

Conversion - From Paranoia to Metanoia



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Conversion as Intimacy with God

*Breast of the Lord,
Kingdom of God:
Who rests against it,
A theologian shall be.
(Evagrius of Pontus – 4th century)*



I. Conversion as intimacy with God – John's Gospel

II. The Uniqueness of John's gospel

a. John's gospel as a mystical gospel

b. Jesus as always divine in John's Gospel



III. The central metaphor:

“Listening to the Heartbeat of God” – John 13, 23

a. Situating the metaphor in John’s gospel

- In Jesus’ farewell discourse
- In John’s gospel as a whole
 - Images of ideal discipleship in John’s gospel
 - ✚ **Mary of Magdala** – “The lover of the *Song of Songs* seeking her beloved/soulmate
 - ✚ ***The beloved disciple*** – the one who leans on Christ’s breast, hears his heartbeat, and looks out at the world from there
 - ❖ This trumps everything else in terms of discipleship, including power and office



IV. Fleshing out the metaphor: How do we listen for Christ's heartbeat?

- By listening to Jesus call our name
 - The overall hermeneutic of the 4th gospel: “What are you looking for?”
 - The abstract answer: “The way, the truth, the light, the life, the water of life, rebirth”
 - The existential answer: Jesus’ answer to Mary of Magdala at the end of John’s original gospel: To hear our name pronounced in loved
 - Robert Michel on what this means
 - Henri Nouwen - Living as “God’s Beloved”



V. How do we live this out?

- 1) By letting Jesus show us where God lives - John 1
 - And then by showing Jesus where we live – John 11
- 2) By not blocking access to God – “Cleansing of temple” – John 2
- 3) By being “born again, from above” – John 3
- 4) By accepting the judgment of light, truth, and Spirit – John 3
- 5) By trusting in the “bread of life” - John 6
 - i. By being nourished daily by the Eucharist
 - ii. By accepting “the sarx”



V. How do we live this out?

- 6) By not “stoning others with the Commandments”
– John 8
- 7) By living in honesty – “refusing to lie” – John 9
- 8) By letting the resurrected Jesus descend into our
communal and private hells – John 20.

