



Darkwood Brew.org

Wherever You Are, We'll Meet You There

New to the role of facilitator? Here are a few tips to help you get started.

- First of all, a facilitator's job is to coordinate the flow of each session. View the video segment ahead of time and make your own notes and observations.
- Prepare the meeting place so that it is comfortable. Arrive early; help organize any refreshments and test your video player/computer.
- Getting to know one another helps the discussions flow. Welcome all, catch up and reflect a bit on last week's session in the first few minutes.
- You don't have to be the expert. You are not expected to provide answers to questions provided. So let the questions ignite the conversation and see where it takes the group.
- It's everyone's responsibility to make sure everyone else gets an equal amount of time to talk.
- Listen first; evaluate later. Make sure you understand a comment, then ask questions or pose other options.
- Encourage participants to bring a Bible or other resources.
- If you feel so moved, start, and/or end your session in prayer.

Leaders Guide

"Wholly Human, Holy Divine"

In the Sundays after Epiphany the narrative points us to the identity of Jesus. Having proclaimed the entry of light into the world at Advent and Christmas we begin to discover yet again just who Jesus was So too with the early church. In the 5th century, the Council of Chalcedon declared the teaching that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine. In this series, we will explore this belief and see Jesus as a mirror reflecting our own deeply human nature and our own imago dei- that spark of God residing within us. In what feels like finite human circumstances, can we see that there is always something more ? This is the ground of our hope.

Welcome to the Darkwood Brew journey!

We are glad you can join us. Our primary resources for small group study are condensed versions of Darkwood Brew's weekly one-hour episodes. These are called GUIDED EPISODES. Each Guided Episode is 25-30 minutes in length. There are pause points with questions provided for each Episode, intended for group discussion or individual reflection.

On the following page, you will find information on the Series Topic, Skype Guests, Scripture passage, and Questions posed during the episode.



Questions:

1. Why would Jesus need to be baptized?
2. Why do you think Jesus asked to be baptized? Why do you think John initially declined the request?
3. The baptism narrative in Matthew suggests that Jesus had a growing awareness of his role? What is Matthew trying to tell us about his divinity and about his humanity?
4. What does it mean to know that you are a beloved child of God? What does baptism provide you? What does it require of you?

EPISODE TITLE: "The Call"

Wholly Human, Holy Divine, Episode 1

Featured Guest: Mark Davis

Ordained in 1996, Pastor Davis holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Theology, Ethics and Culture from the University of Iowa and a Doctor of Ministry from Union Presbyterian Seminary in Virginia. He is the author of two books: "Talking About Evangelism," (May 2006), and "Left Behind and Loving It (Fall 2011), and he blogs intensive Bible studies regularly at <http://leftbehindandlovingit.blogspot.com>. He is a music lover who sings and plays jazz saxophone. Mark and his wife, Chris, have four children ranging in age from 12 to 23.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Matthew 3

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near. ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." ⁴Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁷ But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹Do not presume to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ 'I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing-fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.'

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' ¹⁵But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness.' Then he consented. ¹⁶And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.'

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Questions:

1. Why would Jesus need to be tempted?
2. Why do you think Jesus was tempted? What role do temptations and our response to them play in our own lives?
3. In what ways might our temptation and seductions lure us away from relationship with God?
4. What do you think David means when he refers to, “an obedience of profound trust?” How can the wilderness sometimes be a place of deep beauty and meaning?

EPISODE TITLE: “The Temptation”

Wholly Human, Holy Divine, Episode 2

Featured Guest: David Lose

David J. Lose became the president of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia on Sept. 1, 2014. Before that, he held the Marbury E. Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching at Luther Seminary, where he also served as the Director of the Center for Biblical Preaching. He is the author of *Preaching at the Crossroads: How the World – and Our Preaching – Is Changing* (2013), *Making Sense of the Cross* (2011), *Making Sense of the Christian Faith* (2010), *Making Sense of Scripture* (2009), and *Confessing Jesus Christ: Preaching in a Postmodern World* (2003). He speaks widely in the United States and abroad on preaching, Christian faith in a postmodern world, and biblical interpretation.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Matthew 4: 1-17

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³The tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.’ ⁴But he answered, ‘It is written, “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’ ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶saying to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, “He will command his angels concerning you”, and “On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.”’ ⁷Jesus said to him, ‘Again it is written, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test.”’ ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; ⁹and he said to him, ‘All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.’ ¹⁰Jesus said to him, ‘Away with you, Satan! for it is written, “Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.”’ ¹¹Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him. ¹² Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the lake, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: ¹⁵ ‘Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— ¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.’ ¹⁷From that time Jesus began to proclaim, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’

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Questions:

1. Where do you find Heaven?
2. In what ways might those who are poor in spirit, those who mourn or those who are meek experience Heaven? Have you had an experience of Heaven or blessedness in a similar situation?
3. In what way might those who hunger and thirst, those who are merciful or those who are pure in heart experience Heaven? Have you had an experience of Heaven or blessedness in a similar situation?
4. In what ways might peacemakers and those who are persecuted for righteousness experience Heaven? Have you had an experience of Heaven or blessedness in a similar situation? Where do you find Heaven?

EPISODE TITLE: "The Struggle"

Wholly Human, Holy Divine, Episode 3

Featured Guest: Eric Elnes

Dr. Eric Elnes is a biblical scholar with a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Princeton Theological Seminary. He is also a leading articulator of Convergence Christianity and Senior Minister of Countryside Community Church (UCC) in Omaha, NE. Eric has written several books on faith, theology and culture including, *The Phoenix Affirmations: A New Vision for the Future of Christianity* (Jossey-Bass, 2006) and a book on experiential worship called *Igniting Worship: The Seven Deadly Sins* (Abingdon, 2004). In 2006, Eric also helped lead a 2,500 mile walk from Phoenix to Washington, DC, to promote awareness of progressive/emerging Christian faith and practice and meet with Christians at a grassroots to hear their hopes and dreams for the future of faith in America.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Matthew 5: 1-20

5When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:³ 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ 'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. ⁵ 'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. ⁶ 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. ⁷ 'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. ⁸ 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. ⁹ 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. ¹⁰ 'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ 'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. ¹³ 'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. ¹⁴ 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. ¹⁷ 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

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Questions:

1. The Lord's Prayer asks a lot from God. What is asked of the one doing the praying?
2. What does the idea of the kingdom of God mean to you? What does it look like if that kingdom is manifest on Earth? What part do you play?
3. Michael's insights regarding the petition in this prayer to give us our daily bread speak to our connection with others around the world. When we ask to have our needs met what else might we be asking for?
4. The Lord's Prayer asks a lot from God but what does it ask of the one doing the praying? What do you think makes this prayer revolutionary?

EPISODE TITLE: "The Prayer"

Wholly Human, Holy Divine, Episode 4

Featured Guest: Eric Elnes

Dr. Eric Elnes is a biblical scholar with a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Princeton Theological Seminary. He is also a leading articulator of Convergence Christianity and Senior Minister of Countryside Community Church (UCC) in Omaha, NE. Eric has written several books on faith, theology and culture including, *The Phoenix Affirmations: A New Vision for the Future of Christianity* (Jossey-Bass, 2006) and a book on experiential worship called *Igniting Worship: The Seven Deadly Sins* (Abingdon, 2004). In 2006, Eric also helped lead a 2,500 mile walk from Phoenix to Washington, DC, to promote awareness of progressive/emerging Christian faith and practice and meet with Christians at a grassroots to hear their hopes and dreams for the future of faith in America.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Matthew 6: 7-21

7 'When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 'Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. ¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. 16 'And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 19 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

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Questions:

1. What is the relationship between courage and vulnerability? What do you see that relationship in these two stories?
2. What imaginative meanings do you find in these stories? Do you think that they happened as reported in Matthew? Either way, why do they matter to you?
3. John observes that in his life facing vulnerability and taking courageous stance often reveals that God provides a way when no way seems apparent. Have you had similar experiences? If so, what do they call to be or to do?

EPISODE TITLE: "The Letting Go"

Wholly Human, Holy Divine, Episode 5

Featured Guest: Bishop John Selders

The Right Rev. John L. Selders, Jr., is an ordained minister serving the United Church of Christ (UCC) as the organizing pastor of Amistad UCC in Hartford, Connecticut. John was born and raised in an extended family of pastors and church leaders in St. Louis. Gifted in music, John became a widely recognized songwriter, musician and performer. John's academic and theological training was at Life Christian Bible College, Webster University and Eden Theological Seminary. In 1984, John confronted HIV/AIDS for the first time when a deacon in his father's congregation in St. Louis came out as gay and living with AIDS. John engaged in extensive education and discussion about this new disease with the leadership of the congregation who agreed to continue this deacon in his church position and struggle with appropriate ministry responses.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Matthew 14: 13-33

13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." ¹⁶Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." ¹⁸And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. ²²Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." ²⁸Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

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Questions:

1. What does the transfiguration tell us about what it means to be wholly human, holy divine? Have you had your own mountaintop experience? What meaning did it hold for you?
2. What do all of these stories about the life of Jesus have to tell us about fear and about calling? What can we do to be more courageous in following our own passion to do the right good?
3. Eric suggests it is possible that God is shown to be present even in the darkest places, such as the cross. How is it possible for us, along with Jesus, to find light and life and hope even in that darkness? What does that possibility tell us about God?

EPISODE TITLE: “The Transfiguration”

Wholly Human, Holy Divine, Episode 6

Featured Guest: Eric Elnes

Dr. Eric Elnes is a biblical scholar with a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies from Princeton Theological Seminary. He is also a leading articulator of Convergence Christianity and Senior Minister of Countryside Community Church (UCC) in Omaha, NE. Eric has written several books on faith, theology and culture including, *The Phoenix Affirmations: A New Vision for the Future of Christianity* (Jossey-Bass, 2006) and a book on experiential worship called *Igniting Worship: The Seven Deadly Sins* (Abingdon, 2004). In 2006, Eric also helped lead a 2,500 mile walk from Phoenix to Washington, DC, to promote awareness of progressive/emerging Christian faith and practice and meet with Christians at a grassroots to hear their hopes and dreams for the future of faith in America.

Pneuma Divina Scripture: Matthew 16:24 – 17:8

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? ²⁷‘For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.’

17Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ²And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴Then Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ ⁵While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!’ ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Get up and do not be afraid.’ ⁸And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

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