

BECOMING LIKE JESUS



GOING DEEPER

DISCUSSION GUIDE

APRIL 22, 2018

Discussion Guide

LITURGY OF THE CROSS

CONNECTING:

45 MINUTES

(THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE YOUR GROUP WITH A WAY OF CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER SO THAT YOU MIGHT PARTNER IN THE WORK GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIVES.)

- IN WHAT WAYS DID GOD MOVE IN YOUR LIFE THIS WEEK? IN WHAT WAYS DID YOU RESPOND TO HIM?
- WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE THIS WEEK? IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, DID YOU INVITE GOD INTO THIS CHALLENGE?
- HOW HONEST HAVE YOU BEEN WITH US? (GRACIOUSLY THANK GROUP MEMBERS FOR THEIR HONESTY IF THEY STATE THEY HAVE HELD BACK.)

GETTING STARTED:

10 MINUTES

- WHEN YOU HEAR THE PHRASE, "LIVING LIKE JESUS" WHAT IMAGES OR IDEAS COME TO MIND? COULD YOU ELABORATE?

DIVING INTO THE TEXT:

60 MINUTES

(THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE YOUR GROUP WITH A SIMPLE ROAD MAP THROUGH THE TEXT. FEEL FREE TO USE THESE QUESTIONS IN WAYS THAT BEST FIT YOUR GROUP AND THE DYNAMICS OF YOUR OWN MEETING.)

- USING THE NOTES, DISCUSS THE CONCEPT OF LITURGICAL WORSHIP. TAKE CARE TO DISCUSS THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF INTENTIONALLY STRUCTURING HOW ONE WORSHIPS AND WHAT ONE DOES IN WORSHIP.
- READ LUKE 9.21-24 ALOUD. PAUSE. READ THE TEXT ONCE MORE SEEKING TO HEAR HIS WORDS AS A CALL TO AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY.
- TO WHAT KIND OF LIFE DOES JESUS CALL HIS DISCIPLES? SEEK TO FIND AS MANY ELEMENTS IN THE TEXT AS POSSIBLE.
- IN WHAT WAYS, IF ANY, DOES THIS CALLING LEAD ONE TO

EXPERIENCE LIFE AS JESUS EXPERIENCED LIFE? COULD YOU EXPLAIN?

- DOES JESUS' DESCRIPTION OF THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY FIT WITH THE MODERN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY? WHY MIGHT THIS BE THE CASE?
- JESUS INDICATES THAT HIS DISCIPLES INTENTIONALLY STRUCTURE THEIR LIVES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEIR DAILY RHYTHMS AND WAYS OF BEING LEAD THEM NOT ONLY TO EXPERIENCE WHAT JESUS EXPERIENCED BUT TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT THEIR LIVES RETELL (RECAPITULATE) JESUS' STORY. ONE MIGHT REFER TO THIS INTENTIONAL STRUCTURING OF LIFE TO RETELL JESUS' STORY AS A LITURGY, AND WITH RESPECT TO HIS SUFFERING A LITURGY OF THE CROSS. WHAT MIGHT A LIFE SO STRUCTURED LOOK LIKE?
- WHAT, IF ANYTHING, KEEPS PEOPLE FROM LIVING IN SUCH A WAY? WHAT, IF ANYTHING, KEEPS YOU FROM LIVING IN THIS WAY?
- HOW, IF AT ALL, MIGHT TAKING UP A LITURGY OF THE CROSS (INTENTIONALLY STRUCTURING OUR DAILY LIVES TO INCLUDE THE SUFFERING OF JESUS) BEND OUR DESIRE TOWARD GOD?
- WHAT STEPS, IF ANY, MIGHT YOU BE WILLING TO TAKE IN TAKING UP A LITURGY OF THE CROSS? COULD YOU ELABORATE? HOW MIGHT THIS GROUP BE PART OF THESE STEPS?

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

LITURGICAL WORSHIP

LITURGICAL WORSHIP TYPICALLY REFERS TO SCRIPTED RITES, CEREMONIES, PRAYERS AND SACRAMENTS OF THE CHURCH AS OPPOSED TO PRIVATE DEVOTION. UNDERGIRDING LITURGICAL WORSHIP IS THE DESIRE TO WORSHIP IN AN INTENTIONAL MANNER SO AS TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO PROPERLY EXPRESS DEVOTION AND HAND OFF FAITH TO THE WORSHIPER. IN THE CHRISTIAN CONTEXT, LITURGICAL WORSHIP CONSISTS OF SIGNS, SYMBOLS, AND SACRED ACTIONS WHICH ARE MEANT TO REFLECT AND PRAISE GOD'S SELF-REVELATION IN CHRIST. OFTEN, LITURGICAL WORSHIP IS CONTRASTED WITH NON-LITURGICAL WORSHIP, THE FORMER BEING REFLECTED IN SCRIPTED RITES AND THE LATTER BEING REFLECTED IN CONGREGATIONS WHICH HAVE NO FORMAL OR

SCRIPTED RITES OF WORSHIP. HOWEVER, SUCH A DISTINCTION IS FALSE BECAUSE UPON CLOSE OBSERVATION, CONGREGATIONS WHICH PRACTICE SO-CALLED FREE WORSHIP (NON-SCRIPTED) VERY OFTEN HAVE AN UNSPOKEN FRAMEWORK FOR CARRYING OUT WORSHIP WHICH IS CLOSELY FOLLOWED. THIS REALITY SERVES AS A REMINDER THAT WHILE WE OFTEN THINK OF LITURGICAL WORSHIP IN ITS DENOMINATIONAL FORMS (EX. THE ROMAN LITURGY), LITURGICAL WORSHIP CAN AND OFTEN DOES TAKE LOCAL OR CONGREGATIONAL FORMS.

THE PRACTICE OF WORSHIPPING IN A SCRIPTED FORM HAS ITS ROOTS IN THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE. IN THIS SETTING, A FORMAL FRAMEWORK FOR WORSHIP DEVELOPED CONSISTING OF PRAYER, SINGING, TEACHING, ALMSGIVING, AND PUBLIC READING OF SCRIPTURE. IN ADDITION, THE JEWISH PEOPLE FOLLOWED A REGULAR RHYTHM OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS AND FEASTS, WHICH THEMSELVES CONSISTED OF SCRIPTED ELEMENTS. ONE SUCH EXAMPLE IS THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER MEAL. EARLY CHRISTIANS CARRIED THIS PRACTICE WITH THEM WHEN THEY LEFT THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUES, ORDERING THEIR WORSHIP USING THIS SAME FRAMEWORK. THROUGHOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT, CHRISTIAN WORSHIP IS SEEN TO INVOLVE PRAYER (1 TIMOTHY 2.1-2, 8), SINGING (EPHESIANS 5.19), TEACHING/PREACHING (ACTS 2.42; PHILIPPIANS 1.15-18), THE COLLECTION OF AN OFFERING (1 CORINTHIANS 16.2), PUBLIC READING OF SCRIPTURE (1 TIMOTHY 4.13), AND THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S TABLE (1 CORINTHIANS 11.17-34). MOST LIKELY, THE EARLY CHURCH DID NOT HAVE A STANDARD FRAMEWORK FOR WORSHIPPING ACROSS ALL CONGREGATIONS. MORE LIKELY, EACH LOCAL CONGREGATION DEVELOPED ITS OWN UNIQUE LITURGICAL STYLE AND FRAMEWORK. ONE SUCH FRAMEWORK MIGHT BE SEEN IN THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORSHIP OF THE JERUSALEM CHURCH IN ACTS (ACTS 2.42). HOWEVER, WITH THE RISE OF DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSIES IN THE SECOND AND THIRD CENTURIES, A NEED FOR STANDARDIZING THE WORSHIP LITURGY BECAME IMPORTANT IN ORDER TO SAFEGUARD ORTHODOXY. WHEN CONSTANTINE LEGALIZED THE CHURCH IN THE FOURTH CENTURY, LEADING TO AN INFLUX OF FORMER PAGANS, THE NEED FOR A STANDARDIZED LITURGY WAS SOLIDIFIED BECAUSE OF THE NEED TO PROVIDE SYSTEMATIC READINGS AND RITES WHICH EXPRESSED PROPER DEVOTION AND HANDED OFF FAITH TO THOSE WHO WERE WORSHIPPING.

WHILE THE TECHNICAL UNDERSTANDING OF LITURGICAL WORSHIP INVOLVES THOSE RITES AND CEREMONIES AS CONDUCTED BY THE CHURCH IN OPPOSITION TO PRIVATE DEVOTION, ONE MIGHT BENEFIT FROM THE LITURGICAL PRACTICE OF SCRIPTING OR INTENTIONALLY STRUCTURING IN THEIR PRIVATE ACTS OF WORSHIP. BIBLICAL EVIDENCE FOR THIS INTENTIONALITY MIGHT BE FOUND IN PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS CONCERNING WORSHIP GIVEN TO THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH. IN HIS EXHORTATION, PAUL ENCOURAGED THIS CHURCH TO BE INTENTIONAL NOT ONLY WITH THE STRUCTURING OF THEIR CORPORATE WORSHIP BUT IN THE CONDUCT OF THEIR DAILY LIVES (COLOSSIANS 3.16-17). PAUL ADMONISHED THESE BELIEVERS TO ORDER THEIR DAILY LIVES IN SUCH A MANNER THAT THEY REFLECTED THE VERY CHARACTER OF CHRIST. THE BENEFIT OF SUCH INTENTIONALITY WITH ONE'S PRIVATE DEVOTION OUGHT TO BE IMMEDIATELY OBVIOUS AS IT IS THE SAME AS FORMAL LITURGICAL

WORSHIP. THE INTENTIONALITY OF LITURGICAL WORSHIP IS OF GREAT BENEFIT BECAUSE IT PROVIDES A FRAMEWORK NOT JUST FOR EXPRESSING PROPER DEVOTION, BUT IT ENSURES A REGULAR RHYTHM OF READINGS, RITES, AND CELEBRATIONS WHICH REMIND THE WORSHIPER OF GOD'S TRUE CHARACTER AND REDEMPTIVE ACTIVITY IN CHRIST. LIKEWISE, ALLOWING THIS SAME LEVEL OF INTENTIONALITY TO INFORM ONE'S PRIVATE ACTS OF DEVOTION AS WELL AS ONE'S DAILY LIFE PROVIDE THESE SAME REALITIES, ADDING ADDITIONAL REMINDERS AND EMPHASES POINTING THE BELIEVER TO ORIENTING HIS LIFE AROUND GOD.

THE TEXT

LUKE 9.21-24: *MY LIFE OR JESUS' LIFE?*

JESUS' CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP AND HIS DESCRIPTION OF THE COST OF ANSWERING THIS CALL HAS BEEN OFT DISCUSSED, BUT OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD AND MISAPPLIED IN OUR MODERN SETTING. THIS DISCUSSION COMES AT A CRUCIAL TIME IN JESUS' MINISTRY. ACCORDING TO LUKE, JESUS' GALILEAN MINISTRY IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE, AND HE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN A JOURNEY TOWARD JERUSALEM WHICH WILL RESULT IN HIS CRUCIFIXION (LUKE 9.51). AS THIS CRUCIAL TURNING POINT APPROACHES, JESUS SEEKS TO DRAW OUT HIS DISCIPLES' THINKING CONCERNING HIS IDENTITY (LUKE 9.18-20). WHILE INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN HAD CONCERNING JESUS' IDENTITY, THIS IS THE FIRST FORMAL DISCUSSION JESUS INITIATES WITH HIS DISCIPLES. SUCH A DISCUSSION IS IMPORTANT NOT SIMPLY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE DISCIPLES THINK BUT TO CLARIFY THE NATURE OF THE MISSION THEY ARE ABOUT TO UNDERTAKE. AS JESUS TURNS TOWARD JERUSALEM, HE TURNS TOWARD THE CULMINATION OF THE REDEMPTIVE WORK HE WAS SENT TO COMPLETE. ON THIS JOURNEY, IT WILL BECOME CLEAR THAT JESUS IS MORE THAN A PROPHET OR TEACHER WITH THE POWER TO HEAL. IF THE DISCIPLES ARE TO PROPERLY UNDERSTAND WHAT IS ABOUT TO TRANSPIRE THEY MUST GRASP JESUS' IDENTITY AS MESSIAH WHICH WILL GIVE THEM A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE EVENTS TO COME.

INTERESTINGLY, HAVING SURFACED THE DISCIPLES' BELIEF THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH, JESUS QUICKLY FORBIDS THE DISCIPLES FROM OPENLY REPEATING THIS BELIEF. THIS AND MANY SIMILAR STATEMENTS IN THE GOSPELS ARE OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE "MESSIANIC SECRET;" THAT IS, JESUS DID NOT WISH FOR PEOPLE OUTSIDE HIS INTIMATE CIRCLE TO UNDERSTAND HIS TRUE IDENTITY. THE REASONING FOR KEEPING HIS IDENTITY SECRET LIES IN JESUS' DESIRE TO REWRITE THE JEWISH MESSIAH NARRATIVE. IN THE JEWISH MINDSET, THE MESSIAH WAS A KINGLY FIGURE WHO APPEARED WITH MIGHT AND POWER EXACTING VENGEANCE UPON THE ENEMIES OF GOD AND HIS PEOPLE. JESUS DID NOT DENY THIS NARRATIVE BUT WISHED TO INSERT AN APPEARANCE OF THE MESSIAH, A SUFFERING MESSIAH, BEFORE THE APPEARANCE OF THE MESSIAH AS CONQUERING KING. SIMPLY PUT, JESUS TAUGHT THAT THE MESSIAH'S COMING WAS TWO-FOLD, THE SECOND COMING FITTING WITH THE JEWISH UNDERSTANDING BUT THE FIRST FITTING MORE WITH ISAIAH'S SUFFERING SERVANT (ISAIAH 52.12-53.13).

JESUS TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES ABOUT HIS ROLE AS THE ISAIAH'S SUFFERING SERVANT, LINKING THIS MOTIF TO THE MESSIAH MOTIF USING THE TITLE "SON OF MAN." JESUS DREW THIS MESSIANIC TITLE FROM DANIEL'S VISION OF 4 BEASTS (DANIEL 7) AND MOST LIKELY PREFERRED THIS TITLE

BECAUSE WHILE CONVEYING MESSIANIC IDEALS IT ALSO DISTANCED ITSELF FROM THE TRADITIONAL MESSIAH NARRATIVE ATTACHED TO THE TITLE "MESSIAH." THIS ALLOWED JESUS TO INSERT THE NARRATIVE OF THE SUFFERING SERVANT INTO THE TRADITIONAL MESSIANIC NARRATIVE. JESUS NOTED THAT AS THE SUFFERING SERVANT IT WAS GOD'S WILL THAT HE SUFFER, BE REJECTED BY THOSE IN POWER, TO BE KILLED, AND ONLY THEN BE VINDICATED IN RESURRECTION. THAT THIS WAS GOD'S WILL OR PLAN IS MADE PLAIN IN LUKE'S USE OF A WORD WHICH MEANS "IT IS NECESSARY," A WORD WHICH LUKE ALMOST ALWAYS LINKS WITH GOD'S WILL IN BOTH HIS GOSPEL AND ACTS.

HAVING OUTLINED HIS PRESENT ROLE AS A SUFFERING MESSIAH AND THE WAY GOD INTENDED THIS TO WORK OUT IN HIS LIFE, JESUS TURNS TO HIS DISCIPLES AND OUTLINES THE DAILY CALLING UPON THOSE WHO WISHED TO BE HIS DISCIPLES. THE USE OF THE TERM "DISCIPLE" ITSELF GIVES INDICATION OF WHERE JESUS' INSTRUCTIONS WILL POINT. TO BE A DISCIPLE IS TO SEEK TO BECOME LIKE THE ONE YOU FOLLOW. THEREFORE, TO SEEK TO BE LIKE JESUS IS TO SEEK TO TAKE UP HIS LIFE OF SUFFERING, REJECTION, AND DEATH AS A PATH TO EXPERIENCING THE VINDICATION AND GLORY OF GOD. JESUS INDICATES THIS IS THE CASE WHEN HE SAYS THAT HIS DISCIPLES MUST DENY THEMSELVES AND TAKE UP THEIR CROSSES DAILY IF THEY ARE TO BE COUNTED AS HIS FOLLOWERS. IN THIS STATEMENT, THE FIRST TWO ACTIONS QUALIFY AND DEFINE THE SUBSTANCE OF THE THIRD, FOLLOWING. TO DENY ONESELF DOES NOT MEAN A PERSON DENIES HER INHERENT WORTH OR VALUE. RATHER, TO DENY ONESELF IS TO GIVE UP ONESELF, TO SAY "NO" TO PERSONAL AMBITIONS FOR THE SAKE OF RECEIVING GOD'S WILL IN THEIR LIFE. BASIL THE GREAT STATED, "NOW SELF-DENIAL INVOLVES THE ENTIRE FORGETFULNESS OF THE PAST AND SURRENDER OF ONE'S WILL—SURRENDER WHICH IS VERY DIFFICULT, NOT TO SAY QUITE IMPOSSIBLE, WHILE LIVING IN THE PROMISCUITY CUSTOMARY IN THE WORLD" (LONG RULES 9.246-47). JOHN WESLEY IN HIS SERMON ABOUT THIS VERSE ENTITLED SELF-DENIAL STATED SELF-DENIAL IS, "REFUSING TO FOLLOW OUR OWN WILL, FROM A CONVICTION THAT THE WILL OF GOD IS THE ONLY RULE OF ACTION TO US."

JESUS' STATEMENT CONCERNING TAKING UP ONE'S CROSS WOULD HAVE BEEN SELF-EXPLANATORY IN THE ANCIENT WORLD. CROSSES WERE INSTRUMENTS OF SUFFERING AND DEATH. THEREFORE, TO CARRY A CROSS WAS TO EXPERIENCE NOT ONLY A DEATH SENTENCE BUT THE ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE OF DEATH FOR THE ONE WHO BORE IT. THIS UNDERSTANDING DIFFERS COMPLETELY FROM THE MODERN UNDERSTANDING THAT JESUS SIMPLY REFERRED TO AN INCONVENIENT BURDEN. RATHER, WITH THIS STATEMENT, JESUS INDICATES THAT LIKE HIMSELF, HIS TRUE FOLLOWERS WOULD EXPERIENCE LITERAL DEATH IN THEIR LIVES. HOWEVER, JESUS SEEMS TO TEACH THAT THE DEATH AND DENIAL OF WHICH HE SPEAKS GOES BEYOND POSSIBLE MARTYRDOM AND ULTIMATE REJECTION BY SOCIETY BECAUSE HE STATES THAT THESE ARE TO BE DAILY EXPERIENCES. THIS STATEMENT INDICATES THAT WHAT JESUS HAS IN MIND IS MORE THAN POTENTIAL SUFFERING AND DEATH BUT THE CONSCIOUS STRUCTURING OF LIFE IN SUCH A WAY THAT A DISCIPLE'S DAILY EXPERIENCE IS MARKED WITH SUFFERING, REJECTION, AND DEATH. IN OTHER WORDS, JESUS INTENDED HIS DISCIPLES TO SO ORDER THEIR

LIVES THAT THEY INTENTIONALLY INCORPORATED EXPERIENCES AND WAYS OF BEING WHICH NOT ONLY RECAPITULATED JESUS' LIFE IN THEIR OWN BUT RHYTHMS AND WAYS OF BEING WHICH RETOLD JESUS' STORY IN THE DAILY LIFE OF HIS DISCIPLES. THOSE WHO ACTED IN SUCH A MANNER WERE JESUS' TRUE DISCIPLES.

ULTIMATELY, JESUS NOTES THAT THIS INTENTIONAL STRUCTURING OF ONE'S LIFE IS LINKED WITH DESIRE, THE DESIRE FOR HIM RATHER THAN THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD. JESUS NOTES THAT A PERSON COULD SEEK TO SAVE THEIR LIFE; THAT IS, A PERSON COULD CHOOSE TO FOLLOW THEIR OWN WILL AND INTENTIONALLY AVOID SUFFERING WHICH RECAPITULATED THE LIFE OF JESUS IN THEIR OWN DAILY EXPERIENCE. HOWEVER, THIS PERSON WOULD NOT FIND THE LIFE JESUS WAS OFFERING. INSTEAD, IT WAS ONLY THOSE WHO CHOSE TO LET GO OF THEIR LIFE FOR JESUS WHO WOULD FIND LIFE. THIS PHRASING IS INTERESTING BECAUSE IT CAN MEAN THAT A PERSON HAS LOSS THRUST UPON THEM BECAUSE OF THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH JESUS. HOWEVER, THIS DOES NOT FIT THE PLAIN FLOW OF THE TEXT. A BETTER READING IS TO UNDERSTAND THAT A PERSON HAS INTENTIONALLY CHOSEN LOSS BECAUSE THEY HAVE CHOSEN JESUS OVER THEMSELVES. SIMPLY PUT, THEY WANT JESUS MOST (A STATEMENT OF DESIRE) AND ARE WILLING TO UNDERGO THE PROCESS OF OBTAINING HIM.

REAL LIFE WITH BLAKE:

WHAT DO I WANT? HOW I ANSWER THIS QUESTION WILL HAVE A POWERFUL SHAPING INFLUENCE ON MY LIFE. CHOOSE GOD AND I WILL MOVE TO BECOMING LIKE JESUS. CHOSE SOMETHING OTHER THAN GOD, AND IN TIME I WILL BECOME LIKE WHATEVER I HAVE CHOSEN. SOUNDS SIMPLE, AND IT IS. IT JUST ISN'T ALWAYS EASY. I AM PRONE TO LONG FOR THINGS OTHER THAN JESUS AND TO DECEIVE MYSELF THAT THIS IS NOT THE CASE. HOWEVER, WHEN I DIG DEEPLY IN MY HEART, I CAN SURFACE MY TRUE LONGINGS AND IN SO DOING DISCOVER THE NEED FOR A REORIENTATION OF MY DESIRE. HOWEVER, REORIENTING DESIRE IS EASIER SAID THAN DONE. THE HEART LONGS FOR THAT WHICH IT LONGS. NO AMOUNT OF CAJOLING OR LOGICAL ARGUMENTATION WILL CONVINCING THE HEART OTHERWISE. SOMETHING OTHER, MORE POWERFUL IS NEEDED. THAT SOMETHING IS WORSHIP.

WORSHIP IS THE INTENTIONAL REHEARSING OF GOD'S STORY FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALIGNING OUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY. WORSHIP, WHEN IT FLOWS INTO OUR DAILY LIVES CAN HAVE A CORRECTING EFFECT, CALLING US BACK TO CENTER, SLOWLY AND SURELY REORIENTING OUR DESIRE TOWARD GOD. HOWEVER, NO ONE EVER TAUGHT ME HOW TO WORSHIP IN THIS WAY. I WAS TAUGHT HOW TO GATHER ON SUNDAY AND JOIN MY VOICE WITH OTHERS IN WORSHIP, THE REHEARSAL OF GOD'S STORY, BUT NO ONE TAUGHT ME HOW TO LET WORSHIP FLOW INTO MY DAILY LIFE. AT BEST, I WAS TAUGHT TO HAVE A TIME OF BIBLE READING, PRAYER, AND POSSIBLY THE OCCASIONAL SONG OF PRAISE. BUT BEYOND THAT I HAD NOTHING AND I COULDN'T SEE HOW IT WAS POSSIBLE. HOW DO YOU GO THROUGH LIFE TELLING GOD'S STORY WHEN YOU HAVE OTHER THINGS TO DO? HOW DO YOU TELL GOD'S STORY AT WORK OR AT THE DINNER TABLE? FOR THE LONGEST TIME, I HAVE BEEN STUCK WITH THIS QUESTION BECAUSE ALL I COULD IMAGINE WAS VERBALLY SPEAKING GOD'S STORY. HOWEVER, I AM COMING TO UNDERSTAND THAT WORDS ARE ONLY ONE WAY TO TELL GOD'S

STORY. THE WAY I LIVE MY LIFE CAN TELL GOD'S STORY AS WELL. THE WAY I WORK OR SIT AT THE DINNER TABLE CAN ITSELF BE WORSHIP, A REHEARSAL OF WHO GOD IS. I THINK I FIRST BEGAN TO GRASP THIS WITH JESUS' CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP.

WHEN JESUS CALLS US TO DISCIPLESHIP HE CALLS US TO HIS LIFE, A LIFE OF SUFFERING. THOSE WHO WISH TO BE LIKE JESUS MUST INTENTIONALLY SUFFER LIKE JESUS, INTENTIONALLY STRUCTURE THEIR DAILY LIVES SO THAT THEY EXPERIENCE HIS PAIN, HIS SORROW, HIS REJECTION, EVEN HIS DEATH AS A PATH TO EXPERIENCING THE VINDICATION AND GLORY OF GOD. WHEN I THINK ABOUT HOW TO DO THIS I RECOGNIZE THAT IN SO DOING I AM DOING MORE THAN EXPERIENCING THE LIFE OF JESUS. I AM RELIVING (RETELLING!) THE LIFE OF JESUS WITH MY OWN LIFE. FOR EXAMPLE, I CAN CHOOSE TO BE SUBMISSIVE, TO INTENTIONALLY SEEK THE EXALTATION OF OTHERS RATHER THAN SEEKING MY OWN PROMOTION AS A MEANS OF EXPERIENCING THE SUBMISSION OF JESUS TO GOD'S WILL. HOWEVER, IN SO DOING MY LIFE OF SUBMISSION RETELLS JESUS' LIFE, REMINDING ME WITH EVERY ACT OF SUBMISSION WHAT JESUS DID. IN THE SAME WAY, I CAN CHOOSE TO SACRIFICE OR EXPERIENCE SIMPLICITY, INTENTIONALLY REMOVING THINGS WHICH I COULD HAVE, DESERVE TO HAVE, OR MUST HAVE IN MY LIFE, THINGS LIKE FOOD OR SLEEP, OR BY DRIVING A VERY OLD CAR WHEN I COULD AFFORD A NEW ONE. IN SO DOING, I EXPERIENCE SMALL DEATHS, DEATH TO MY BODY IN THE DENIAL OF MY NEED FOR FOOD, DEATH TO MY REPUTATION AS A DRIVE A 14-YEAR-OLD CAR, DEATH TO MY WILL AS I GIVE UP A DAY OF MY LEISURE FOR A DAY OF SERVING ANOTHER. IN SO DOING, I EXPERIENCE SOME OF THE SUFFERING AND SACRIFICE OF JESUS, BUT I ALSO RETELL HIS STORY IN MY LIFE. THIS IS WORSHIP IN THE EVERYDAY, THE INTENTIONAL STRUCTURING OF MY LIFE TO RETELL JESUS' LIFE, A LITURGY OF HIS CROSS.

I AM JUST LEARNING TO DO THIS WITH INTENTIONALITY, BUT I AM DISCOVERING INCREDIBLE BENEFIT. AS I RETELL JESUS' LIFE, EXPERIENCING IT IN MY OWN, I COME TO REALIZE THE DEPTH OF JESUS' SACRIFICE FOR ME. I BEGIN TO TASTE THE BITTER GALL OF DEATH AND REFLECT UPON HIS AMAZING WILLINGNESS TO TAKE IT UPON HIMSELF. I FEEL THE STING OF NOT BEING FIRST AND RECOGNIZE THE IMMENSE LOVE FOR THE OTHER THIS REQUIRES. AS THESE FILL MY DAYS THEY CALL ME BACK TO CENTER, FOR I AM REMINDED OF THE AMAZING LOVE, DEVOTION, AND SACRIFICE OF GOD ON MY BEHALF. I AM REMINDED OF GOD'S GREAT LONGING FOR ME AND IT WOOS MY HEART BACK TO HIM, AND HOW CAN IT BE OTHERWISE. TO TRULY RECOGNIZE THAT WE ARE SO LOVED CAN ONLY TURN OUR HEARTS BACK TO LOVE IN RETURN.

REAL LIFE WITH YOU:

WHAT DO YOU WANT? THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST FORMATIVE QUESTIONS WE MIGHT ASK ON THE JOURNEY OF DISCIPLESHIP BECAUSE WHAT STIRS OUR HEARTS SHAPES OUR LIVES. ON THE JOURNEY TO BECOME LIKE JESUS, A HEART FIXED UPON JESUS WILL RESULT IN A LIFE WHICH MIRRORS JESUS. HOWEVER, OUR HEARTS STRUGGLE TO REMAIN FIXED UPON JESUS. NO AMOUNT OF LOGIC OR PROMISING CAN CAUSE OUR HEARTS TO DO OTHERWISE. HOWEVER, WORSHIP CAN DO FOR OUR HEARTS WHAT LOGIC AND PROMISES CANNOT. WORSHIP, THE REHEARSING OF GOD'S STORY IN OUR DAILY LIVES CAN STIR OUR HEARTS, CALLING THEM BACK TO CENTER AS WE REMIND OURSELVES OF

WHO GOD IS AND WHAT HE HAS DONE, IS DOING, AND WILL DO. BUT HOW DO WE WORSHIP IN SUCH A MANNER? IT IS NOT AS DIFFICULT AS WE THINK. ONE WAY IS TO STRUCTURE OUR LIVES IN SUCH A WAY THAT OUR LIVES AND WAYS OF BEING REHEARSE GOD'S STORY. SUCH A STRUCTURING MIGHT BE LIKENED TO A LITURGY AND ONE SUCH LITURGY IS THE LITURGY OF THE CROSS.

JESUS INSTRUCTED HIS FOLLOWERS TO SO STRUCTURE THEIR LIVES THAT THEY EXPERIENCED HIS SUFFERING, REJECTION, AND DEATH AS THE PATH TO EXPERIENCING THE VINDICATION AND GLORY OF GOD ON A DAILY BASIS. THIS INVOLVES MORE THAN A WILLINGNESS TO EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE MARTYRDOM, BUT A STRUCTURING SO THAT IN LARGE AND SMALL WAYS WE TASTE THE SUFFERING OF JESUS. WITH CARE AND THOUGHT, INTENTIONALLY INCORPORATING PRACTICES OF SUBMISSION, SERVICE, SIMPLICITY, AND SACRIFICE INTO OUR DAILY RHYTHMS CAN LEAD TO THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SUFFERING OF JESUS. FOR INSTANCE, INTENTIONALLY CHOOSING TO FAST (A FORM OF SACRIFICE) ON A REGULAR BASIS CAN LEAD ONE TO TASTE DEATH, A SMALL DEATH TO OUR WILL AND OUR BODY AS WE DENY WHAT IT DESPERATELY NEEDS. MORE THAN BRINGING THE EXPERIENCE OF JESUS INTO OUR DAILY LIVES, THIS WAY OF LIVING BECAUSE AN ACT OF WORSHIP BECAUSE OUR LIVES BEGIN TO RETELL THE LIFE OF JESUS. AS WE INTENTIONALLY TAKE UP HIS SUFFERING, REJECTION, AND DEATH WE RELIVE HIS LIFE AND DEATH. MORE THAN THIS, OUR LIVES RETELL WHAT JESUS DID, HOW HE LIVED AND DIED, IN FAITHFUL SUBMISSION TO THE FATHER. AS WE LIVE IN THIS WAY OUR LIVES OF WORSHIP CALL US BACK TO CENTER. TASTING THE STING OF SUBMISSION, SEEKING THE WELL-BEING OF ANOTHER IN A MEETING OVER OURSELVES, CAN REMIND US OF JESUS' OWN SUBMISSION AND WHAT IT TOOK FOR HIM TO LIVE IN SUCH A WAY. TASTING DEATH IN THE INTENTIONAL DENIAL OF OUR BODIES OR OUR DESIRES WITH THINGS LIKE SIMPLICITY CAN REMIND US OF THE LOVE WHICH WOULD HAVE LED JESUS TO SO WILLINGLY TAKE UP HIS OWN CROSS. AS WE TASTE AND SEE JESUS' LIFE, REHEARSING IT WITH OUR OWN, WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH GOD'S AMAZING DEVOTION AND LOVE AND OUR HEARTS ARE WOODED TO HIS OWN.

THERE IS NO RIGHT OR WRONG WAY TO BEGIN A LITURGY OF THE CROSS FOLLOWING JESUS' CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP. THE BEST WAY TO BEGIN IS SMALL. PICK ONE THING WHICH YOU MIGHT INTENTIONALLY INCORPORATE INTO YOUR DAILY OR WEEKLY RHYTHMS WHICH MIGHT RETELL JESUS' SUFFERING. YOU COULD CHOOSE TO FAST FOR LUNCH ON FRIDAY, OR YOU MIGHT LOOK FOR ONE WAY TO PUT SOMEONE ELSE ABOVE YOURSELF EVERY DAY. YOU COULD CHOOSE TO SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE SO THAT DAILY SCARCITY REMINDS YOU OF JESUS' OWN SELF-DENIAL. YOU MIGHT CONSIDER TALKING ABOUT SOME OF YOUR IDEAS WITH A FRIEND ON THE FAITH JOURNEY AND SHARING WHAT IT IS LIKE TO INCORPORATE THESE INTO YOUR DAILY LIFE.



SENIOR
PASTOR
BLAKE
SHIPP

 twitter.com/blake_shipp

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