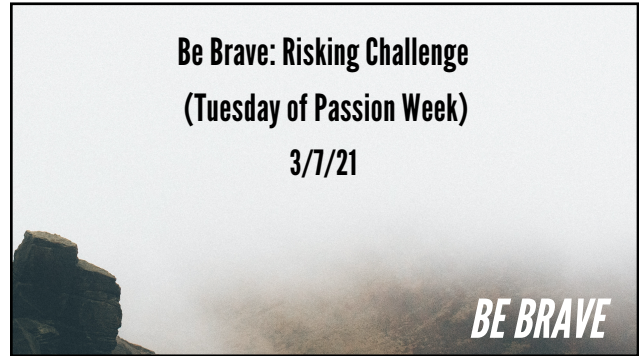
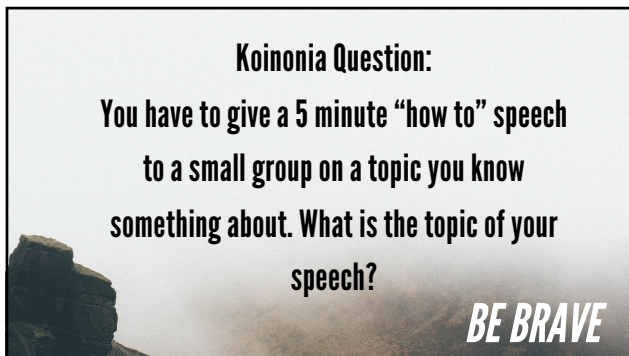


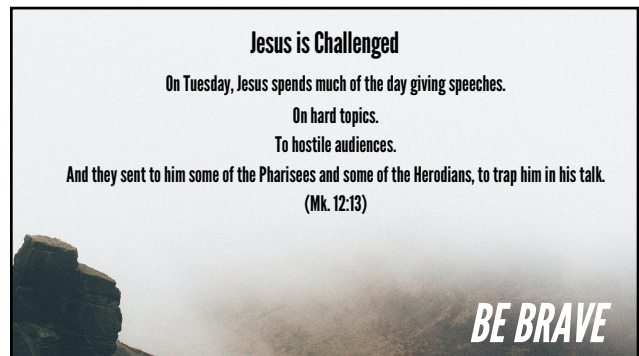
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### Amy-Jill Levine VIDEO



5

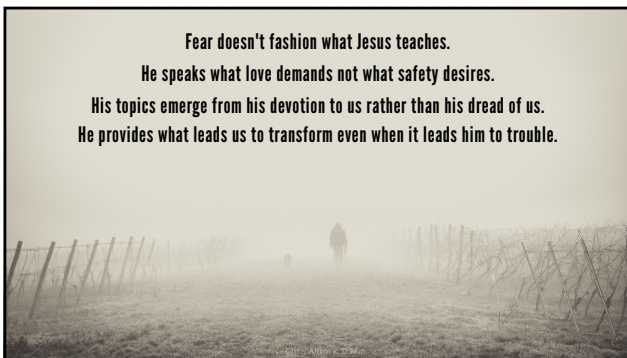
All of us are poised between two dangers. The obvious one is "The Other." The subtle one is "Us." ... We gain a lot by attacking the Other—in religious circles as well as political ones. Ironically, Us can be as great a threat to each of us as the Other is, probably greater. Us might withdraw its approval of me. It might label me disloyal, unsupportive, unbeliever, unorthodox, liberal, anathema, etc. To be rebuked, marginalized, or excluded by Us is an even greater threat than to be attacked by the Other. I don't think we Christians often realize the great degree to which we live in fear of Us. (Brian D. McLaren)



Chris Atwood, D.Min.

6

Fear doesn't fashion what Jesus teaches.  
He speaks what love demands not what safety desires.  
His topics emerge from his devotion to us rather than his dread of us.  
He provides what leads us to transform even when it leads him to trouble.



7

### Speaking the Truth

1. What impact does fear have on you when it comes to speaking truth?
2. How do you overcome that fear?



**BE BRAVE**

8



### God and Country

14 And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" 15 But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." 16 And they brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." 17 Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at him. (Mk. 12:14-17)

**BE BRAVE**

9

### Taxes

...the denarius that had the picture of the Emperor Tiberius on one side, with the inscription, in Latin, that translates, "Caesar Augustus Tiberius, son of the Divine [or Deified] Augustus ... The other side was engraved with the depiction of a seated woman, probably Tiberius's wife, Julia, and the inscription, in Latin ... "High Priest." AJL, 71

**BE BRAVE**

10

### Silver Denarius

Worth one day's wages  
Coin bearing Caesar's image in  
Matthew 22:17-22



**BE BRAVE**

11

### Reflection

- What risks was Jesus taking by this teaching?
- What gave Jesus the confidence to stand by this challenge?
- What risks might this teaching call us to take?

**BE BRAVE**

12

### Interpreting the Bible

28 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" 29 Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." 32 And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. 33 And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions. (Mk. 12:28-34 ESV)

**BE BRAVE**

13

### Greatest Commandments

Jewish Tradition recognizes 613 commandments in the Scriptures of Israel ... 365 negative commandments ... and 248 positive commandments. The Talmud, a collection of Jewish teaching compiled after the time of Jesus, provides a list that attempts to rank, or better, to summarize the commandment.

- Using Ps 15, they list 11.
- Then, using Is. 33:15, they list 6.
- Micah 6:8 summarizes with a list of 3.
- Habakkuk 2:4 summarizes with 1: living by faith. (ALL)

**BE BRAVE**

14

For those who count the Bible as sacred, interpretation is not a matter of *whether* to pick and choose, but *how* to pick and choose. We are all selective. We all wrestle with how to interpret and apply the Bible to our lives. We all go to the text looking for something, and we all have a tendency to find it. So the question we have to ask ourselves is this: Are we reading with the prejudice of love or are we reading with the prejudices of judgment and power, self-interest and greed?

If you are looking for Bible verses with which to support slavery, you will find them. If you are looking for verses with which to abolish slavery, you will find them. If you are looking for verses with which to oppress women, you will find them. If you are looking for verses with which to liberate and honor women, you will find them. If you are looking for reasons to wage war, you will find them. If you are looking for reasons to promote peace, you will find them. If you are looking for an outdated and irrelevant ancient text, you will find it. If you are looking for truth, believe me, you will find it.

Rachel Held Evans

**BE BRAVE**

15

### Reflection

- What risk might Jesus be taking with this teaching?
- Is it appropriate to prioritize certain texts/scriptures, or is everything equally important in the Bible?
- What risks might be involved in reading all of the Bible through the lense of love God/ love neighbor?

**BE BRAVE**

16

### 21 Love Questions for Churches

#### God's Love for Me

1. What priority have I given this past week/ month to fully accepting God's love for me?
2. What practices or habits have enabled me to sense and savor God's love for me?
3. Specifically, what forms of prayer have led this past week/ month to seeing myself as God does?
4. How have I practiced self-care (mental, spiritual, physical and emotional)—the kind prompted by seeing myself as God does—over the past week/month?
5. How have I actively addressed messages internally and in my culture/ environment claiming I am less than God's beloved?
6. How have I stewarded pain this past week/month, allowing God to use it for my growth while also engaging authentically in grief and lament?
7. How have I listened to myself over the past week/ month and responded to what I heard?

**BE BRAVE**

17

### 21 Love Questions for Churches

#### My Love for God

1. What priority have I given this past week/ month to fully expressing my love for God?
2. What practices or habits have enabled me to express my love for God?
3. Specifically, how have I practiced / experienced forms of gratitude and/or praise over the past week/ month?
4. What forms of prayer have I engaged in that lead to expressing love for God?
5. How have I practiced listening to God and responding to what I heard during the past week/ month?
6. In what ways have I been tempted to treat spirituality less relationally: less of a matter of my heart (how I cleave to God) and more a matter of my hands (what I receive from God) or my head (what I believe about God) or my feet (what I achieve for God)?

**BE BRAVE**

18

### 21 Love Questions for Churches

#### My Love for Others

1. What priority have I given this week/ month to selflessly loving others?
2. What forms of prayer have I engaged in on behalf of individuals and groups, especially those who may not be like me?
3. In what ways this week/ month have I thought or behaved in ways that reveal my own ageism, sexism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia or similar prejudices and biases?
4. What have I done this past week/month to actively work against both personal and systemic ageism, sexism, racism, xenophobia, homophobia or similar prejudices and biases?
5. What practices have enabled me to become more self-aware regarding things like implicit bias and other things keeping me from loving others fully?
6. In what ways have I practiced listening to others, especially those who are not like me, and responded to what I heard over the past week/ month?
7. What practices have helped me to be more hospitable, inclusive and compassionate, especially with people who may not be like me?
8. How have I actively addressed messages internally and in my culture/ environment claiming that some person/ group is less than God's beloved?

**BE BRAVE**

19

### Generosity/ Sacrifice

41 And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. 43 And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. 44 For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."

(Mk. 12:41-44)

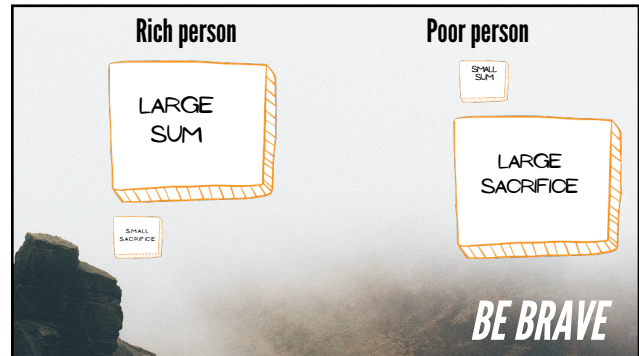
**BE BRAVE**

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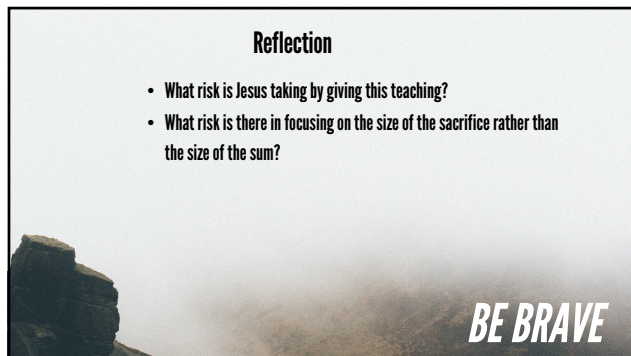




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