

Pastor's Winter Book Club 2022

Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again

By Rachel Held Evans

Session #3

January 19 at 6pm on Zoom and January 20 at 10:30am in the Fellowship Hall

For Session #3 Read “The Walls” and “War Stories”

Zoom Link for Wednesday, January 19 at 6pm: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84865582248>

Or use meeting ID: 848 6558 2248

Opening Prayer

Warm up question:

If you could make a verse or a story from the Bible disappear, which one would it be?

(Fear not—you are not actually able to remove anything from scripture; this is just another way of asking: what in the Bible makes you uncomfortable or creates difficulty for you?)

“The Walls”

1. “It depends on who tells the story” is the refrain throughout this chapter intro. “For every battle a thousand tales could be told, yet we seldom hear more than one of them,” RHE says at the end of the intro. What do you do you think we are to do with this as we read scripture?

“War Stories”

*A friend’s seven-year-old captured the angst well when she recently asked,
“Mom, is God the good guy or the bad guy in this story?”*

2. What challenged you or encouraged you as you read this chapter in the book? What did you highlight or hope to discuss when we met together?
3. On page 63, RHE writes, *“When it comes to processing these troubling stories, there are generally three types of people: 1) those who accept without question that God ordered the military campaigns in Canaan and has likely supported others throughout history, 2) those who are so troubled by the notion of God condoning ethnic cleansing that it stains their faith or compels them to abandon it, 3) those who can name all of the Kardashian sisters and are probably happier for her.”* (I think option 3 is her way of saying the third option is not to deal with it at all.) Which type are you? Is there another type or approach?
4. What are some hard questions you have about the Bible that perhaps you’ve been afraid to confront? What does it look like for you to “face these questions head-on, mind and heart fully engaged, willing to risk the loss of faith if that’s where the search leads”? And what might it mean to continue in your faith, even if your questions and doubts are not fully resolved?

5. Has fear of rejection by other Christians kept you from sharing your difficulty, doubt, or dilemma when it comes to scripture or faith (see pages 68-69)?
6. At the conclusion of the chapter, the author acknowledges that she has yet to find satisfying answers to all her questions about the Bible's violent and troubling texts, but that she finds perspective in
 - 1) paying attention to the stories and experiences of biblical women,
 - 2) keeping humble about her own culture's violent tendencies,
 - 3) seeing in Jesus a God who "would rather die by violence than commit it."

Which, if any, of these perspectives do you find most helpful or challenging?

7. What is satisfying, troubling, or frightening about the assertion that comes on pages 72-73:
"...the authors of scripture like the authors of any other work (including [this book we are reading]) wrote with agendas."

Read Philippians 2:6-11

[Jesus,] who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.
Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

8. How does Jesus turn the war story on its head?

Sharing Joys and Concerns

Closing Prayer

For Session #4 read *The Debate and Wisdom Stories*