

Christ on the Psych Ward

Week 5: God's Sleeves

- David recounts a story where a nurse gives him imagery, both in her words and in her presence, of Christ on the psych ward with him in a difficult time. (76-78)
- How we imagine God plays an important role in what we imagine God to be like and do. If we only envision God in one way (often male, and often authoritative), we are limiting our view of God, and limiting where we might see God in the world. (79-80)
- The Bible has many instances where God is imaged as feminine: as midwife (Psalm 22), as mother bear (Hosea 13). These images are fluid. (80-81)
- Our imagery can have unintended consequences; e.g. light/dark imagery in the Bible has been used to support racist ideas, and we lose a lot of images of God that go with darkness ("darkness can also be healing, even as light can be jarring.") (82-83)
- Particularly around issues of gender, how we imagine God and how we imagine others can play a big part in how we connect with them; David recounts not knowing what to do with his father trying to show vulnerability in recounting his own struggles with mental health (86-87).
- When we limit our images of God, we also try to limit our experience and stories of God to things that fit our pre-conceived images. (87-88)
- When we expand the images of God we use, we expand the parts of humanity we feel have access to God; when we move past binary ways of thinking about God, we are better able to see where God is present in connections and continuums. (88-89)
- Language of God's embodiment can be life saving for those who have lost their sense of their own embodiment. (89)
- The figure of Wisdom from the Hebrew Bible is usually portrayed as feminine; similarities to the description of Jesus can help those who view Jesus' incarnation as being a sign of God's maleness. (90)
- God is ultimately crossing boundaries, defying