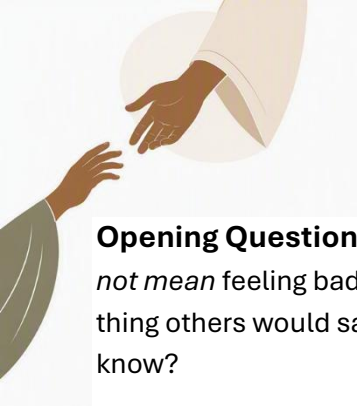




Week Six: Encountering Jesus in our PRIDE

Luke 9: 43b-56

Opening Question: As we talk today about PRIDE it is important to remember that guarding against pride does *not mean* feeling bad about ourselves or denying what makes us unique, beautiful, gifted. In that spirit, what is one thing others would say you are really good at? Or what is one thing that you are good at that most people wouldn't know?

CONTEXT

A quick look back: What did you learn last week about how Jesus interacts with us in our needs? In what ways does hurry limit our ability to replicate Jesus' pace and posture towards others in need?

Today's Passage: As we pick up our story today, we enter an interesting dynamic between Jesus and his disciples. Remember that by this point, the disciples have spent A LOT of time with Jesus. They have watched him heal diseases, cast out demons, seek connection with unexpected outsiders, extend grace to unexpected sinners. Three of them have witnessed the transfiguration, where God again claimed Jesus as His son and gave the witnesses a little glimpse into His glory. And yet, despite all of this, the disciples (like all of us) are still vulnerable to self-focus, self-promotion, and selfishness.

Behind the passages today are two important context issues. First, as explained last week, **children in this 1st century culture would have been treated with very little value**. This makes Jesus' interaction with the child in our passages even more layered with meaning. Second, part of the story today highlights Jesus moving through a region called Samaria. Samaritans were a people group who claimed to follow the Jewish religion, but Judean Jews (which includes all the disciples!) didn't see their faith as authentic. In this 1st century context, **politics and racism had driven a huge wedge between Samaritans and Jews**, so much so that any Jew traveling to Jerusalem would typically go WAY out of their way to avoid conflict. Keep these realities in mind as you watch how Jesus interacts with those who believe they are on the "inside" and those they believe are on the "outside". Today we get to experience how Jesus receives us, teaches us, corrects us in our pride.

CONTENT

Read Luke 9: 43b-56 out loud and then pick ONE of the following ways (*Option A, B, or C*) to help your group engage with this passage.

Option A. Notice/Wonder: Ask everyone to read the passage again quietly on their own. As they read, ask them to make a list like the one below. Remember that what people notice or wonder can just be small, simple things.

What do I NOTICE about this text?

What do I WONDER about?

Once everyone has had the chance to make their list, come together as a group to share and discuss your observations, writing them in a place where everyone can see the list as it develops.

Option B. Creative Engagement: Give everyone paper and drawing supplies. Have everyone read the passage again on their own, then invite them to spend some time illustrating the passage (or a part of the passage) in whatever way they want- concrete, abstract, colors, images, lists, words. When everyone has completed their art, come together to share and discuss what you drew and why.

Option C. Guided Bible Study Questions:

1. There are three separate stories in these verses that reveal different patterns of pride (43b-48, 49-50, and 51-56). Look at each story. Where do you see pride on display? What are the different ways this pride shows itself in each story?
2. In response to the disciple's argument about greatness, Jesus presents a child (imagine getting pulled into Jesus arms as a random little one!) How is a child a counter-argument to greatness? Knowing what you do from the context section about children, what is Jesus doing here?
3. In vs 49, notice why John doesn't like what he saw. What is his reason for wanting to stop this person from casting out demons? How does Jesus change John's ideas of who is "in" and who is "out"?
4. In vs 51-55, who do James and John THINK should get rebuked? Who does get rebuked? Thinking through the context of the history between the Samaritans and the Jewish people, what message is Jesus giving his disciples here?
5. As Jesus interacts with his disciples in their moments of pride, describe his demeanor, character, tone. Contrast it with the demeanor, character, tone of the disciples. What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

APPLICATION

How does all of this connect to our lives? Here are some questions to help guide your discussion.

Choose one or several.

- How do you define pride? What are some other behaviors or characteristics that seem to grow out of pride? Does pride have an opposite? If so, what is it?
- Have you ever had an experience where a faith community made you feel like "you aren't one of us?" Share that situation and what that felt like. In what ways does pride ruin the capacity for the people of God to live like the people of God?
- In this story, the disciples pride causes them to totally miss acknowledging Jesus' suffering. What else does pride cause us to miss? Why might all this "missing" matter in our lives of faith?
- Pride shows up in 3 ways in this passage: wanting to be THE BEST, wanting to be SPECIAL (SEPARATE), and wanting to be the JUDGE/be in CHARGE. Of all these variations of pride, which one do you struggle with the most?
- Jesus does not dismiss his disciples, berate them, express disappointment. Instead, he seeks to show them alternative ways of thinking about what it means to be part of his kingdom. What it means to be "the least." In very practical ways, what might it look like to live as "the least" in the classroom? With your roommates? In your family? In your friendships?

PRAYER

Close your time together in prayer using one of the ideas below

- Use words/images/themes from the passage to guide your prayer.
- Raise up your "wonderings" from the notice/wonder section to God in prayer
- Take prayer requests and pray over each other as a group or in small groups
- Use this written prayer:

God of humility and grace-We come to you and admit that just like the disciples, there are times- too many to count, really- where we are pulled in the direction of self-focus, self-promotion, selfishness. Even though we too have encountered your might and your grace and your kindness and your selfless love, we still feel such a pull towards our own greatness, our own control, our own version of being special. Remind us today that there is a different way to live. A way filled with joy, and wonder, and vulnerability. A way marked with grace, humility, and a love that doesn't miss the suffering of others or the gifts in those around us. In our efforts to be faithful followers, would you help us look more and more like the children we were created to be? Children who follow Jesus with wild abandon in this beautiful, upside-down kingdom of grace. We pray this in the name of Christ, the one who emptied himself of everything so that we might be lifted up- Amen.