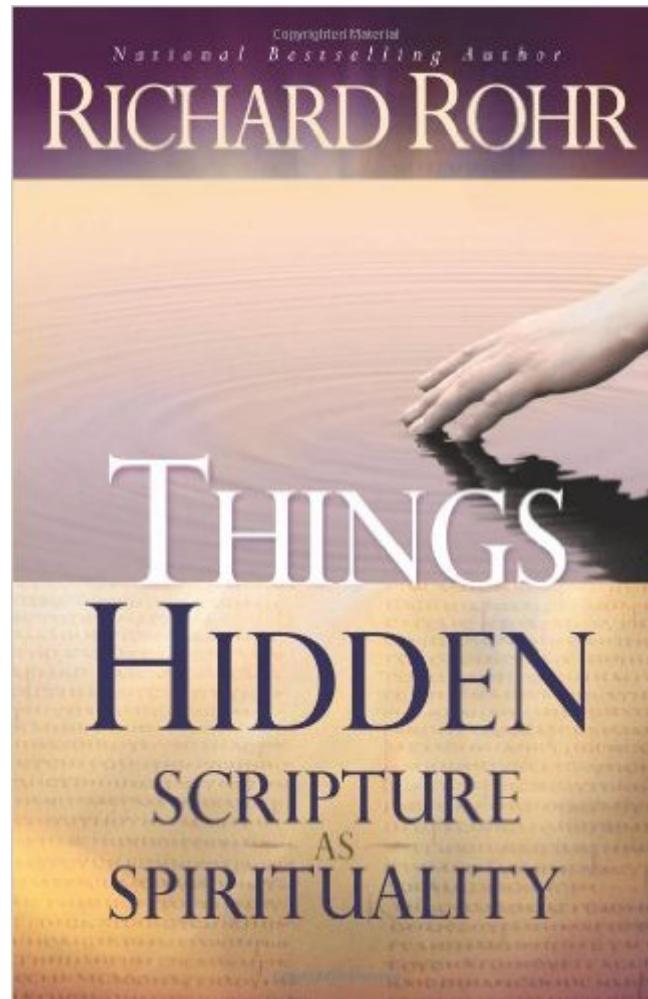


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Things Hidden: Scripture As Spirituality



Synopsis

Only when the two come together, inner and outer authority, do we have true spiritual wisdom. We have for too long insisted on outer authority alone, without any teaching of prayer, inner journey and maturing consciousness. The results for the world and for religion have been disastrous; I offer these reflections to again unite what should never have been separated: sacred Scripture and Christian spirituality. From the Introduction In this exploration of central themes of Scripture, Richard Rohr transforms the written word, discovering in these ancient texts a new and vital meaning, relevant and essential for modern Christians. He uncovers what the Bible says about morality, power, wisdom and the generosity of God in a manner that demands a life-changing response from believers. Rohr offers his readers a Christian vision of abundance, grace and joy to counteract a world filled with scarcity, judgment and fear; a vision that can revolutionize how we relate to ourselves, others and the world.

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Customer Reviews

Toward the end of his marvelous *Things Hidden*, Richard Rohr tells an equally marvelous story. Parents bring home a newly-born baby. Their 4-year-old daughter insists on speaking to her new sibling--alone, she insists. The amused parents leave, but stand at the doorway for easy eavesdropping. Their daughter gets close to the infant and urgently whispers: "Quick! Tell me where we came from and why we're here. I'm beginning to forget!" This little parable is a nice encapsulation of what Rohr has to say about the spirit of scripture. For Rohr, following Rene Girard (whose

influence, along with Nouwen's, is all over this book), the bible is a "text in travail," a fluid, living document that is often times messy and meandering, taking one step forward and two steps back. That's why it's important, insists Rohr, to be clear about the bible's trajectory and momentum, so that we won't get lost down a sidetrack and take the inessential as vital (the fundamentalist failing). The trajectory is the working out of the human recognition of God as a loving, nurturing parent who exhibits mercy, grace, faithfulness, forgiveness, and steadfast love; of recognition of ourselves as originally blessed, made in the image of a loving God and hence intrinsically lovable ourselves; and recognition that the bible encourages awakening, remembering, rather than accomplishing. (It's fascinating to reflect on the fact that the Greek word for truth used in the New Testament--*aletheia*--can be translated as "unforgetting.") Readers familiar with Rohr's work won't necessarily find a great deal to surprise them in this lovely and wise book.

THINGS HIDDEN: Scripture as Spirituality, Richard Rohr (2008). Franciscan prophet and teacher Richard Rohr is a mystic rather than a systematic theologian: indeed he believes 'systematizing' theology runs the risk of doing it violence and missing the point: theology is to be experienced in a life of faith, hope and love, not organized into creeds. Is he 'evangelical'? I would say 'yes' though he doesn't use the term of himself: he has an unqualified commitment to Jesus as Lord and God's special revelation of God's character. Is he 'progressive'? Yes: for example he likes Marcus Borg and reads the mainline liberal biblical scholars. Is he a dogmatist/ fundamentalist? Definitely not: any exclusionary system which divides humans made in God's image into 'our people' and 'those [heretics] not like us' is alien to the will of God as experienced in the life and teaching of Jesus. He writes in the Introduction: 'Only when inner and outer authority come together do we have true spiritual wisdom. We have for too long insisted on outer authority alone, without any teaching of prayer, inner journey and maturing consciousness. The results for the world and for religion have been disastrous... I offer these reflections to again unite what should never have been separated: sacred Scripture and Christian spirituality.' He quotes Eugene Ionesco with approval: 'Overexplanation separates us from astonishment.' Example: the humble recipient of God's love in the Eucharist/communion, who gazes at Christ on the cross with awe and wonder and love, is far more likely to 'get the point' than a theologian who organizes dogma into theories of the atonement.

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