

U2 Vertigo & God
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There is something about U2's music that compels me to preach it. - just so tempting, I can't help myself.

Fellow ministers - little "co-dependent"... pull that **pop cultural needle** out of my arm a bit... **PAUSE**...my first response-"Back off Bud! What do you know? I can stop any time I want **PAUSE** I just don't want to..."

There's just something about U2; **Spiritual guides** for a generation; **modern day prophets** challenging our consumer centred western culture to get off its butt and start loving its neighbour as it loves itself; **fellow human beings** giving voice to the eternal cries of the human heart....

And the way **they do the XNTY thing**; it's **inspiring**, it's **real**... curses on one hand/blesses on the other - makes for a **heck of an interesting sermon topic!**

So, this morning - Gonna preach a little U2... Let the song be our text... **"If you could all please turn with me to the chapter on, "How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb," album 11. We'll begin reading at the verses dealing with Vertigo."**

I remember **how excited I was** when I initially got home with the CD... listening to it for the first time... starts w/**drumsticks**, then the **Edge's** very cool staccato guitar riff, then in comes **Bono**, (in Spanish!) **"Onos, dos, tres, catorce,"** and away we go, to a place called Vertigo.

First time you listen for pure enjoyment... then you play it again w/lyrics... try to figure out what the heck this band is really up to... I'm asking myself, **"How in the world am I going to preach this thing?"**

(be honest - first announced - hadn't looked at words) Now don't let that freak you out... How could commit? First, know a bit about band (like I said)... second, **I'm thinking there's got to be some Divine truth here...** My theology- has to be! **[Bono... Image of God... creator/creations... 5 SLIDES]** I believe-

"All truthful lyrics in U2 music are God's truthful lyrics, **all musical brilliance** is God's musical brilliance every one of those **driving, edgy guitar riffs** are God's driving, edgy guitar riffs (Really... where else could **real truth, beauty, & driving creativity** from?)

Anyway... I'm sitting/listening to the song and then, **boom!**... it hits me... Part- , **"All this, all of this can be yours 2:08 – 2:22,"** & the entire sermon begins to fall into place.

"Those are the exact words that were used to tempt Christ in the Gospels." [RECALL STORY] This song about temptation!... about **rock star with a Christian conscience** struggling to overcome his personal temptations... **stardom, money, and girls.**

Title:Vertigo- makes sense!! **[EXPLAIN... High place]** **"Swaying to the music with Jesus round her neck,"** --**words offer dizzying juxtaposition** for a Xn like Bono, **fixed on fidelity of the faith.**

I'm thinking, **"This song's about a lot more than just selling ipods."** ... **PAUSE**... about Bono's tempting Vertigo... -- & reason I relate to lyrics - **suffer from same dizzying malady!**

You?... “know what **ought to do or ‘not do’**... **say something/shut up**... make that **business decision engage w/that person**... - soul gets disoriented, - feels like I’m losing your balance and might even fall.” All you want - just one **look, touch, taste... bite!!!**
Been there? Done that? PAUSE... Yeah, me too. It’s all too human... it’s often the last stop b/f make a lot of **bad choices... grief... regrets... LONG PAUSE**

So what can we do - better stabilize/ position ourselves - when we get into Vertigo place?... U2 has an answer - last vs of song... same answer Jesus teaches via verses of temptation story... 1st Jesus...
READ Luke 4 Message

The temptor hits Christ in three areas (Achilles’ heels for any human being fighting temptation)...

- 1 - Who/what sustains your life?** (Bread alone?)
- 2 - What matters most to you?** (Having it all?/ **Ident**)
- 3 – Who’s agenda following in life?** (Don’t tempt God!) -- 3 areas of temptation... Common denominator- Answer to all 3 must be **God first!**
O who **feeds** you... makes **matter**... be **followed!**

Christ (son of God)... who had all the power he wanted at his disposal... rebukes each temptation for one big reason-- **b/c the way offered - not God’s way...**
Jesus - obedient to one voice only - Father’s!
(which is why he keeps quoting Dad’s book!)
ONE voice!... “one love, one life, you got to do what **you should**”

That kind of obedience to God - takes huge **humility** to step away - from that kind of power (not use)... hugely **submissive posture** on X’s part... - and its this posture - ultimate antidote for Vertigo.
Bono came to same conclusion in the song...

“Lights go down and all I know
Is that you give me something I can feel
You’re teaching me ... Your love is teaching me ...
How to kneel
Kneel!”

Strange - how Bono see’s **Love** as the author of the hard lessons temptation is teaching!... **PAUSE**... But he right on!... something about making it through - wholly enriching to life... **develops perseverance... perseverance- character**... - ultimate manifestation of Character (before God) -humble posture of kneeling

Kneeling says, “**I can’t do this on my own... I can’t live by bread alone!**” ... “I will never find what I’m looking for in any other place in this world”... I can have it all... **the talent** to be one of the world’s biggest rock stars ever... **more money** that I’d ever need... **the power** to court corporate and political presidents... **the freedom** to do anything I want!... **LONG PAUSE**

Even with all that... I am nothing without God... and the only way I get him - by **kneeling**... the **only safe place when the world begins to spin... is to get humble/get low** -- “**THE**” divine antidote for Vertigo.

[EXEGETE that place... kneeling with Christ/HS right there with you... God give you something you can “feel” -- steadying hand... calming tone(voice)... reorienting perspective (onto the face of God!!!)... empowering HS strength!... envisioning view of life/ future!!!

That’s the gospel according to U2... The gospel according to Jesus Christ... -- **the God that made and fuels U2.**