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Becoming the Kind of Person Who Has **Something to Say**

The following are my paraphrased notes and comments from a critical concerns session by Rob Bell at the 2004 National Youth Workers Conference in Atlanta. Rob Bell is the teaching pastor at Mars Hill Bible Church in Michigan. He is also the producer of the Nooma short films on spiritual topics. He is considered one of the freshest voices addressing the modern Church today.

Session 1

Rob started by saying that “Some of you signed up for a revolution and have found yourself giving nice Bible talks.”

While many people focus on Rob’s unique approach to mining treasure out of the Jewish scriptures or Jewish tradition, Rob said that he was far more interested in what kind of person someone is than what he/she knows. It’s not what we know but who we are and who we are becoming that really matters.

It’s not about the glitz and glamour. Many times we go looking for the latest trend or thing to push our ministry to the next level. But many times it is simply “new tools with the same lame message. Now we just have smoke and power point.”

Many have asked how Rob goes about preparing a message. He said that the process is messy. It takes time as he learns by experiencing the truths of God everywhere.

Genesis 28:10-11, When Jacob reached a “certain place,” then he had a dream. Rob said that this accurately describes how many people think of God. Many times people talk about God being some place as if He suddenly shows up and wasn’t there to begin with. We invite God to “be in a situation” when He has been there all along. People can encounter God everywhere.

But Rob said that we tend to think of God as if He is only located in a building between 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on a Sunday. We need to start looking for God in the ordinary things. It’s not as if He lives in just one place. Why do we always think of God as being distant? God is not somewhere else. He is here and now, present in our sufferings and triumphs. His presence is truly everywhere. We awaken out of our spiritual slumber to the divine reality that God was in it all along.

Rob said, “It’s not that God showed up here. It’s that He has been here the whole time and we were not aware of it.”

Taking the point further, Rob pointed to the story of Moses encountering the burning bush. Moses saw the burning bush in an area he was familiar with and likely had walked past on many occasions. What was it then that made this ground holy at that particular time? Was it not holy in the past? Rob believes that the bush could have been burning for years. Moses could have missed it or maybe God did something outrageous because His presence manifested in the mundane things of life was not getting Moses attention.

Rob asked, “Where are the burning bushes that I have missed?” He said, “We don’t need more people busy doing ministry; we need more people who see the burning bushes all around us.”

Rob read Psalm 139 where he identified King David, a man who knew God in the present reality of life. Many people say that Christianity is not relevant. And they are right. What we demonstrate to the world is not relevant because we don’t live the difference. We don’t live Biblical Christianity. We live westernized, churchy culture Christianity. The world is looking for more people like David who had a relationship with God right here, right now. The world is looking for a God that they can know in the moment, not some day when they get to heaven.

Then, Rob talked about the power of a good story. He mentioned the woman who washed Jesus feet in Mark 14. Jesus knew how to look at life with a heavenly, merciful perspective. What many of the religious people called a waste, Jesus referred to it as a “beautiful” thing. He saw her act as worship of the highest order. We need to be able to speak a difference. We can’t be tied to our ole box. In order to captivate the hungry out there in the world and in our churches, we can’t be looking for a shortcut or formula. The story is the message, not just a point in the message. If our inspiration comes from www.desperatepreacher.com, we are in trouble.

Rob told a story about driving down the road and looking in his rear view mirror. He said that he saw a father sitting on the side of the curb. This man was looking straight ahead while his young son vomited in the bushes. The father was patting his son’s back. His lips were moving. Obviously, he was kindly reassuring his son. Rob then asked us to discuss this in small groups. We were to try to see what spiritual significance we could take away from the story. Many points were brought up. The thing that was the most profound to me was that he invited discussion. He did this a couple of times. He wanted us to think and process for ourselves what things mean. He did not want to do a brain dump like many preachers do. We were not just to be mere spectators. We need to be participants if we expect the message to really make a difference in our lives.

In John 5:17, Rob pointed out how God is always working. This includes every person, every relationship, every interaction... all the time. Rob said that his radar is always up looking for things to explore and topics to cover in messages. He is constantly looking for God in the everyday experiences of life. He writes these things down and then thinks

about them. He calls them “buckets.” He goes back and will re-read or sometimes changes them. He says that he has to grab the moment and capture it or else it will quickly be forgotten.

Rob said, “The best kind of teachings are grown in our own backyard and are not bought off the shelf.” He went on to say that all work is creative at the core in some way. There are many who buy things off the shelf because they don’t believe that they have something to say. But that is just not true.

Then many times these random buckets get connected to each other which helps complete the puzzle more. The dots get connected bringing clarity to questions. Sometimes he struggles with questions for years. He marines in an issue or question. Rob said that your teachings become part of you. You must be on your own road, your own journey. He said that he wants to live the teaching kind of life. For Rob, crafting a good teaching is both part inspiration and part perspiration. He definitely reaffirmed the need and spirituality of preparation. He debunked the myth that everything the Holy Spirit does has to be spontaneous. If the Holy Spirit is in the moment, why can’t He be in what we prepare ahead of time?

Rob said that sometimes people hide behind spiritual arguments like, “I don’t want to prepare ahead of time because I want to be led by the Spirit.” He said what they are really saying is, “I just pick up a verse and ramble and throw in some college stories to make it interesting.” He said, “I believe that the Spirit is present in all we do.”

Then Rob went to the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15. He said that Jesus started out by shocking the crowd. The people of Jesus’ day would have been horrified to hear the son go to the father and demand the inheritance right away. It was kind of like saying, “I hope you’re dead. And I want what is rightfully mine right now.” This request would have been the biggest slap in the face and sign of disrespect in the Jewish culture of that day. Jesus drops a bomb in the beginning and then freezes the story in the end without closure. He violated two major rules of story telling. But in doing so, Jesus sends a message that not everything can be wrapped up in a tight little bow. It is OK not to have all the answers or tell the audience everything. Rob said that sometimes you can ruin a great teaching by talking.

The story gives an open invitation for the audience to find their place in the story. It gives space to breathe and explore. Rob said that great teaching begins the discussion not ends it. He asked, “Is your goal to answer all the questions or just to raise the best ones?” We have a distorted view of mystery and don’t understand that all things do not have to be solved at once. This gives the listeners a reason to go to God. Teaching should drive people to God, not give them all the answers so that they can live another week without interacting with Him. Each new answer should lead to a deeper question.

Talking about the treasure of the Word, Rob talked about the first mention principle. This shows how words in different places in the Bible are connected to give significant spiritual meaning. This helps deepen understanding and personal application. Rob said,

“Truth is not static for us because there is always some place deeper.” We need restored to the people of God a sense of wonder. When was the last time you just stopped to wonder about something?

We must not forget that the Bible is not fantasy land. “Scripture is real people at real places at real times. The Bible did not just drop out of the sky.” The Word is both history book and living love letter to mankind. When studying the Scriptures, Rob reads for three levels:

- The story (The details around the local meaning when the passage was written)
- Their story (The larger story within context of the entire Scriptures)
- Our story (The application of the story to my personal life)

Rob suggested using Google searches and the Biblical knowledge of others in your fellowship. He said, “Google is your friend.” Nothing is in the Bible by chance. Numbers in the Bible are huge, rarely is a number mentioned by accident.

An example of the first mention principle, Rob pointed to when God gave the Israelites the 10 Commandments. These laws were commonly known then as “the way, the truth and the life.” Jesus later says these very same words in reference to Himself. Rob said that a friend once said that Jesus rarely said anything new. Much of what Jesus said can be found in the Scriptures or the teachings of other rabbi. {Personally, I don’t know if I agree with that. For example, just look at the Sermon on the Mount. He radically challenged the Jews’ understanding of the law.}

Rob said that one of the dangers of the Scriptures is that people begin to think of them as just things that happened in the past versus something that is relevant and impacting us right here, right now. The Scriptures are our story. Everyday we must choose to eat the forbidden fruit. Everyday we find ourselves wrestling with God. We just have to find ourselves in the story.

Rob took questions from the group. One person asked if he ever works in a group to develop his teachings. Rob said that he always does his research alone. But he does bounce ideas off other people. He meets with a group of creative people on his staff to help flush out ideas. He believes that the more people who are in on the journey, the bigger the impact it will have. In the end though, the point is not research but what does God want to say in this passage?

One person asked how to engage a group of students in Bible study who did not really want to be there. He said that he did not think he would teach them primarily through lecture or group discussion. He said that he would teach them primarily through experiences. He said, “Maybe you do and then you talk.” Take them places that rock their reality and then talk through it. Give them something to do and wrestle with in your teaching encounters. The experience can be the message. He gave examples like take youth to an orphanage or critical care unit in a hospital or have them watch as soldiers return home from the battle field. They could greet them and just watch as these soldiers interact with their families for the first time in a year or more.

If a group of youth were constantly talking and being disrespectful, Rob said that he would ask them what they are talking about so he could discover how to help them see divine truth in the topics of interest to them. He said that youth workers should frame the talk around what they are already talking about.

Modern ministries have added lots of technology which tend to get in the way sometimes. Rob said, "Visuals don't mean anything if you don't have something to say." Visuals only highlight the message; they can never be the message.

Rob talked about being free to explore and make mistakes. He said, "Growth means that you aren't where you were." And if you seem to be the same person you were a year ago, you are in trouble. This led me to think, "Failure is not making a mistake. Instead it is never trying to grow or learn from our mistakes."

All Christians must admit that we are pilgrims on a journey. We don't know everything. He said that he has heard people say, "So-and-so is a seeker, trying to discover what he believes spiritually." Rob said that he wants to respond, "Oh, and like you're not a seeker." He was expressing the thought that none of us have arrived.

Rob had us draw an arrow on a clean sheet of paper. Then on the other side of the paper he had us draw a box. He explained that Christians tend to look at life as either an arrow, which signifies movement, a journey to deeper spiritual enlightenment. Or people see life as a box, a system of beliefs a destination with clear answers. Arrow types are inviting and inquisitive. Boxes are closed minded. They are always trying to win over someone to their side. They view life as people either being in or out. And they expend a lot of energy making sure that their square is perfect.

Rob sees a third possibility. He believes that life is an arrow with some boxes along the way. He was not making an argument for relativism. Instead, he was calling us to honestly admit our dependence on God. We need to be open and loving, not self righteous and judgmental.

We need to realize that if people are listening to a Christian message, whether they have made a commitment to Jesus or not, they are on the arrow. This launched Rob into a discussion about altar calls. He said that his church does not do them. They don't really even have an altar because sacrifices stopped about 2,000 years ago. They do have moments for people to respond, whether the action is be the first time that someone surrenders to Jesus or takes some other step. Instead of looking at it as trying to get someone to come forward, say a prayer and make a commitment once, Rob wants to invite them to a new way of life that will manifest itself every day in their lives. He wants to make disciples, not one-time converts. He warned against using manipulation to get a desired result. Rob said, "With the right music and mood, I can get people to say or do anything."

There are those people who challenged you with the tough passages of the Bible. He said that he knows some people who are not Christians because they have read the entire

Bible and have a brain. As Rob pointed out, the big problem is that they do not understand the Bible in context. He explained it by having the group read Deuteronomy 21:10-14.

To our modern mindset, the passage seems extremely degrading to woman, almost barbaric. But understood in context, the passage actually shows God's provision for woman while not trying to force society to change too fast. This demonstrates that God is a realist. He knows that we can't go from A to Z in one giant step.

In the days of Deuteronomy, women were treated as property, spoils of war. Instead of treating foreign woman as property, Israelites had to take them as wives. They had to be given time to mourn, which recognized their individuality and need to process through their feelings. If the woman did not please the men, they could not be sold like slaves. Instead, they had to be given leave as wives. This practice was far more humane than what normally happened when one nation vanquished another in war.

The key to communicate effectively is to have a personal experience with God. We have to learn to identify the movements of God in our own life. We can't really share something that we do not have ourselves.

Sometimes we try to teach a major point without the foundation being laid first. How can you expect for youth to get excited about witnessing when they don't really know God themselves? How can you expect them to get excited about something that they have very little first hand knowledge about? Another example is that you can't really teach about tithing and expect them to learn it if they do not have a clear understanding that everything belongs to God in the first place. We get frustrated when the flock is not where we think they should be, when our expectations are unrealistic based on their level of experience or revelation.

Rob quoted Henri Nouwen, who said, "In order to speak into your community, you have to step out of it." Eventually, the message needs to move beyond words to action. It must become who we are.

Rob talked about reclaiming love. He said that many young Christians have a hard time thinking about their non-saved friends outside of converting them. Many people in the world have the same view of Christians that we have of Mormons or Jehovah Witnesses. We want to run from them because we don't want to be converted. The world feels the same way about us.

Christians need to learn again how to love without an agenda. There should be no strings attached. Some are afraid of compromising. They don't want to lose out an opportunity to bring "souls into the kingdom." But in the process we are too aggressive seeking a result from our action. Why can't love be simply about love and not getting someone to say the sinner's prayer?

Someone asked about balancing truth with discovery. Rob said that Scripture is like a gem. It has one real substance to it. But the light reflects differently as you move the gem in your hand. Sometimes a passage can have multiple meanings. Ultimately, we must let Scripture interpret Scripture, be in community to understand truth and let the Spirit guide our journey. We must know God for ourselves and serve as uniquely called by God. Rob said, “Don’t be the second somebody else. Be the first you and the best you that you can be.”

For the last hour, Rob candidly shared his testimony. It was quite powerful, especially as he shared about his struggles in ministry. Rob grew up in a Christian home. But honestly, he did not see the relevance of it for most of his adolescence and childhood. He either saw people imprisoned by tradition or faking something they were not. He felt lonely because he didn’t fit in with the perfect church kids or the really bad people at school either. He was sort of in the middle.

One person said of him in school, “I thought he was a foreign exchange student.” After high school, Rob went to Wheaton College where he for the first time found the kind of Christians he had been looking for. He became part of a band. Then God spoke to him about going to seminary. He went to Fuller Seminary and when he got out, he went to serve as an assistant pastor at a church in Michigan. While helping to lead an alternative service on Saturday evening, he started to notice a major disconnect. Things were getting lost in translation between the church culture and the world around it. One day he had had enough. He knew that God was calling him to do something different. He went to the senior pastor for his blessing and got it. It was a risk. But God had told Rob earlier in his life, “If you just teach, I will take care of everything else.”

Not sure where his paycheck would come from, Rob took a leap of faith. He said that there are times when the what if question matters more than anything. You could not live with yourself if you did not have the answer. He had to strive for the dream that God gave him. A few years later, he has one of the fastest growing churches in the country. He broke all the rules of church marketing along the way. He had a no flyer/no promotion policy. The church grew by word of mouth. He even preached on Leviticus for a long time just to try to weed out those who weren’t really into it. The plan backfired, the church kept on growing.

As it grew, the pressure mounted on Rob. He said that all the success was doing was making him more miserable. He had to make tough decisions. For example, one day a man offered to give him land for a new building, which the church desperately needed. Then the man decided to build him a building for free, too. The land was in a prime location. Rob did not feel right about the offer. Even though it was as good as it gets, Rob turned it down, which shocked the man who made the offer. He prayed, “God, I don’t ever want to stand in the way of what you are doing.”

A little bit later they find a large mall which is on the decline. The owner agrees to give Mars Hill the building if they buy the land. From this experience, Rob learned again of God’s provision. But he was still struggling to do too much on his own. One Sunday, he

thought about walking away from it all. Between services he said that he thought, “I wonder how far I could get out of town before anyone would catch me.” He was very successful, yet he was miserable. He started to realize his own insufficiency to handle the burden. It became so bad that his son would keep on saying his name trying to get his attention. His young son realized that Rob was not paying attention. He had become so focused on the church that he frequently tuned out his family.

Rob discovered that he had to learn how to be present for things that are important. He presented a very thought provoking definition of sin. He said, “Your job is the relentless pursuit of who God made you to be. Everything else is sin.”

Rob said, “I had bought into the lie of the super pastor.” He had become addicted to the ministry buzz. The rush of doing ministry diverted his focus from everyday life. When he stopped doing ministry for a couple of days, it was as if he was coming down off a high. Normal life did not give the same buzz.

Rob said, “It is very easy to get so excited about what God is doing through me that I lose what God is doing to me.” He had to learn how to start taking a Sabbath. He had to start to ask himself tough questions like, “What days of the week am I unavailable.” Other questions came at him like, “When was the last time I just did nothing or simply stared out the window?” If we talk so much about getting away with God and having the right priorities, are we smoking what we are selling?

Rob reached the point that he started going to see a psychologist. He openly admitted to the elders at his church that he was burnt out. He even changed his schedule and lifestyle to deal with all the pressures. He stopped living based on the expectations of others. Rob said that many people are driven by things that they never address. They have a weight that they don’t want to admit exists. He talked about recognizing idols. He said, “Your paycheck and job can be an idol.”

Rob got to the point that he was striving for the wrong things. What the world needs and what God is calling us to do is to “reveal the mystery behind the mystery.” But it can be so hard to say no. Rob said, “I discovered that the gospel is bigger than I had been taught.”

Instead of presenting the Gospel as a legal transaction, he has started to think of it as a new way of life. God is calling us to live in this world as people who bear His image. Rob said that the point of the gospel is not forgiveness but restoration. It’s not just fire insurance or sin management.

Session 2

Rob unveiled how restoration theology has been lost by modern evangelicals. To many within Christianity, the Gospel has been reduced to getting a ticket to heaven. But it is about so much more.

Rob took the audience back to the beginning because it is important to know where mankind has been. He read the creation account in Genesis and pointed out several things that I had never seen. While God is the Creator, not everything in the garden is produced by Him. For example, the land produces vegetation. God created things that have the ability to produce other things. Rob said, "God loads creation with potential. Creation is good, and it is going somewhere."

When most people think of the Garden of Eden, they envision a perfect place. But Rob pointed out that the garden was not perfect. It was good. Perfection implies that something is complete, cannot be improved upon. If you touch it, you will mess it up. The Garden is good bursting with promise. The real question is, "What are we going to do with the potential that God has implanted in each one of us."

Many people, even Christians, are bored by life. But God never intended on us to live a boring life. Rob said that somebody who is bored is essentially saying to God that He has made nothing of value to him.

God gave Adam things to do. He gave Adam dominion over creation and even allowed him to name each creature. Naming creation connected Adam with it. God even let man make mistakes. God could have done a better job naming creation, but He gave man liberty. One of the primary things that Jesus came to do is to provide freedom to those captive to sin, death and the curse. God's dream is to reverse the negative ramifications of the curse. God wants to find partners to fulfill His dream.

The missing part of the Gospel is that we have new life through Jesus, the ability to recapture God's dream for the world. God want us to bring change to this planet and everything on it in order to reverse the curse caused by man's original sin. Many Christians have a view of life where earth is a place to be left behind, not something to be reclaimed for God. But Biblical prophecy shows that God will create a new heaven and new earth. Even while all creation groans under the weight of sin and death, God is progressively working to reverse the curse and restore all things.

Rob said, "The end is the beginning with God living here on the earth with people." The Bible comes full circle. It begins and ends with practically the same scene. Rob asked, "Maybe it is the people who are on God's plan that stay?...Are you teaching kids how to do the right things to get out of here? No wonder they are bored."

Modern Christianity has been hijacked by the obsession of just biding our time until Jesus takes us away. This has led many to practice couch potato religion. This mindset sees the world as intrinsically evil, something to be purged. Whereas, God seems to see it as something of value, something worth dying for and struggling to see it restored. Did the fall push out all the good? Or is there still some goodness at the core of creation? Rob suggests that even in the most evil person there is still a spark of good, at least a trace of God's original design. While there is none who is righteous on his own, we all have some good in us.

Further connecting the garden imagery, Rob took the group back to the events after Jesus' death on the cross. Jesus rises from a garden tomb. Mary thinks he is the gardener. Jesus conquers death in a garden. Rob said that Jesus conquers death and sin in a garden. This imagery masterfully shows God's master plan. Acts 3:21 points out that God is restoring all things, we simply have to choose if we want to be part of His redemptive work. As ambassadors to reclaim the good in the world, Christians should be leading the way in all fields including science, art, academia, sports and government. Jesus demonstrated by his life that eternal life is now, not some day. Are we really living the kind of life that goes on forever or are we merely hoping not to be left behind?

Rob challenged the traditional view of heaven as something that actually works against efforts to share the gospel. Many people think of heaven as a boring place because it is perfect instead of good. They think it is finished without need to do anything other than sit around and play a harp and sing. Rob suggested that instead of a static, perfect place, heaven will resemble more the garden, a place full of life and opportunity. In heaven, we won't know all things because that would make us God. What about those who are not very good at singing? What if my harp won't stay in tune?

Rob sees heaven as a state more reflecting the Garden of Eden, a place full of potential and teeming with life, not a boring, static, perfect place where we know everything and stop discovering, growing or becoming. He suggested that whatever we love to do and makes us feel most alive will be what we do in heaven. Rob suggested that we will have the opportunity in heaven to live out our dreams unfettered by doubt, fear, guilt, sin or a dying body. We will not have to work. But we will get the opportunity to work and do things that allow us to be who God designed us to be. Time will fly by fast in heaven because we will be living the life we always wanted. The good news is that we can start to live that way now if we only believe and press through all the fetters of this current reality.

Instead of merely accepting what has been passed down by the previous generation, we must take it and see if it is true. Does our tradition and theology mesh with God's stated intention as outlined in the Bible? Rob suggested that we must start to look at the wizard behind the curtain. He called much of the fatalistic theology taught Americans, "A depression masked with Bible verses." It creates adults who get their ticket and just sit around waiting for the bus to arrive. People talk about being on fire once. After their emotional buzz wore off, they come crashing down to earth. Our false notions of what God's plan looks like has kept many from entering God's best here and now.

Asked about evangelism, Rob said that he doesn't use the word because it sounds like some kind of "disease." Instead, he encourages people to wonder and fall in love with God. This causes the gospel to spread because people naturally talk about what they love. Rob's church never told people to bring their friends or had a new member campaign. They did not guilt people into doing the right thing. Instead, they created a culture where people wanted to invite their friends kind, of like what happens when people invite someone to the party of the year.

The word evangelism also implies distinctions that cause division and unnecessary separation from those we want to reach. Many in modern Christianity have an “us verses them” mindset where the lost are the seekers and Christians are the people with the answers. While this is somewhat true, it is also true that even the best Christian is still a seeker on a spiritual journey. None of us have arrived or have any reason to be proud of our own righteousness.

Going more into how he prepares messages, Rob talked about taking time to listen and wrestle with passages. He said, “I figure that I ought to listen to God before I try to speak for Him.” He studies individual words and looks for word pictures in the passage. He also focuses on numbers in the text because numbers are always in the Bible for a reason. He looks for where else these themes are covered in the Bible. He studies the location and culture of the event. Rob’s teaching has challenged many traditional theological sacred cows. One youth worker asked what he should do because if he taught much of what Rob said, he would likely lose his job. Rob responded by saying, “It is easier to give birth than raise the dead.” He encouraged the man to be very realistic about where his church is on its journey. He discouraged anyone trying to move the flock too fast because people can only handle a certain amount of change at any one time. Transformation takes time and patience. And quite frankly, some people don’t want to grow. In those instances, you can’t make someone budge if they want to stay where they are.

Rob said that he has friends who left the ministry, scaled back their lifestyle and got a secular job so that they could do what burned inside of them. He said, “I would rather have a soul than a paycheck from a church.” This word really challenged many of the ministers in the room. You could tell by how the audience reacted.

Instead of be openly subversive, Rob encouraged the audience to quietly and humbly do what the Spirit guides them to do. He also warned that truth does generally cause division. He cautioned against taking the sin management way of ministry which simply focuses on getting youth to do the right thing. Rob encouraged a ministry philosophy which instead shows them how to live a better life and make proper decisions for themselves. He said that we should be confident that what we believe is the truth and not cower from challenges. He asked, “Where is the swagger?” He suggested that if we teach with fear the students will be able to smell it no matter how hard we try to hide it. We challenge students to prove us wrong and really taste and see that the Lord is good.

If we want to be relevant, we need to stop viewing life through just our narrow understanding of who God is. This is not a call for relativism. No, it is a call for deeper exploration. This does not deny absolute truth. It simply states that we have not dug deep enough to understand all facets of that truth. We can’t settle for anything less than a continuous journey for more of God and a deeper understanding of His truth. Rob said, “There are lot and lots of ways to be a Christian.” No one denomination or tradition has the answer. Jesus unveils the answer as He writes the truth on the hearts of His living epistles. Presumption kills the journey.

Connecting these points to Scripture, Rob talked about the incident where the disciples wanted to call down fire on others for casting out demons even though they were not part of their group. The disciples saw these people as moving in on their turf. Jesus looked at the situation as us just got bigger. The people casting out demons were doing God's work. All the disciples were focused on was that they were not part of their little band. How dare they do something good like cast out demons?

In this story, the disciples demonstrate the old way, based on division. The new and living way is founded on oneness. The old way is suspicious and wants to designate what is "official." The new approach is open and inviting. It holds to truth yet is not oppressive in defending it. The new paradigm trusts that God will protect truth. It is not afraid of a legitimate question. Rob asked, "It is possible that in the name of God, you are actually working against God?"