



Faith, Culture, Questions 2016

Lisa Sharon Harper: The Very Good Gospel

FAITH, CULTURE, QUESTIONS 2016

David Bazan

Thursday, September 22
at 8pm

The Bell House

Lisa Sharon Harper

Thursday, October 13 at
7pm

Calvary Episcopal
Church

Brian McLaren

Sunday, November 6 at
10am and 11:30am

The Gramercy Theatre

RESOURCES

- Excerpt from *The Very Good Gospel* on Sojourners
- Forgive Us (co-authored by Lisa Sharon Harper)

OPENING:

Watch this video featuring Lisa Sharon Harper as she talks about "Fear, Faith & Witness." [Click here](#) to watch the video on YouTube.

Reflect on the video together:

- Did you grow up in a culture like what she describes, whether in your family or faith? How did it affect the way you saw or still see yourself, God, and others?
- "When you fear you are not trusting God. When you fear you are lacking faith." Discuss how or why you agree or disagree with this quote and how you see it playing out in your life or the lives of others.
- How would it change the way you see and treat yourself, God, and others if you could believe that you are truly loved?

DISCUSSION:

Lisa Sharon Harper recently published *The Very Good Gospel*, an exploration of Genesis and the Hebrew meaning of shalom ("wholeness, well-being, the perfection of God's creation"), Lisa comes to a more progressive understanding of God's love for us, and what this wholeness from God can look like in today's world. Discuss this quote from the book:

"When we think of good news, we usually think about something that excites folks. News that makes people want to celebrate... It makes us want to shout, to celebrate. Someone pop the bubbly and turn up the music! Christians are taught to think of the good news of Jesus Christ in this way: God loves us, but we're sinful. As a result, we're separated from God. Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins. All we have to do is believe that his death was enough and we get to go to heaven."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Visit forefrontnyc.com/calendar-mh for more events

SUNDAY SERIES FOREFRONT IS...

September 11 -
October 9

We are an interdenominational faith community dedicated to cultivating a just and generous expression of Christianity. In this series we're uncovering the core gospel message that has been buried under layers of tradition, culture, and history.

- Lisa states above how most Christians are taught to think of the good news. Do you resonate with this understanding of the Jesus story?
- Ask yourself the same question that Lisa asked on her journey: What makes the Gospel "good news" to you? Does your understanding of the Gospel even feel like good news? Would you want to share it with others who are hurting? If not, then what questions do you need to ask in order to better understand God's love?
- Has your understanding of the "good news" in the Gospel been evolving as you grow in community? How is it being challenged by the sermons you're hearing on Sundays during our FOREFRONT IS series?

Our small groups will continue these discussions as we read *The Very Good Gospel* together with study guides during our SIX WORDS sermon series this October and November. Encourage your group members to attend Lisa's night of #FCQ16 where they can purchase a copy of the book and start reading it together.

CLOSING PRAYER:

Lord, help us to be faithful, even when we face our own fears. Remind us that we are your children, even when we feel inadequate and unloved. We know that you have overcome giants and crosses and all broken things. Help our unbelief. Help us bring wholeness to our fragmented world. Help us find peace for our hurting souls. Amen.

(Adapted from the Book of Common Prayer)