

Engaging the Culture we Inhabit with the Gospel
Emmanuel Baptist Church's 2018 Spiritual Life Conference
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Session 1

Fish out of Water? An Introduction to Faith & Culture

1. Why culture?
2. What is culture?
3. How does culture influence our faith?
4. How does faith influence culture?
5. Dynamics of Culture: Changing the water
6. What does it mean to be in the world, not of the world?
7. Signs of the Times: Acts 17; Matthew 16:1-4

Session 2

Bearers of the Light in a Post-Everything Culture: Disorientation and Reorientation

1. No more big stories? Remnants of post-modernism
 - a. Lyotard: Incredulity toward meta-narratives
 - b. Baudrillard: Consumer Society: Simulacra and Simulation
 - i. Image represents the real
 - ii. Image masks the real
 - iii. Image masks the disappearance of the real
 - iv. Image is the hyper-real
 - c. Jesus goes viral:
 - i. Truth: Authority v. Democratized reality
 - ii. Identity: relationship v. Consumption
 - iii. Communication: Publicity v. Connectedness
 - iv. Productivity: Efficiency of Speed v. God's time
 - v. Function: Constant distraction v. Sabbath
2. What about THE big story? Adjusting to post-Christendom
 - a. Exile
 - b. Fearlessness
3. Bearing the Light into postmodernity: Matthew 16: 5-12

Session 3

The Burden of Bearing the Light: Living Joyfully in a Survivor-Guilt Culture

1. Cultural Malaise and the Crisis of Meaning (Ecclesiastes)
 - a. Everything was better before
 - b. Is that all there is?

2. How did we get here from there?
 - a. Who am I? Existential culture
 - b. What am I? Deterministic culture
 - c. What point is there to life? Nihilistic culture

3. Cultural Malaises: Immanence, Tragedy, Meaning
 - a. Angst
 - b. Weltschmerz
 - c. Ennui/Acedia

4. Reintroducing Meaning: Matthew 16: 13-20
 - a. Who does God say that I am?
 - b. What does God say that I am?
 - c. What point is there to the Christian life?

Session 4

1. The Burden of Bearing the Light: You had ONE job...
 - a. Surrendered agency
 - b. Endless distraction
 - c. Retreat to the self
 - d. Privatized faith
 - e. What will happen to the church?

2. Cultural v. Christian Liturgies: Building Character and Regaining Confidence
 - a. Thinking well
 - b. Slowing down
 - c. Meaning in the everyday
 - d. Self-sacrifice rather than self-service
 - e. Embodying the good news
 - f. Speaking the gospel well

3. Resetting Priorities and Commitments: Matthew 16: 21-28