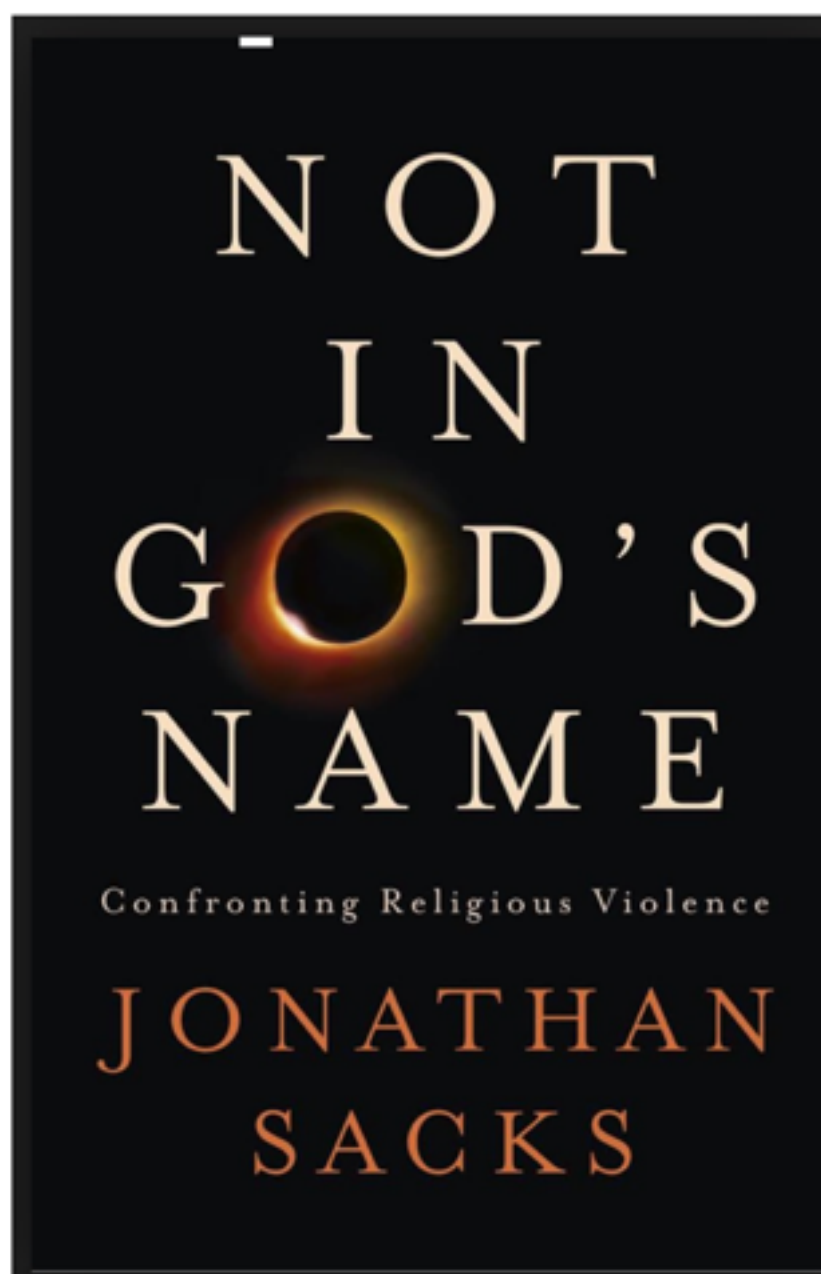


NOT IN GOD'S NAME



ACTS
WINTER 2018

St David's United Church
Calgary



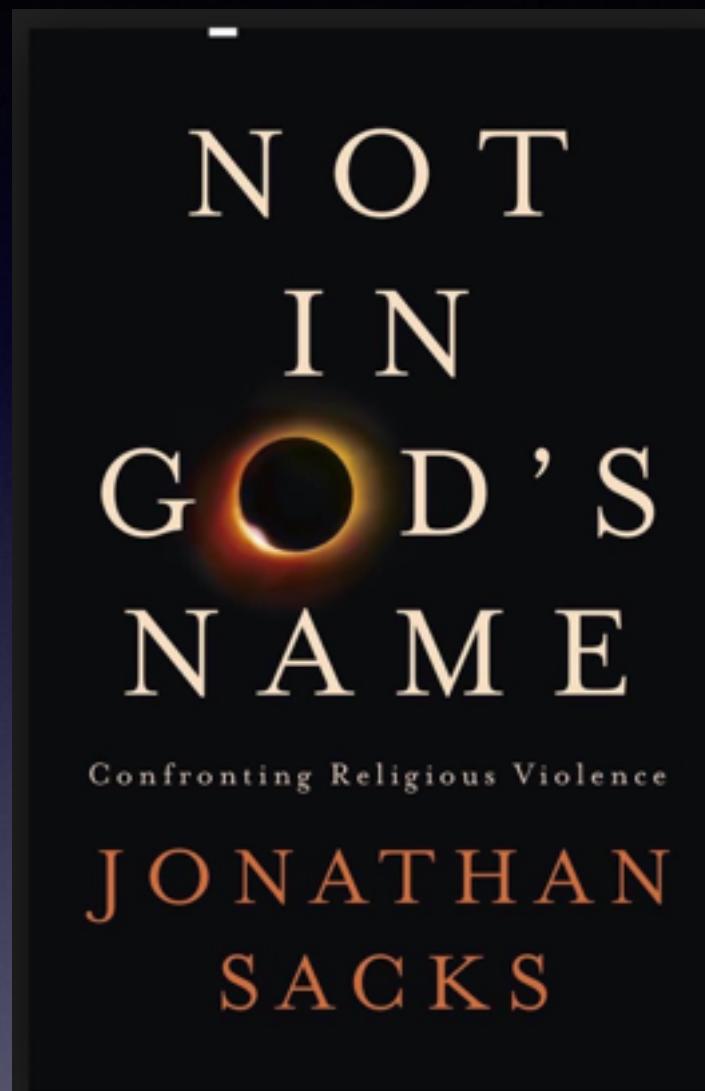
Holy Manners Book Study # 40

Session #7

- House Keeping
- Opening:
June Martin

Housekeeping

- Please feel free to raise questions as we go.
- March 26: Guatemala
- LENTEN RETREAT - MT. ST. FRANCIS - Such a special time on a gorgeous winter's day.
- SDUC.ca



Opening:

June Martin

SIBLINGS

CHAPTER 9: REJECTION OF REJECTION

- “The Hebrew Bible was a document meant to be *heard* rather than read. It came into being at the critical juncture between orality and literacy....to understand the Bible you sometimes have to listen to it rather than read it. ”
- “The Bible makes us hear Leah’s pain in the names she gives her children... There is sustained anguish in these words.” Gen. 29:32-34



- **Introductory comments**

1. Sibling rivalry, the central theme of many of the Hebrew Bible stories we have studied, is not a given of the human condition.

2. It may be natural, but it is not inevitable.

3. Torah law exists to serve the purpose of justice.

The impartiality of justice must take precedence over love - since love implies favouritism.

Do you agree?

Discuss

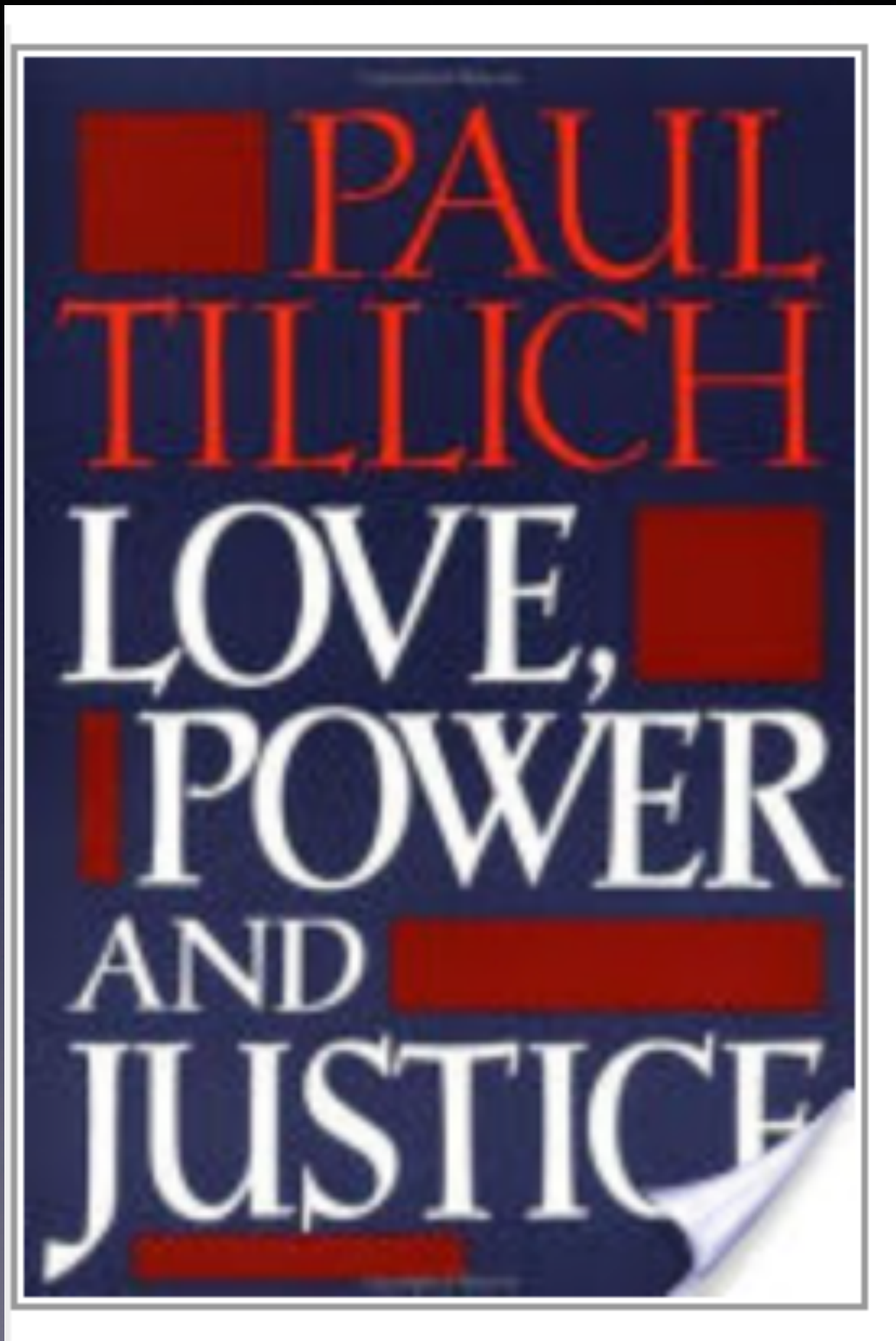




- **What do these images tell us about law and justice in a free society?**
- **What are some of the important values inherent in the British Common Law and the Protestant Faith Tradition that are important components of our Canadian heritage?**

- **A current court ruling - based on precedent.**
- **The defendant is presumed Innocent, unless proven guilty,**





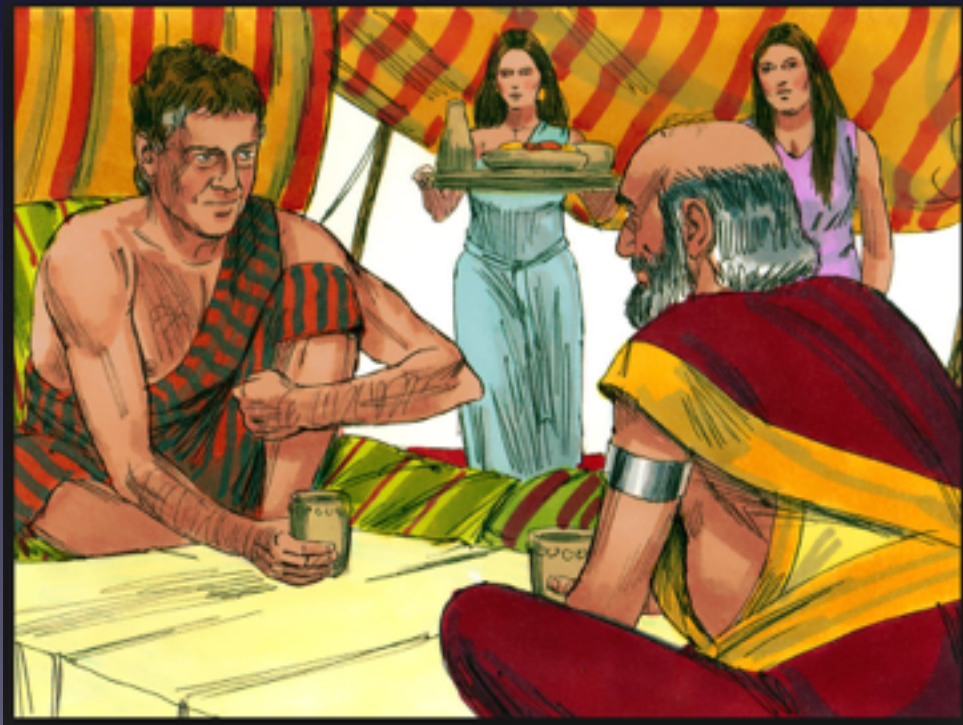
A Brief Summary and Correlation

[https://
karlamclaren.com/
2013/01/21/love-power-
and-justice/](https://karlamclaren.com/2013/01/21/love-power-and-justice/)



Some key insights from Sack's "Rejection of Rejection" chapter:

In the story of Laban, Rachel and Leah the deceiver is deceived (162) Jacob, fleeing from one sibling rivalry, unintentionally creates another. (162)



Discuss

The fifth story of siblings: “One that will gloriously transcend all the others.”

The denouement/resolution is provided by Moses centuries later:

"There are to be no more dramas of chosen and rejected sons, preferential treatment, favouritism and the psychodynamics of sibling rivalry."

All are loved equally by God.



What do we know about love?



Love unites, but it also divides.

It leaves the unloved, feeling rejected, abandoned, forsaken, alone.

You cannot build a society, a community, or even a family on love alone. (165)

Discuss

Abrahamic monotheism is predicated on love for profoundly theological reasons. It was a rejection of the unpredictability of the pagan gods and the blind chance of natural selection.

The Hebrew Bible, in contrast, tells us that we are here because God created us in love.

But love is not enough. We need justice as well as love, because justice is impartial.

Justice without love is harsh. Love without justice can be unfair.



The Joseph story teaches us that no longer are there favourites in the covenantal relationship where one is chosen and the others are unchosen.

For all are chosen. All have an equal covenant with God.

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Genesis teaches us the "rejection of rejection"

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REJECTION OF REJECTION

- **“Dividing the world into saints and sinners, the saved and the damned, the children of God and the children of the devil is the first step down the road to violence in the name of God.”**
- **“By the end of Genesis, however, Joseph, who really was a victim, refuses to define himself as such... This is an immensely significant transformation... *sibling rivalry may be natural, but it is not inevitable. It can be conquered.*”**

Summaries to follow



A SUMMARY OF GENESIS: SOME KEY LEARNINGS

- 1. None of the central figures in the Genesis story are all good or all bad. Not either/or, but both/and.**
- 2. Genesis provides us with stories of moral complexity. Dualism leads to violence. It introduces us to nuance.**

3. Joseph teaches us that self-victimization is unsatisfactory. Instead of asking "Who did this to me?" Joseph asks, "What redemptive deed has this put me in a position to perform?"

4. Genesis teaches us that sibling rivalry is not a given of the human condition.



- “The narrative genius of Genesis is precisely that it forces us to undergo role reversal. We don’t just see the world through the eyes of the chosen... We feel their (Ishmael, Esau, Leah) sense of rejection.”

“That is why Genesis is the story of two covenants between God and humanity on the one hand, God and Jacob’s children on the other.”

Key Learnings con'd

5. Between Moses, Aaron and Miriam there was no rivalry. Moses, Aaron and Miriam teach us that only when a people has overcome its internal rivalries is it ready for the journey. They teach us the value of confederation of tribes and nations.

Discuss

6. Genesis represents truth-as-story rather than truth-as-system. It is about meanings, and meanings cannot be conveyed except through narrative.

7. Biblical narrative functions on many different levels of comprehension. Our understanding of it deepens as we grow.

8. Biblical consciousness is chronological, not logical. Its concepts are not abstract and conceptual, but real encounters of challenge and response, during which wisdom matures and relationships are honed and refined.

9. Genesis opens for us the meaning of monotheistic universalism. We are all different, but each carry in our being the trace of the one God.

10. Sibling rivalry can be replaced by covenantal choseness for all.

11. Jews, Christians and Muslims need no longer live in a state of sibling rivalry, but in a state of divine love (plenitude) with equal love and covenantal blessing existing for all.

Discuss

“Why I Am a Jew”

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=CAbiFbpQP8o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAbiFbpQP8o)

Expanding our **encounter with Sacks and his book**

Jonathan Sacks: “Not in God’s Name”

A Video Presentation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oK3PK_qHkrs

18:30 - 26:00

MIKE GRAMMER'S CLOSING

Next Week: Session #8

Opening: Aileen Shewchuk

Reading Assignment: March 5

II: SIBLINGS

Chapter 10: The Stranger

**Chapter 11: The Universality of
Justice, The Particularity of Love**

Closing: Jack McFarquhar

- **Have a great week!**
- **See you on March 12th.**