for Earth.
 - The nature of the beginning
 - Relationships
 - At its core to be in the image of God is to be in relationships. God is Triune and has always been in relationship with himself.
 - God created us to be in a relationship with:
 - God
 - Others
 - Self
 - Earth / Creation
 - Genesis 1 v. 26
 - In the beginning God gives us an identity (in his image) and a mission (cultivation)
 - God also gives us some commands
 - Most believe there was only one command (what not to do)
 - He actually gave a number of commands:
 - Be fruitful and multiply
 - Fill the earth
 - (Re-read the story of the tower of babel and determine the core problem. Was the problem that they wanted to build a tower toward heaven or that they all wanted to gather in one area? – Crick suggests that the punishment was to separate

them all across the world; also brings up Acts 8)

- Stewards of the Earth – Dominion is not Domination; we're called to lovingly steward all that God has entrusted us with
- Adam = Hebrew word, from Adam-a (earth) We are connected to the earth.
- Sabbath – God rested on the seventh day. Some would say that isn't yet a commandment. But if we are called to be like God we will do the same.
- Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil
 - To be fully human is to act in a way to bring about things as they were meant from the very beginning.
- The Fall
 - Ultimately they didn't believe that the role they were given was the best role they could have – the lie that they believed that we continue to believe today.
- Movement of Sin's Destruction
 - Individuals sinning taking on effect in society

Mars Hill Pastor's Conference – Session 2 – Rob Bell

Monday, January 22, 2007 7:00 pm

- NYU on their application asks: In order for the admission to get to know you, we ask that you answer the following question: Are there any experiences that have helped you develop as a person. Actual essay read. Crazy. He was accepted.
- Two forms of creativity:
 - I'm so outside of the box. (Just another box)
 - Mutation of what came before – usually hyperaware of what they are not
 - There's a box?
 - Doesn't aware there is a box, doesn't fit into anything
 - Truly moving voices were from this group
 - The application isn't just clever it's in a completely different realm
- Where do ideas come from? How do we work with ideas? Instincts? Insights?
- **Sacramental Imagination**
 - Genesis 28
 - "Jacob leaves...when he reached a certain place...laid down on a stone to sleep....in a dream....angels descending and ascending the stairs....the lord said I am the lord....i will give you...you will spread out....all people on earth will be...I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you....when Jacob awoke he thought 'surely the lord is in this place and I was not aware of it'"
 - Surely the Lord is in this place and I was not aware of it!
 - A Jewish writer always writes on numerous levels – he was asleep on a metaphorical level = he was asleep!
 - A very jewish place for saying this isn't a holy ground, not a temple, this is a roadside place in the middle of nowhere
 - Pray that we are aware of the fact that god is always with us, not that God comes to us – He's always with us
 - If we just sing the chorus long enough God may be here, maybe God will show up? No, God is here. True spirituality is waking up to a God who has been here all along. Opening our eyes.
 - Psalm 24

- The earth was drenched in the existence of God
 - “the earth is the lord’s and everything in it....the world and all who live in it...”
 - The earth is drenched in the presence of God
- John 5
 - Talking about the authority of the son, debating the jewish leaders, sabbath
 - V. 17 “my father is always at his work to this very day and I too am working”
 - My father is always at His work to this very day and I too am working.”
 - Our job is to be hyperaware of God at work in every situation
 - “God is at work here somewhere”
 - Move from trying to cram God into our 10 minute blocks of prep time – move to an awareness of God’s existence in our everyday lives
 - Peggy Noonan on si: “It has to do with seeing God in all things, and with being perhaps particularly open to the physical reality of the constant and manifold interventions of a real God in a real universe.”
 - “I know how much you’re to enjoy every sandwich”
 - Dallas Willard CH 3 – A God Drenched World
 - All ground is holy, the difference is my awareness of it
- **The art of tension, elimination, perspective, expulsion, turning the edit button off, risk, and space**
 - The art of tension: Luke 15
 - Three stories, prodigal son
 - Bring a fat calf – feeds like 100 people, a whole village
“I want you to be reconciled to the whole village”
 - If this parable was a movie and you were given the end of the movie – father says “you are always with me” – if it was a movie you would have a long slope....you know that feeling in the movie? If the credits come up right now this is the worst movie I’ve ever seen. You want all the penguins to live!
 - Jesus tells this story and then freezes it.
 - The art of tension – Jesus leaves it unresolved, he lets it hang there
 - Jesus doesn’t end the story with the older brother turning around – life doesn’t work that way! It just gets

frozen, he leaves it unresolved – you don't have to resolve everything you say on the spot. Some truths, stories, biblical passages, issues, you can't solve in a 33 minute homily

- Sometimes we do people a great injustice by resolving things.
- Why does he do this?
 - Invites you to find yourself in it
 - Some people are the younger brother – feel far from home
 - Sitting next to older brother – having trouble celebrating joy in another life
 - Or father
 - At different times we relate to different people in the story
 - He leaves open spaces
 - He trusts that it's been told so well that people can find themselves in it – we do a great disservice to a story or a text when we draw all the lines directly instead of allowing them to find themselves
 - It begins the discussion
 - Who am I in this?
 - Where are you?
 - How does this story speak to you?
 - Who do you need to bless, forgive?
 - Jesus is having the first word in the discussion – beating people to the issue.
 - We're still talking about this 2,000 years later. A great teaching begins the discussion
 - Scripture is living and active
- The art of elimination
 - So much clutter in culture: he works to remove clutter and make it as clean as possible, get that thing down to what it actually is
 - Mark Twain: If I had more time I would have said less
 - How much a rabbi could fit into the fewest possible lines; never how long a speaker could go, but how much they could say in a small amount of time
 - What needs to go?
 - Lust for Life p 90

- "...but Bosbooms values were precise and exquisite and Vincent learned that it is always the simplest piece of art which has practiced the most rigid imlimination and is therefore the most difficult to duplicate."
- The greatest sermons in the world have been stripped down a lot.
- Johnny Cash
 - In the early 90s no record deal, dinner theatres, but Rick Rubin (beastie boys!) found him at a nightclub dinner theatre in Orange County. Rubin sits down with him and said he would like to record him. "What for?" I think if I record you singing the songs that you love. Take your guitar, sit down in front of a guitar and sing me everything you love. Cash did it, one mic, one acoustic. They blew up. All kinds of new fans at 70.
 - Get rid of your band, rid of your fluff.
 - Rick had another thought. Still recording. Maybe play in a club with an audience. Cash played 300 concerts a year. Never alone. Rubin calls club and convinces them to let Cash do a set. Petty is a friend and says he was nervous. Talked before a show and had never done a show alone before. An incredible night, dead silent. People couldn't believe it was Cash in the viper room. Soon all the fear was gone; it was beautiful. One of the greatest things they ever saw.
 - Genius: strip it down. Get it down to its most pure, unadulterated thing.
- Whats the controlling idea here?
- If I only had a few words to capture this...
 - What needs to go?

- What's good but not absolutely necessary?
- What is this in its most raw, pure, unadulterated form?
- If everything doesn't serve that feature then it is gone. Take it out. It has to be tight, tight, tight. It has to flow. What has to go? I know it's nice, but it doesn't fit if it doesn't serve this thing. You know you're cooking on a message when good things don't make it.
- What's the thing that if someone walked out, they would miss it? How tight can you make that?
- If you aren't rock solid on the controlling idea than how can everyone else be?
- Very few people get this.
- What is it that you're working on? What's your thing?
- "The goat has left the building"
- Nooma is relentless. Does every single thing serve the one thing you are doing?
- The Perfect Thing about the ipod.
Newsweek tech writer. Religious in cult of apple.
 - Everyone listened to shuffle as default – so he said "What if we made a really inexpensive ipod that was really based on shuffle?" Jobs was almost thrown out of the room for the idea. Only Steve Jobs could convince people that taking away what makes the ipod an ipod can make an even greater ipod.
 - Very few people do this
- The art of turning the edit button off
 - Carries notebooks around with him; constantly writing whatever comes to mind, little scraps at end of day – all kinds of random things
 - Phrases – people are waking up to this amazing stimuli – and not capturing it! In the end they miss something that would have led them to gold.
 - "How do you come up with the ideas for your novels?"

- NJ Lundquist: "That would be a great place to hide a body...and then asking, 'well, how did it get there'?"
 - For you it might not be where you hide dead bodies!
- Listen to you gut instincts. If you ever have a thought beginning "what if" or "nobody ever talks about"
- Most of the things I communicate start with "eh"
- 6 months ago: We should do a pastor's conference and start with a 2 hour thing on Eucharist
- Capture it, write it down. If you find yourself thinking
- Abandonment is central to creativity
 - That's crazy
 - We could never pull that off – how do you know?
 - This makes no sense – not right now
 - I don't see how any of this is related – worry about that later
 - If someone were to read this – they already think you're nuts!
- End of year (Everything is Spiritual – he loved it, wants to do it again) another tour! 2 hour talk experience – The Gods Aren't Angry – why people invented God!
 - Has a notebook full of "random" things – Aztec baby, etc.
 - It doesn't matter right now – he's capturing this right now and who knows what god will do with it! This is huge – get rid of your edit button!
 - If you're in the creative business grab every fragment that you can and hold it there and just see what happens

○ The art of expulsion

- The art of getting things out of you
- Rolling Stone with Ray Lamontagne October 5, 2006
 - "The songs can just eat at you, you have to get rid them because at some point they just beat around in your head. And I'm afraid they're going to kill me if I don't get 'em out. And then once I record them, it's something tangible. It's done."
- Knowing yourself so well that you can get down to that thing
- What do you really want to say? What's the real thing?
 - Nooma – What's the thing behind that? Go farther. What's farther in you?

- “There's more emotion about this in you that's not coming out. What is it?” - about the most recent thing, dealing with self-esteem. What's the real thing you're calling people to?
 - Anne Lamott: “I write because I have to.”
 - I guarantee if you probe your own soul you know what those things are or you wouldn't have gotten into this. God has placed something in you and you know what it is, listen to this and then lit it rip.
 - Why do you care?
 - What is the thing inside of you about this that people have to hear?
 - What do you have to get out or you are going to spontaneously combust?
 - “can I run this teaching idea by you” – talk about all kinds of things – “Why? What are you really talking about here?”
 - What are the hard questions to ask yourself about what you are about to present. If you don't get this out the songs are going to kill you.
 - You wouldn't be here if you didn't have things in you.
 - Very few people have the discipline to ask themselves what they really want to do
- The art of space
 - The best ideas came from staring out the window – if I sit down with a series of commentaries, lots of information – but it's other times when that information sparks and “now I get it” excites the soul
 - “fast thinking” is getting things done, attacking your list
 - “slow thinking” when you're meditating, reflecting
 - Joshua passage : neither. He's wrestling with it
 - Beuchner from Secrets in the Dark p 233
 - “I hadn't learned yet the importance of letting the empty place inside of me open up...”
 - Take text you are going to be preaching on. Then sit for an hour with the text in front of you and ask God to let the open space in front of you open up. I've done the work, the studies, but show me the text for me, for the community. I'm going to back up and let you fill the open space with something. It's when we let the open space fill up that amazing things happen.
 - The discipline of turning the radio off. Let your mind be.
 - Lord I'm giving you these next ten minutes for you to speak to me in this situation, show me where you've

been and I've been sleeping, wake me up. Give me a picture, a metaphor, an idea, so I'll know what to do.

- Jesus on a regular basis : said to his disciples "Get in the boat"
 - What is there to do in a boat besides rowing and talking?
 - Be scared? Sleep? Big waves?
 - Getting in the boat is right after encounters with lots and lots of crowds. Let's get some space, some distance.
 - There is a discipline he is engaging them with

o The art of risk

- Sometimes I think that preaching is like learning to play the violin in public. I've had incredibly humiliating moments in front of people on stage.
 - One of my first times speaking, 25, Saturday night service
 - Helping a single mom, custody battle, Witness in the court room?
 - Sheriff to lay hand on the bible and Bell thought "maybe I should tell the truth here" probably should – and live like this all the time
 - I'm going to do a whole sermon on this.
 - He borrowed the sheriff's uniform. Everything but the gun. Going to do the whole service as if he was the bailiff holding the bible out to you.
 - At the end of the service you can ask anything you want, ushers take and hand it to him, then he starts answering questions. So he's in this chafing uniform and thinks he's brilliant
 - o First questions: "so why are you dressed up in a police outfit"
- To do this you have to be willing to stub your toe and fall down
- "What if at the end the work remains poor? You've been drawing that fellow kneeling down for days and he's still wrong. Suppose you go on drawing him for years and years and he keeps on being wrong?" Vincent shrugged. The artist takes that gamble, father. Are the rewards worth the gamble? What rewards? The money, position in society. Vincent looked up..."I thought we're discussing good and bad art."
- Nothing is wasted in God's economy.

- You're the preacher, you're supposed to lead the way in freedom. Your identity is in Christ, fall flat on your face, it's okay.
 - Churches ought to lead the way in innovation and experimentation, we have nothing to lose!
 - Started through Numbers after Leviticus – it didn't work, he stopped halfway through!
 - We need people willing to say let's try that. If it really screws up apologize and keep going. Try it!
 - With risk, one of the risks is that not everyone will appreciate it and some people will criticize you. Some people will devote blog sites to destroying you. Some people will say things about you and your family and your kids that will bother you for days. If they think they are defending God, Jesus, the Bible, authority, they will stop at nothing. It's shameful what some people will say thinking they are defending God. If you risk some people will try and destroy you. You don't have to listen to it but it will creep in.
 - The Pharisees took the command to be fruitful and multiply seriously too
 - Questions: What about Mars Hill criticism?
 - Someone photocopied the amazon.com reviews of Velvet Elvis. Don't read anonymous letters or reviews. Be careful what you expose yourself to. You don't owe those people your time. If you're going to create things, come down from the mountain, "I have these chunks of stone, I think it's from God", then you're going to have to take what comes with it. Get people around you who will call you everyday and say they love you.
 - Don't google your name.
 - STANDING OVATION FOR ROB
 - For every fundamentalist you offend, there may be 1000 people who think "hey, now I'm listening"
 - When you're working to keep so many people happy there are many people who need to hear what you're saying.
- **Buckets, chunks, and the all important marinade TOMORROW**

Mars Hill Pastor's Conference – Session 3 – Rob Bell

Tuesday, January 23, 2007 9:00 am

- Some of the judgments tend to wear on you, because you don't know how to answer that question, etc. – passionate pastors who have questions about salvation, religions, who's in, who's out – some of the systems, theologies just don't work. Their understanding of the world is failing them and they're in an awkward place. Pulling out bricks is not allowed.
 - This is an even safer place than yesterday, wrestle with the nature of salvation.
 - There are some who have deep questions they have never voiced
 - Jesus saves. I trust him for salvation. God really is redeeming the world through Jesus dying on the cross. I'm more passionate than ever, but I have questions.
- Going to heaven?
 - Makes the message about some other life.
 - "That's it?" the best we can do is some other life? Is this really just fire insurance? Just have to save souls? That's our message to the world? That's despair. No wonder you have to use words like relevant, the message is all about another world.
- Is that the best God can do?
 - I need help today. Oftentimes is the driving goal to get people out of here? Is that the kind of spirituality that Christ leads us into?
 - Is this what Jesus waved in front of people?
- "Said the prayer" but don't follow Jesus? Never "said the prayer" but live a lot like a Jesus follower?
 - Some people are a lot more Christian than Christians you know.
 - You don't want what the people who have followed the four steps have.
 - They said the prayer and that's all that matters? So the kind of person you're becoming is irrelevant? That's odd, because Jesus taught all about how to become a certain kind of person.
 - Why did Jesus talk about forgiveness, prayer, compassion, the poor, reconciliation? If it didn't matter what kind of person you are if it doesn't matter?

- He's upset with his disciples because they're not getting it here and now.
- Scriptures don't teach the above; how do we reconcile some people who live such lives of generosity and compassion and don't cling to the scripture but others who do....
- Which Jesus?
 - 1-800 big hair Jesus?
 - "All that matters is Jesus", if they reject Jesus...who are we talking about?
 - "Stumbling Toward Faith"
 - I grew up in an abusive household. Spiritual abuse. Not new age, esoteric, hippy parents....not thinking all the wrong ideas because of too much freedom...I don't mean my God protested "under God"...I mean that my father raped me while reciting the Lord's prayer. My father molested me while singing Christian hymns."
 - Some Jesus' should be rejected.
 - "I don't want anything to do with Jesus" – which Jesus are you talking about?
 - Someone who doesn't want church – they may be on the road to salvation because they have a problem with your church! They may be rejecting things that are done in the name of Jesus that Jesus taught us to reject.
 - There's a chance the Jesus they heard about they rejected because they're on the right path.
 - The Jesus who herds people in and kills them should be rejected.
 - What Jesus has this person been exposed to?
 - Some people have only seen the Jesus flipping channels late at night...
- Of all the billions...? Us? Only?
 - Whenever someone says there are a select few of us that are going to be in heaven
 - The people who say that are always, happen to be in the "in" category. There's a connection. Some patterns.
 - Do you believe in a God who would create billions of people only to watch them burn with no chance for any other sort of future?
 - What kind of God do you believe in?
 - Those who reject truth, grace, truth, etc.
 - But these are questions of the nature of God.

- A select few who happen to believe/confess/do a few things that even they can't agree on?
- Is this really the story of existence? Just a few people that are going to be in, and even they can't agree on what the code is, what the password is...
- What if the missionary gets a flat tire?
 - Seriously, what if she's coming over the hill to tell you and gets a flat tire. Man, bumner for you. If she just would have had different tires you would have had a different future. Isn't that what fate is?
- Age of accountability?
 - What about the 13 year old "atheist" who dies in a car accident?
 - Well there's an age of accountability - if a baby dies a baby goes to heaven because of what David said.
 - The magic age is - 12? Anyone have anything else? 8?
 - Very exclusive fundamentalists become open universalists when a young relative dies...it's different when it's a close family member, then God's grace becomes greater
 - Was there a 1 year window from 12-13? Hopefully someone can during that year?
 - A friend, a local 13 year old died who said he was an atheist. Someone actually came to a girl and said "oh, so there's no hope"
 - Is that the Christian message?
- And how is any of this grace?
 - Free gift, nothing you can do to earn it, given by God
 - So all you have to do is....wait, let me try it again
 - You just have to....accept it? Receive it? There's nothing you can do except do whatever it is you're told to do....?
 - We're just asking questions....
- The hard, fast answers break down when you actually live. We're going to do a massive bible study and look at how we are saved. We're going to look at 40+ verses.
 - Luke 7
 - If you were reading the bible for the first time: how do I get it, how do I accept it?
 - He entered capernum....sick and about to die, centurian...asking him to come heal a servant....he loves our nation and has built a synagogue....lord, don't trouble yourself...I do not deserve...im not worthy....but say the word and my servant will be healed....i am a man of authority....do this and he does it...when jesus heard this he was amazed at him and

turning to the crowd following him said "I tell you I have not found such great faith even in Israel..."

- Don't come in, all you have to do is say the word. I have authority, I know you have authority, I get it.
- He says of a roman soldier that he hasn't seen that kind of faith

○ Luke 18

- V. 9 "to some who were confident of their own righteousness....parable...two men went to pray, tax collector and Pharisee....but the tax collector wouldn't even look up and beat his breast and said 'god have mercy on me a sinner,' and I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before god..."
- This man at the temple says God have mercy on me, a sinner

○ Luke 23

- Jesus on the cross, hanging between two thieves / bandits / revolutionaries (rebelled against Rome)
- These people stood up to Rome
- V. 42 "the one thief said ' Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom.....truly I tell you..."
- Is it something that you say? Each one is different, it doesn't seem to be something you say.

○ John 3

- Is it something you say? Or is it some other thing?
- "Rabbi, we know that you are Jesus replied 'very truly I tell you noone can see the kingdom of God without being born again..."
- Is it something that you be, something you are...

○ Luke 20 v. 27-35

- Jesus talks about life in the age to come
- Awesome story, backed up a bit
- "the people of this age...but those who are considered worthy of taking part in the age to come....will neither marry nor be given in marriage...."
- Is it something you have to be?

○ Matthew 6 v.14

- Maybe it isn't something you have to be or say, maybe something else?
- Rob tries to read the bible as if he's never held it before.
- "For if you forgive others when they sin....but if you do not, your father will not forgive your sins"

- Matthew 7 v 21
 - “Not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only those who do the will of my father who is in heave....”
 - Do I have to forgive people or do the will of?
- Matthew 10 v22
 - “Brother will betray brother....everyone will hate you because of me, but those who stand firm to the end will be saved.”
 - I guess in order to be saved I need to stand firm.
- Luke 7 v36-38
 - Bible study on steroids.
 - “When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus...reclining...a woman learned Jesus was....wiped them with her hair....so far she hasn't said anything...stood behind anything”
 - You reclined on your left, ate with your right, and your feet would be sticking back.
 - So far she hasn't said a word.
 - “If this man was a prophet...Simon I have something to tell you...two people owed money, one 500 and the neither had money....which would love him ore....bigger debt...see this woman?...she wet my feet, you did not give me a kiss....her many sins have been forgiven..”
 - We often have services where we invite people to kiss each other's feet.
 - Therefore – if you were to read the bible literally – “as her great love has shown”
 - For Jesus her salvation comes from some intuition regarding her actions.
- Luke 15
 - Lost son v.18 has a speech
 - “ I have sinned against heaven and you...make me a hired servant...got up and went...still a long way off,...”
 - Is that what you need to do? Come home, say you've sinned?
 - It's in that moment the god said this....
- John 11v25-32
 - “I am the resurrection an the life, whoever believes in me will live even if they die....”
 - Living a certain way by believing in me...
 - Believing is intricately linked to living.
- Acts 2v38

- The birth of the church.
- “Tell us what we need to do, how we get in? Get saved?”
- “When the people heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to....brother what shall we do? Peter replied ‘repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ...promises for all who are far off...”
- Straight asked and answered.
- Is it something you say? Be? Do?
- Luke 19
 - Jesus is going through Jericho – where a lot of wealthy jews had summer homes – lots of money to be made off taxes
 - Going through means passing through
 - Zacheus – chief collector, very wealthy – short man, wee little man couldn’t see, climbed a tree
 - “come down and meet me...welcomed him gladly...”
 - Who you dined with in this century was a political statement – when you dined outside of your social line you were making statements about the politics of the day.
 - “lord, here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of everything I will pay back four times the amount”
 - Not “forgive me” not “born again”, he says I’ll give half of my stuff to the poor
 - Jesus says “today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a son of Abraham...”
 - His name means salvation, salvation has come to this house
 - Is it about what you say you’re going to do?
 - Jesus doesn’t say “I’m not interested in social justice, only in personal salvation...”
- Matthew 9
 - “This one is like, okay I give up”
 - The peer pressure route to the eternal realms...
 - “Jesus came to his own town...when Jesus saw their faith...paralyzed guy...he said to the man, take heart son your sins are forgiven”
 - How do you get saved? You just need the right friends!
 - Jesus sees them and is like, Dude you’re fine.
- Mark 2v4
 - The home-depot version of salvation

- Those with the gift of destruction, this is your place in the kingdom
- “A few days later....the people heard...no room, even outside the door....brought a paralyzed man...made an opening in the roof by digging through it...‘they unroofed the roof’ in greek....then lowered the mat the man was lying on....when Jesus saw their faith...”
- Equivalent of Jesus looking, seeing, “Yeah, you’re in, that’s good.” Ah, you’re in too, all four. You can be in the basketball tournament, no sub, but okay.”
- Like when a baby crying and you’re like “should I say something or not” – this is the same, digging on the roof?
- 1 Corinthians 7v16
 - If you only had the bible, if you were just reading it....
 - In most cultures you don’t read the scriptures alone, but in community...a new belief that doesn’t understand
 - How many of our problems come up because they are off without the community to guide their understanding?
 - “The brother or sister...God has called us to live in peace...how do you know, whether you will save....”
 - Do you want to go to heaven? Get married? Doesn’t seem right.
 - Is it something someone else does? In these passages salvation is linked directly to other people.
- Acts 9
 - This is one of the best exchanges – only God
 - “Paul was still breathing out murderous threats....if he found any there belong to the way...a light from heaven....Saul? Saul?...why do you persecute me?...I’m Jesus, who you are persecuting...”
 - Above the bold number 9 my chapter has a heading – Saul’s Conversion – let’s get this crystal clear – Jesus is asking him a question, and Saul responds with a question. The giant dramatic moment is being asked a question and answering with a question. That’s a conversion?
 - Maybe you are saved by asking questions? When in doubt ask questions?
 - Maybe it’s something someone says to you?
 - Some of our defining moments weren’t anything we said or did – we heard something – God spoke. How many of you, if you were to look back, you have

moments that don't fit in any categories, yet you claim those as real. "All I know was that something happened between me and my maker that changed me"

o Romans 10 v14

- "paul says: how then can they call on the one they have not believed in, and how can they believe in the one...how can they hear without preaching...how can anyone preach if someone was sent...."
- He links salvation to someone being sent – are you saved because of something somebody tells you to say/do/trust/believe?
- Beleiving?

o Luke 4v34, 41

- Lots of people in bible are fuzzy about who Jesus is...
- Very widespread opinions on what Jesus is and what he is doing...
- "in the synagogue...possessed....go away Jesus, have you come to destroy us...."
- The only people who are clear on who Jesus is are the demons
- Kind of an exorcist thing
- "be quiet, come out of him...came out without injuring him..."
- Demons believe he is the son of god

o James 2v19

- Talking about people who say "we believe"
- "some of you will say I have faith and I have deeds...I will show you my faith by what I do...you believe there is one god...even the demons believe that and shudder..."

- If you were asked the question "How does a person get saved, converted, in, redeemed, etc.?" and you only had the Bible to answer the question...you would have lots of answers.
- Involves acts of love that demonstrate a change of heart, awkward exchanges, it's all over the place...People come to Jesus in all sorts of ways.
- When we say "this is how it's done" – it would be nice, but the problem is it's not the way we see it.
- People stumble into the kingdom in all sorts of ways.
- Observations based on passages – how does a congregation move forward, how do you move forward, how do you proclaim?
- Salvation is holistic in nature. Jesus wants to save all of us. Jesus wants to save you from your past, from fear, from crippling worry, hatred, the myth of redemptive violence, from hating, racism,

poverty, anything that hinders the full shalom that God created for the entire world.

- Two understandings of:
 - Destination theology: sees you're either out or you're in, you're either there or you've arrived – now help others "get" saved
 - Journey understanding: Jesus wants to save certain people from selfishness, possible to be born again redeemed and indifferent to the world – scripture shows us a different picture, Rob would argue, that is this
 - There are moments of arrival along the way – moments of trust, understanding
 - Draw an arrow and put boxes, there are these moments of arrival
 - "I came to the realization that my life is unmanageable."
 - Salvation is this ongoing way of life that we enter in to from all different ways, directions, places.
 - If our hearts aren't changing there is something seriously wrong with what we call salvation
- Jesus died on the cross for all of the ways you fall short
- Altar call to have people come up and cut up their credit cards – that debt God wants to save you from came from greed that you thought something would fix a need – its connected to all sorts of things
 - People cut up their credit cards – a whole section would cheer

BREAK

- Matthew 12v32
 - "anyone who speaks a word against the son of man...forgiven....but not forgiven...neither in this age nor the age to come."
 - In this age – and then the age to come
 - A Jew would not talk about forever – forever is a foreign concept, offensive
 - Eon – we're living in this age, then there is an age to come
 - An inherit humility – don't talk about big things that you don't really know about
- Matthew 13v39
 - Again and again Jesus speaks of this age the age to come
 - "the enemy...the harvest is the end of the age"
- Matthew 13v49
 - "this is how it will be at the end of the age"

- Matthew 24v3
 - “when will this happen, what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”
- This age and the age to come – life in both
 - Life in the age to come
 - Olam haba
 - Eternal life
 - Speaking about future
- Luke 18v30
 - When you read eternal life you must read it beyond English, in the way they wrote it, saying “olem haba” and talking about the life in the age to come.
 - “truly I tell you no one...in this age and in the age to come and in the age to come eternal life”
- Matthew 19v6
 - “just then a man came to Jesus...what must I do to get eternal life?..”
 - Really meant: What must I do to live in the age to come?
 - Also would ask a rabbi: What is the greatest commandment?
 - The rabbis would respond and it would give you an idea of what their yokes are like, tells you about what they are like.
 - Rabbi: Teach us to pray. (The rabbi would recite scripture and you would learn, again that would tell you their thing.)
 - Rabbi: How do I attain olem haba?
 - “if you want to enter life, keep the commandments...”
 - Bit of a problem for evangelicals?
 - “which ones? Jesus replied you shall not...(he leaves out do no covet)”
 - Why does he leave out do not covet?
 - They would also translate olem haba as “harmony with God”
 - What are the commands?
 - Olem = means to the vanishing point = as far as possible into a thing, acknowledges that only God could understand something that vast
 - If life in the age to come is synonymous with heaven then = “on earth as it is in heaven” ; that way we would somehow be living in a way to draw that day near
- Matthew 19
 - Notice verse 28
 - “Jesus said to them, truly....at the renewal of all things...when the son of man sits on his glorious throne....you who have followed me will also sit on 12 thrones judging....everyone who is left...will receive 100

times as much and will inherit eternal life. Many who are first will...."

- The renewal of all things
- Jesus speaks of the end of this age and the beginning of the age to come
- All things in greek = all things

- Acts 3v21
 - Peter is talking about the messiah
 - Talks about repenting and turning to God
 - Repent = return from straying from God
 - "that he may send...heaven must receive him...until...time for God to restore all things..."
 - Jesus and Peter both talk about the restoration, about the renewal of all things.
 - They specifically use massive language – ALL
- Colossians 1v20
 - Look at what Paul says
 - By the way, reading ahead, this is a good book. This is the gospel you've heard proclaimed to every preacher under heave....
 - "for in him all things were created....things in heaven and earth...all things have been created...in him all things hold together."
 - Renewal, restoration, holding together of things
 - "for god was pleased...and through him to reconcile to himself all things...whether things on earth or things in heaven...by making peace through his blood shed on the cross..."
 - This is about a grand massive reconciling to all things for their creator.
 - Renewal of all things
 - Restoration of all things
 - Holding together all things
 - Reconciliation of all things
- Of course the cross is about personal salvation – Christianity revolves around this idea – but it isn't the full magnitude of the language they are using
- This thing is as wide as creation itself – God wants to put you and I back together because he wants to put all things back together.
- We have to understand that the cross extends to the end of the earth.
- "If Jesus didn't die for the spotted owl then he didn't die for me" – his point is this – when the scriptures deal with the cross it's as wide as creation itself

- When you shrink salvation down to individual souls it's not the whole gospel.
- Think practically – you are being invited to take part in something as big as the solar system. Know what I mean? We are inviting people into something huge.
- How this “all things” effects people?
 - In and Out – Who's in and who's out?
- Throughout the art of Jesus' teaching = one warning: some people who you assume are in may be in, and out be in. This is a big warning. Be very careful.
- One of the freshest words – Billy Graham
 - When asked whether he believes heaven would be closed to Muslims, Jews, etc.... (Newsweek)
 - “It would be foolish for me to speculate...I don't want to speculate...I believe the love of God is absolute. I think he loves everybody regardless of what label they have.”
- We invite people to trust Jesus wherever they are on their journey. I was not charged by God with the task of destroying other world religions. I don't know how God sorts everything out – but I do know Jesus has warnings for religious leaders who make grand pronouncements about who's in and who's in. We can boldly say what is right and what is wrong, but maybe as Christians one of our greatest witnesses can be for us to say “I don't know. I know this and I know this, but nothing else...”
- When people talk about absolutes – we must reclaim the word absolute
 - Like the love of God – he gave his son to the world
- Everything Belongs – what's your definition of salvation?
 - Richard Rohr: “My simple definition of salvation would be when one beings to live in conscious union with God. This, of course, grows and develops and Jesus makes it plain that this has to begin in our bodies, in our human lives, in our experience in this world, now and for that Jesus is surely necessary for salvation...it is not a formula or a mere affirmation but a change of identity.”
 - Bell recommends The Path of Dissent too; talks about male affirmation, great stuff
- Understanding olem haba
 - What is it that when you do this you think “man I could do this forever”
 - What do you do that when you do it time flies
 - New heaven and new earth, no sun or no moon – it's how we gauge heaven

- When we do these things we're tasting eternal life. Moments of relationships, there is a quality to this that is other-worldly. Oh, of course: life of the age to come. Those are the moments you are transcending.
- Many people have experienced this at U2 concerts.
- Little glimpses into olem haba
- Shalom – three, four dimensions of shalom
 - Is there hope?
 - Genesis 1
 - A poem, has a rhythm – why we are so passionate about women being whatever God made them to be – if you only have the male then you only have half the image
 - It begins with Genesis 1 not Genesis 3
 - Ruling over the woman = part of the curse, we are moving away from this
 - God blesses them – the shalom – often translate as peace – but bigger, shalom is everything in its right place, the blessing and goodness God created for all things; when God blesses them they are in right, harmonious relationship with their creator
 - Genesis 2
 - shalom between people and each other – his name is ground, hers is mother of the living
 - thirdly, god places them in the garden – be fruitful and increase in number...subdue it – lovingly care for it, steward it, do something with it!
 - A couple verses on people, everything else is on creation – they are linked to their physical surroundings
 - People are connected with themselves
 - Shalom
 - With God
 - With others
 - With self
 - With creation
 - If salvation is holistic and it involves right relationships with shalom – caring for the environment is not an option for Christians – the first commandment in the bible!
 - Genesis 3
 - They sin, realize they are naked so they sewed leaves together
 - Vs9 – god goes looking for them, God said “Where are you?”
 - Does god not know?

- HESHEL - God in Search of Man
 - Vs23 Banished from Garden of Eden to work, we're told the man curses the ground because of you, through painful toil you will eat of it.
 - All of the shaloms are messed up with sin – sin is anywhere shalom has been disrupted
 - Sin is culpable disturbance of shalom whatever it looks like.
 - Exodus 25
 - Let me dwell in your midst
 - 1 Kings
 - God's house, to dwell in midst
 - The word becomes flesh and God tabernacle'd among them...
 - Then Jesus ascends and now the church is the hands and feet...
 - And in Revelations – the bride coming down, and now he is dwelling among man...
 - The arc of the scriptures is of a God who is always wanting to come down
 - Revelations 2:1, and 2:2 – the healing of the nations (people getting along) ; God taking up dwelling among them, an abundance of natural resources, people in connection with the soil
 - The story begins and ends in a similar way.
- To be a Christian is to believe that history is going somewhere.
- Live the kind of life where God can dwell among us. Be weary of any form of spirituality that argues that the goal is escape. God has not given up on this world, he will not, and he wants to reclaim the whole thing. God is looking for partners. Be weary of any escapist theology, of any theology that locates our home as anywhere else than what God has always called our home – our home has been invaded but it will not last. The story does not begin with sin – it begins with shalom. Creation begins in 1 and 2 and not Genesis 3.
- On heaven and in earth. Heaven and hell – you council people and you experience hell all the time – of course we believe in hell. What terrifies me is the people that talk about hell someday and you don't care about hell – Sudan? – today? If you care about hell then you care about hell, then you care about anything that isn't heaven.
- In the Garden of Eden there is something not good – loneliness. The man was alone, this was not good. He needs a woman to pick out his clothes.

- 1 Thesolonians 4 – the rapture passage “Blenders are left on and cars go off cliffs.”
 - Vs. 13 actually it doesn't come from the bible, but from a series of novels
 - “brothers and sisters...asleep in death...grieve like the rest....those who have fallen asleep...we who are still alive...with a loud command at the trumpet call....meet the lord in the air and we will be with the lord forever...”
 - Belief is there were several earthquakes – year 17 and 60 – and the city was destroyed, flattened, so much so that the inhabitants had to leave and move outside the city walls. The roman emperor was proceeded everywhere by the blowing of trumpets said “I will send you resources to rebuild your city.” They rebuilt their city. They received word that Caesar wants to come see your city you rebuilt. Legend has that as Caesar was coming, the whole city went out to welcome him at the blowing of the trumpets – none were left in the city that they all left to welcome him. They all went back in the city to show him how they rebuilt it with their resources. To these people, several years later – there will be a blowing of a trumpet. We will be gathered together with Jesus. But they went back in to their city, they didn't go anywhere else. What if Paul is saying that we have been given resources to rebuild the city, get to work?

Mars Hill Pastor's Conference – Session 4 - Rob Bell

Tuesday, January 23, 2007 2:00 pm

- How can you on a Monday morning, with Sunday coming, not be staring at a blank computer screen?
- The preaching/teaching thing is a wait.
- He puts it all in a word file called bucket. Some of your thoughts may have profound insight into them.
- **Buckets, chunks, and the all important marinade**
 - all those little buckets grow as you grow, and they become teachings and they work in Rob – that preaches, there's more work to be done, but that's a chunk
 - God is Green in July
 - When you pick something 6 or 8 months out you grab everything that has to do with it – you accumulate, it builds
 - Planning on a series in June would make your series better – everything that came though, turning your radar on, you would catch it. You're reading a book and it comes up, you wouldn't have caught it before.
 - What if the whole world was your commentary and everywhere you went you were picking things up?
 - Marinade- I try not to present anything that hasn't been marinating for months and months of my life. Look at the next six months and plan ahead – you can always be spontaneous in the moment, and that's okay.
 - What if on Monday morning you literally had to choose – I don't know which I'm going to do because a bunch of them are ready to go.
- Questions to ask
 - Are there any key words? Greek? Software? Logoss?
 - Do these words have pictures within them?
 - Are there physical things in the passage?
 - Are there any people in this passage?
 - The principle of first mention – when you run across something where is the first time this was mentioned in the Bible?
 - Are there concepts/ideas/truths that are found elsewhere?
- My dream for you would be that you have so much going, so much you are learning and wrestling with that you would move from "I have to say something" to "I have something to say" – what if every time you were scheduled it wasn't a slot you had to fill but it was "give me the microphone, I have something to say"

- It doesn't take 50 hours each week – it takes disciplines and an awareness
- Word → Flesh
 - There is a movement in the scriptures from word to flesh.
 - Throughout scripture there is God speaking the word so that people will incarnate the word and it will become flesh. It will become the intuitive way you live.
 - Jesus came to show you what it looks like when you put flesh and blood on the words – not to abolish the Torah.
 - It isn't about getting the words right – it's about putting the flesh and blood on the words
 - It's dangerous to try and get all the words right
 - There is no systematic theology in a synagogue – the goal is always to put the beliefs into action
 - Is this moving from word to flesh?
- Action → Awareness
 - Some teachings are calls to action – go be the people of god, go do this
 - Other teachings have more of an awareness
 - Ephesians 1-3 all about who you are
 - Try and balance – are we appropriately teaching people who they are in Christ and are we balancing that well with action – what are we trying to do, action
- Lent
 - Calling lent = leaving Egypt = that god rescues people from darkness...What is it this season that you need to leave in Egypt?
 - Here's how it's going to unfold...What is it that you need to leave behind? An addiction? Is there some physical thing – come on Good Friday and stack their crap in the sanctuary. Make a big pile of all the ways of living that we don't want anymore – then they will come back on resurrection Sunday and it will all be gone.
- When you are preparing a teaching there are different components that make up a teaching
 - Information – you just have to get some across, somehow
 - The reading of the text – how you read the text is important, what you emphasize, there is an art to how you read the text
 - Stories
 - Pointed, confrontational questions
 - Reflective questions
 - Video clips, testimonies, rants!
 - What are the different dimensions to this teaching? Where are people emotionally at different points?

- You can only go so far without you knowing where it is going...
- You can create only so much tension. If you have a story, a highly emotional one, you can't just drop that thing like a bomb in a teaching without realizing its impact.
- You can't put anything next to anything else in a teaching.

Mars Hill Pastor's Conference – Breakout Session – Loving, Living, Leading: A Journey of Eldering at Mars Hill – Tandy Champion Tuesday, January 23, 2007 3:00 pm

- Details of governance
- In the beginning: the facts
 - In 1999 Mars Hill was a start up ministry
 - Staff were not hired on the first day
 - Rob + Admin Assistant were only staff
 - Went from 1200 at two services to adding a third
 - Elders were helping with management decisions
 - Staff were hired as needed, slots filled
 - Leadership (elders) assisted in hands on tasks
 - Calvary Non-denom = church plant
- In the middle
 - Staff became more empowered in management issues
 - Silo of ministries emerged
 - Clear mission and vision were missing
 - Tension between staff and elder developed
 - Often that will happen at the 5 year mark
 - Leadership from the Inside Out
 - What is the spirit of this place? What are we collectively doing?
- My story
 - A church united or divided?
 - Initially the pastors and elders were only allowed to be men.
 - A challenge for the church
 - June 2003 – vote to allow women to use the gifts they have in any leadership capacity
 - A call
 - Questioning the call
- The last 2-3 years
 - Leadership (elders) began a process asking:
 - Who are we as a community?
 - Who are we being called to do?
 - What kind of leadership does that require?
 - The man with the bicycle or the little girl on the tricycle? How much stuff are you carrying?
- Last 12 Months
 - Leadership transition – Don hired

- Governance clarified – new bylaws
 - Mission and vision defined
- Leadership transition
 - Values Embraced
 - Committed to loving the staff
 - Loving well
 - How well you love your self
 - Do you love your self the way God loves you?
 - How well do you love others? Sometimes it means letting them go – that is the best way you can love them.
 - Committed to living in community together
 - Living well
 - Community
 - Going inward together
 - Sharing together
 - Model what you hope to see reproduced
 - Passionate about what god is calling this community to be and do
 - Leading well
 - You can only lead as far as you your self have gone
 - What journey are you on?
 - Is your journey the same as your church community?
 - How are you helping shepherd the journey?
 - Often the case that the reason for having issues isn't the topic itself
 - Meet twice each from 9:00-11:00
- Currently 8 elders – min of 6 and max of 12
- One year terms
- Usually term limits are there to get people out
- Early spring – dialogue – expected that the first meeting in april about whether everyone is going to be serving everywhere...
- Covenant Community – membership
 - Collectively once each year, these people can vote on bylaws and statement of faith
 - Bylaws – front and back of 8 1/2 x 11 piece of paper
 - Can make nominations
- Governance at Mars Hill
 - Leadership/organizational structure

- Don is a member of that team
 - Rob is a prophet and a teacher and spends time with them at his or her pleasure
- Membership/Covenant community
- Elder Job Description
- Elder selection process
- Questions
 - **Have you ever dealt with expulsion?**
 - One way to do it is have Rob do a teaching that makes people mad.
 - Either you're here to check us out or you're here to get involved, otherwise we could use your chair. Leave.
 - Potential for moral failure...identified the story personally...became clear that there were different stories, wasn't possible to solve the problems. Both were repentant, etc. and guidelines were given to stay in community, almost right away rules were broken and they were asked to leave.
 - **What effect did hiring Don have in freeing up the organization to fulfill the mission/vision?**
 - 1. a person who could lead and help the areas organize around a common mission and vision
 - **How do you avoid complaints? Who decides?**
 - Don and the staff get to decide everything...helping them to be a part of it. They define guidelines/policy.
 - Try to have lunches with different departments. Often takes worship team out.
 - **What is discipleship look like at Mars? How do people take the next step?**
 - Bringing director formation, spiritual formation
 - Making sure everything is knit together – children, student, etc.
 - **What was the process in designing the covenant?**
 - Switching back and forth...
 - Different directions were used to inform the different pieces. It doesn't reflect all of the things we necessarily believe, it's an outline. A way to know what they are signing up for.
 - **How did we interpret Titus/Timothy passages on women?**
 - Ray V. came in and talked, taught on the theological differences
 - There was a definite push from the feminist side that women had a right to be an elder – but does anyone have a right to be an elder?

- Other side was to say we need to keep women out...

Mars Hill Pastor's Conference – Session 5 - Rob Bell

Tuesday, January 23, 2007 7:00 pm

- Brought in \$195,000 – cost \$40,000 –
 - giving excess away to school of 1500 kids in Rwanda
 - Microfinance
 - Gives loans to small businesses in third-world countries helping them to get started. The average loan size is \$40
 - Burundi is the poorest country in the world
- Numbers 15 – attach tassels to the end of your garments – to remind you of a covenant you've made with the Lord God
 - Symbolic of your life, of your ability to be trusted
 - When you found yourself losing your innocence you would grab hold of the tassels to remind yourself
- Malachi “he will rise with healing in his k'noff” = the tassels at the end of his robe, his tassels
- He doesn't have clever words for regaining innocence...only the words “Please heal me”
-