

## **Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost (October 6, 2024) – Walking with Jesus: Such as These**

**Fellowship** – Snacks or a Meal (10 minutes with snacks; longer, obviously, if there is a meal).

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants answer, “How do you think Jesus invites us to receive others into the kingdom of God?”

**Group Dialogue** (Approximately 30 minutes). Read [Mark 10:2-16](#).

- Who is testing Jesus? What are they focusing on? [Read Mark 10:2-5. Some of the teachers/Pharisees are testing Jesus and focusing on the law of Moses as the sole authority for instruction and daily living.]
- Why do you think Jesus focuses on the law? How is this different from his teaching and example? [Read Mark 10:6-12. Discuss how Jesus uses marriage and the law to reveal the values and emphases of the culture. As the disciples question Jesus more about the law and marriage, he invites them to reconsider how they understand divorce and marriage. Jesus invites them to see the law differently.]
- Note the transition from the conversation around law and marriage to people bringing little children to Jesus and his disciples rebuking them.
  - o How does Jesus, as a teacher, invite his disciples to reconsider how they view people coming to him with questions or to receive blessings? [Read Mark 10:13-14. Discuss what it means for places of worship to receive children or other groups of people and receive blessings from the congregation, even if they differ from those normally present.]
- The Preaching Note for today, October 6, says, “‘Let them come,’ he says. That means that how we treat children and what we allow done to children or not done to children is what we do to the kingdom of God.”
  - o What does it mean to you that what we allow done to children or not done to children is what we do to the kingdom of God?
- “And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.” (Mark 10:16). How is your church blessing children and responding as Jesus would respond to them? How could your church bless children in your congregation and community?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). End with the following prayer, a similar prayer, or the Lord’s Prayer:

Loving God, we come before you as children hungry to learn and grow in our faith. Help us to reflect on the grace you have given us and to give thanks. Open our eyes so we might continue to love you and others more deeply with questions and curiosity. Help us to bless and welcome others just as you so graciously and warmly welcome us. In Christ’s holy name, we pray. Amen.

## **Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost (October 13, 2024) – Walking with Jesus: Needles and Camels**

**Fellowship** – Snacks or a Meal (10 minutes with snacks; longer, obviously, if there is a meal).

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants answer, “When you think of ‘treasure,’ what comes to mind?”

**Group Dialogue** (Approximately 30 minutes). Read [Mark 10:17-31](#).

- Who is asking about the gift of eternal life? What is his background? [A man who has many possessions. (Mark 10:22)]
- Who does the “saving” to give eternal life? [Jesus saves. He says, “For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.” (Mark 10:27.)]
- In verse 21, Jesus, “looking at him (the young man), loved him,” and then asked him to sell everything he owned, give the money to the poor, and then follow him.
  - o Why do you think the text emphasizes Jesus loving the man? What does it mean to look at someone with love and then challenge that person?
- The Preaching Note for October 13 states: “Perhaps one of the underlying messages in this text is the pull money can have in our lives and the need to resist and release that pull to use money as one of many resources that can further God’s work in the world. Money is a tool, not an end in itself.”
  - o What is Jesus saying in this passage about how we view treasure or money and following Jesus?
- “Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age--houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions--and in the age to come eternal life” (Mark 10:29-30).
  - o How does Jesus invite us to look at our lives and our church as part of an inheritance? How does it help us to be good stewards and to think not of our needs today but for the needs of generations after us?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). End with the following prayer, a similar prayer, or the Lord’s Prayer: Generous God, You have given us so many good things: food on our table and the people in our community whom we love. Help us be good stewards of everything in our possession, for we know everything belongs to You. Give us hearts willing to follow you and respond to the call You place on our lives. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

## **Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost (October 20, 2024) – Walking with Jesus: Not to Be Served**

**Fellowship** – Snacks or a Meal (10 minutes with snacks; longer, obviously, if there is a meal).

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants answer, “What are characteristics you associate with someone in the role of ‘servant’?”

**Group Dialogue** (Approximately 30 minutes). Read [Mark 10:35-45](#).

- Who is asking to sit at the right and left of Jesus in glory? [James and John, the sons of Zebedee, initiate this conversation with Jesus. (Mark 10:35)]
- What role does Jesus tell the disciples they must take as they follow him? [Jesus tells the disciples they must be servants just as the “Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:35).]
- While sometimes there are variations in translations of the text, there is consistency in this passage with the words “service” and “servant” as the terms Jesus gives to the disciples amid their discussion of what it means to follow him. Why do you think this word is significant for Jesus as he compares “servants” to the high-ranking officials of the secular Roman world?
- The Preaching Note for October 20 says, “I do not want to entertain the idea that I might share some similarities with James and John. None of us wants to admit that we, too, might be seeking notoriety and power, especially with such bald ambition. Yet, there is something entirely understandable about this episode in our walk with Jesus that, despite my resistance, I can’t help but feel for them. And it seems that Jesus does too.”
  - o Where can we go wrong with ambition? How can we seek to be real servants and not be blinded by paths to notoriety and power?
- Jesus says to his disciples about authority and power: “But it is not so among you; instead, whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant” (Mark 10:43).
  - o How does being a servant in our church today look to you? How can your church seek to serve the community in which you live? What veils of power and prestige do you need to release to reach out with the gospel?

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). End with the following prayer, a similar prayer, or the Lord’s Prayer:  
Servant God, there are so many ways You have given us new life. By the power of the cross, we have received the greatest love and gift we could ever receive. Forgive us for all the times we seek power and glory instead of living as faithful disciples and servants. May Your Spirit create in us hearts made to serve You and those around us. Amen.

## **Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost (October 27, 2024) – Walking with Jesus: Let Me See**

**Fellowship** – Snacks or a Meal (10 minutes with snacks; longer, obviously, if there is a meal).

**Gathering Time** (5-10 minutes). In pairs or groups of three, have participants answer, “What does it mean to have mercy for someone?”

**Group Dialogue** (Approximately 30 minutes). Read Mark 10:46-52.

- Who is “the Son of David”? Who is crying out for this “Son of David” to have mercy on him? [The “Son of David” refers to Jesus; the person crying out is Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, a blind beggar outside of Jericho (Mark 10:46-47).]
- What does Jesus say heals the sight of Bartimaeus? [Bartimaeus’s faith makes him well (Mark 10:52).]
- All different translations of the text end with Bartimaeus “regaining his sight and following him [Jesus] on the way” (Mark 10:52). What do you think is the significance of Mark including this healed man following Jesus as opposed to other miracles where Jesus and the healed person go their separate ways?
- The Preaching Note for October 27 says, “Confess and commit to recognizing the areas of need and the people crying out for mercy who have been ignored for too long. When we gather for worship, Jesus pays attention and asks us, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’”
  - Why do you think it is significant Jesus calls for the crowds to be quiet? How do we sometimes block others from being transformed by Jesus?
- “Then Jesus said to him, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ The blind man said to him, ‘My teacher, let me see again’” (Mark 10:51.)
  - What do you want Jesus to help you see? How do you think Jesus is calling you to see his presence in your life as well as the needs of those around you? Discuss some ways you and your church can think of people who are crying out for help and how God might be calling you to be in ministry in new ways.

**Prayer** (10 minutes). Share prayer requests and respond appropriately.

**Sending Forth** (2 minutes). End with the following prayer, a similar prayer, or the Lord’s Prayer:

Faithful God, day by day, we see glimpses of Your glory. Quieten our hearts and open our eyes to see Your goodness in front of us. Give us the gift of faith to see new possibilities or dreams for ministry. We pray this to you, the great Physician who makes us whole. Amen.

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