

## Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

July 14, 2019

### *The Arrival Fallacy*

#### How to Be Yourself

Mark 1:9-15

#### EXPLORING THE SERMON

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

#### KEY VERSES

<sup>9</sup>At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup>Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.

<sup>11</sup>And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."<sup>12</sup>At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, <sup>13</sup>and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him. <sup>14</sup>After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. <sup>15</sup>"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

#### DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

Before Jesus began his ministry, he was baptized by John and proclaimed by God to be "my Son, whom I love." As Christians, our identity is in Christ – we are also God's beloved sons and daughters. Nothing we do can make us more or less valuable to God. Yet priest and author Henri Nouwen identifies five cultural myths that can keep us from claiming our identity in Christ. Myth #1: *We are what we do.*

The common ice breaker, "What do you do?" generally means, "What is your job?", which puts great emphasis on one part of life. Work has become the object of worship for many people, journalist Derek Thompson wrote in a recent article. "Workism" makes work the centerpiece of a person's identity and purpose. He also noted that workists "worship a God with firing power." **What role does work play in your life and relationships? How would you get to know people if you never asked, "What do you do?" What are the hallmarks of worshipping a God with firing power?**

Work is fundamental to life, so much so that it is never done. Measuring our worth by productivity means that we will inevitably be frustrated and feel inadequate. Yet workism promises our accomplishments will be satisfying. "If I get a promotion (or get into the right school, move to the right neighborhood, etc.), then life will be good." Nouwen calls this "the arrival fallacy" because every accomplishment brings new goals rather than fulfillment. **Reflect on times when you expected accomplishment to bring fulfillment. What was the result?**

Mark wrote that after Jesus was baptized, "the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness." Ancient people would have recognized the wilderness as a place of challenge and failure. Satan tempted Jesus with wealth, power, and status – the same ends we seek through work. Note that Jesus entered the time of testing sure of his identity, in the company of the Holy Spirit, and not needing worldly success to justify himself. **What changes might you make this week if you had no need for worldly success or fear of failure?**

**Heavenly Father,** Thank you for the good news that we are your beloved children whose identity is in Christ, thanks to your goodness and grace. Help us to embrace that what we do flows from who we are, not the other way around. May we accept this good news for ourselves and bear it to everyone we encounter. **Amen**