

## Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

July 21, 2019

### *Was Jesus A Minimalist?*

#### How to Be Yourself

Matthew 19:16-26

#### 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>16</sup> Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" <sup>17</sup> And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." <sup>20</sup> The young man said to him, "I have kept all these;<sup>[a]</sup> what do I still lack?" <sup>21</sup> Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money<sup>[b]</sup> to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." <sup>22</sup> When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions. <sup>25</sup> When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, "Then who can be saved?" <sup>26</sup> But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible. **Matthew 19:16-26**

#### DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

Claiming our identity in Christ involves understanding and trusting that because we are the objects of God's love, we are in Christ. Part of understanding our own identity involves learning how to see others. Having the ability to see other people as beloved by God can reveal a lot about ourselves. ***If being beloved by God is the truest thing about us, then why do you think living with Christ as the center of our lives is so difficult?***

Never before has identity been so self-determined. Our identities are less socially assigned, as in more traditional cultures, and more individually created than ever. Creating our own identities brings with it a new pressure to be authentic. ***How do you find the real you? Is it defined by your desires, hopes, or dreams, or does it represent what your culture wants you to be? Just as Jesus emerged different after his baptism, how can our identity be more about losing a part of ourselves than gaining something?***

Myth # 2 of the five that can keep us from claiming our identity in Christ, as outlined by Henri Nouwen, is that *we are what we possess*. Jesus responds that "being perfect" requires selling all possessions, giving the money to the poor, and following Him. Like this man, we wonder how many things we need to check off our list to reach our goals, as in the "arrival fallacy" that we explored last week. ***Could it be that faith is not a possession, but rather it takes possession of us? When we are acting in faith, our life no longer belongs to us. Why might this be the hardest of the five myths to grasp?***

We can learn from this text that it is out love for us that Jesus asks us to give up identifying ourselves with our possessions. Though He demands far more of us than what we think we are actually able to give, He simultaneously offers more grace and mercy than we could ever expect. ***How, in the balance of these things can we grow into our true selves, trusting that indeed for God, but not mortals, all things are possible?***

**Heavenly Father,** We thank you that our identity is found in You. Help us to see others as your beloved so that we may understand and love them better. Help us to accept your grace and your mercy as we give up identifying ourselves with what we possess, and strengthen us to know that with You, all things are possible.

**Amen**