



Others > Self

Encounter Prayer:

Dear Loving God,

We adore you and exalt your Holy Name. Forgive us for our sins. Help us to serve like Jesus. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray.

Amen!

Encounter God:

Where have you seen God at work in your life this week?

Encounter Neighbor:

What good have you done for someone else this week?

Encounter Scripture: Mark 10:42-45

"So, Jesus called them and said to them, 'You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man

came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'"

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were not content with just being disciples of Jesus Christ. They wanted to have positions of honor when Jesus came into his glory. The request of James and John resulted in contention between them and the other disciples. A summation of Jesus' response to James and John is "no pain, no gain." In order to be exalted the disciples would have to share in Jesus' suffering. It is easy for modern-day readers of the text to say, "what in the world were these guys thinking." I agree one could easily critique the disciples' lack of self-awareness and emotional intelligence. We could also ponder the question, "How could they have totally missed the point of Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom of God? If we are completely honest with ourselves does not being blessed and highly favored while riding in the finest car and living in the best neighborhood sound so much better than being a suffering servant living on the rough side of the tracks? Doesn't being the boss, the CEO, or the

President sound so much better than a slave? We want to be great but our view of greatness is often shaped by the world's standards: the size of our bank accounts the numbers of followers or likes on social media, our job titles, the number of trophies we have won, our physical appearance, or the number of members in seats.

Jesus redefines greatness. True greatness comes from following the Great Commandment, Love God with your entire being, and love your neighbor as yourself. Jesus, the Son of God, left his home in glory to fulfill the mission of God to save humanity from slavery to sin. God incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ became our neighbor. Jesus, the Lord of all, demonstrated his love for humanity through his sacrificial act of dying on the cross as a ransom of humanity. The way of the kingdom of God is that of a suffering servant who gave his life so that we can live. The good news is when we choose to live like Jesus, God redeems our suffering, therefore; our suffering is not in vain.

One of the biggest obstacles to finding contentment is the tendency to compare ourselves to others. James and John wanted to be greater than the other disciples. Of course, this upset the others. When we desire to be in positions of power over others or prestige, we need to examine why. Is it because we desire to serve or is it because it somehow validates our self-worth? Is it because we

are trying to raise our social profile? Once we have positions of privilege and power, it is our Christian obligation to use it to be a blessing to others, to serve. Thus, contentment does not come from comparing ourselves to others it comes from serving God and serving others.

Encounter Heads:

What distinguishes us from the “Gentiles”?

What does it mean to be a servant? A slave?

Encounter Hearts:

Share a time when you put others above yourself? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about God? What did you learn about others?

Share a time when you used your position of power to help someone who was powerless.

How do we discover our call in this saying of Jesus? Our call during social isolation: at home, online, and in the community?

Encounter Hands:

Did you cause harm in word or deed to someone this week? (self-examination). If so, confess your sin to God, then seek to reconcile with your brother or sister.

Share your prayer concerns and celebrations.

Ask a member of the group to pray for the concerns and give thanks for the celebrations.

Notes Sections

Prayer Concerns:

Celebrations:

Daily Reflection Questions

Where have I seen God at work in my life today?

What is one thing that I am thankful for?

What is one thing that broke my heart today?

What is one good thing did I do for someone else today?