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July 15, 2018

## **Luke 9:44-56**

### **Living Well- Respecting well.**

<sup>44</sup>“Take these words to heart: the Human One is about to be delivered into human hands.” <sup>45</sup>They didn’t understand this statement. Its meaning was hidden from them so they couldn’t grasp it. And they were afraid to ask him about it.

<sup>46</sup> An argument arose among the disciples about which of them was the greatest. <sup>47</sup> Aware of their deepest thoughts, Jesus took a little child and had the child stand beside him. <sup>48</sup> Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me. Whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever is least among you all is the greatest.”

<sup>49</sup> John replied, “Master, we saw someone throwing demons out in your name, and we tried to stop him because he isn’t in our group of followers.”

<sup>50</sup> But Jesus replied, “Don’t stop him, because whoever isn’t against you is for you.”

<sup>51</sup> As the time approached when Jesus was to be taken up into heaven, he determined to go to Jerusalem. <sup>52</sup> He sent messengers on ahead of him. Along the way, they entered a Samaritan village to prepare for his arrival, <sup>53</sup> but the Samaritan villagers refused to welcome him because he was determined to go to Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup> When the disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to consume them?” <sup>55</sup> But Jesus turned and spoke sternly to them, <sup>56</sup> and they went on to another village.

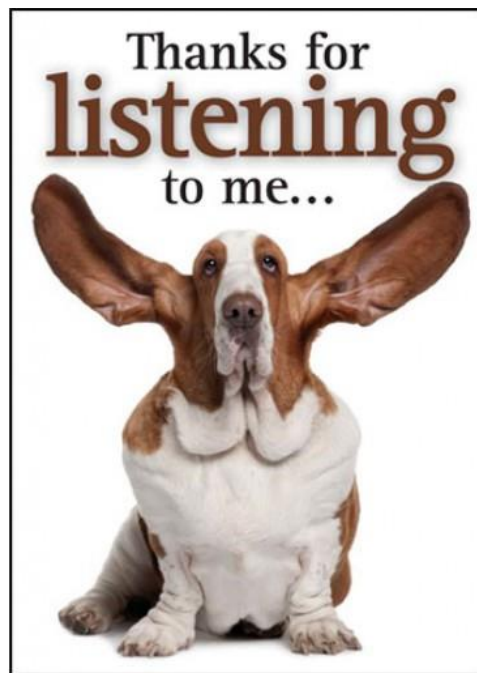
## **Living Well – Respecting Well**

Today is the 6th Sunday of our 7-part series on developing habits of the soul. It is my prayer that you have heard some things that have encouraged you to think, to pray and to apply to your life. As long as we continue to walk together, to listen to the Word and deepen our love of God let us encourage one another. Sometimes we disagree with each other... even with a pastor. This is how we know are closer to the truth. We challenge each other and continue to walk and to pray together.

Today’s passage is strange. Let’s look a little bit what happened previously. In Luke 9:28 we read about the transfiguration. Peter, James and John were able to see how Jesus changed in their eyes and two men, Moses and Elijah, were standing next to him.

In the next scene we see Jesus rebuking the unclean spirit which was in a boy and Jesus healed the lad. They were all astonished at the greatness of God.

“While everyone was amazed at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, <sup>44</sup> “Take these words to heart: the Human One is about to be delivered into human hands.” <sup>45</sup> They didn’t understand this statement...and they were afraid to ask him about it”



Jesus says something so very important, while people are still focusing on what he has done. Jesus is saying and sharing something he wants the disciples to know. The disciples do not understand and are even afraid to ask him: “Why?” Did they not want to hear the truth? If Jesus is speaking, it means he wants them to hear and to know.

One of the ways for us to respect others is to not assume. We must train ourselves not to think we know what the other person means, but to ask questions. How many times do we “read” others people minds? How many times, when Andrew says “I will be at home”, I think he is saying he will clean the house and will make dinner. That is what I think. When he says, “I will be home.” It does not necessarily mean he will be doing household chores. He could be playing with the children, working on his sermon, or watching TV.



During our VBS this last week and while ministering with these precious children I noticed how hard it is sometimes to listen to children. By the way, thank you to all the teachers and helpers for such a wonderful job and for your commitment

It is hard to listen to children. We say they do not listen to us. How hard are we trying to listen to the children? Yes, they talk when they should listen. Yes, they talk a lot and sometimes things are very hard to grasp. They are not talking to us like adults and they shouldn't. Somehow it is so hard to listen even to your own kid.

One little girl from VBS felt miserable. Her feet hurt. The sun was too bright. The other students were not good. She was just not having a good time. She told so many things that are not good for her. We call it complaining. In the middle of the many words she said, "I am so broken."

I am so broken. It echoed down deep into my soul. I was squeezed with literal pain. Suddenly I saw myself as a broken vessel. I realized anew how broken we all are. How many times do I miss hearing a cry of a broken person? Is it because I am quick to label? Am I assuming his or her problems are not really that big? In the very same passage Jesus says: "Whoever welcomes this little child, welcomes me."

### **Are Me, Myself and I the 3 most important people?**

The next sentence in the Bible is: "an argument started among them over who was the greatest of them. Nice! Jesus wants to get them ready, to prepare them, to let them know that He will be delivered to authorities and will be crucified. We, in turn, get into an argument over who is the greatest. Let's talk about me. How about me? I am so

important. I am better than so many. Forget about you: let's talk about me. If I do not look out for myself, who will?

We were doing a Christmas project. We were giving Christmas gifts to children in small villages with no running water and no heat. They were living very poorly. We had a great crowd of these young one in the church and it was such a joyful experience giving gifts of new sport shoes. Some ladies came to me afterwards and asked how about them. They did not get any good gift like these kid. Well, what do you say? How about chocolate? It was and is hard – very hard – to rejoice and celebrate with others when you think you are being left out. How can I think about myself not as even a better, more deserving, or greater person?

It is a challenge to love ourselves, to have a sense of self-worth and still not have excessive pride. It is so easy to put ourselves higher than others? I have lots of examples today...

### **“Winning isn’t everything, It is the only thing.”**

*(Football coaches Red Saunders and Vince Lombardi)*

Another thing I have noticed is that we all want to be first. One Monday when I was with the Scouts, they were racing little boats, that they had made. I was amazed at how hard it was to lose. Only a few were able to handle well the loss. It is not hard to deal with emotions and facts when you are first, but when we are last, when we are not the greatest, when we are not the first one chosen on the team in the playground we can truly see our character.

Jesus, knowing their inner, deepest thoughts, did not let them to continue to dwell on them. Maybe it is just me, but lately I have noticed more and more, that our thoughts are so important. I have heard that if something does not hurt others then that means it is ok. But I keep questioning: Why would Jesus not let them to have these inner thoughts?

Thoughts themselves do not harm anyone. However, our thoughts can weigh us down and can distract us. Our thoughts make us angry or fearful? As you let thoughts swirl in your mind they grow in you! Have you noticed that? Think about how somebody hurt you or betrayed you. Is there somebody you just can't stand?

Soon you will not be able to think about anything else. In fact, that person has control of your mind and he or she does not even realize it. They grow like crazy weeds. So let's ask ourselves a question: How can I watch my heart above all else (since that is

the place from which life flows?) It is a constant choice to change your thoughts to prayer, to blessing. Every single day, almost every hour I have to ask God to help me and choose to think, to speak and to act with love.

Jesus continues to challenge us to grow in love and to grow in maturity.

Verse 49 sounds like a very different subject but follows right after instructing the disciples to stay humble and stop thinking how to lift themselves up. We are to lift up and welcome the least and the lost, the weak and the broken.

The disciples now have another issue. They see somebody throwing out demons in Jesus' name and he /she is not from their group. Think about it. The disciples just got back from experiencing the glory of Jesus and experiencing the authority and power of Jesus' name. (Peter and John were still talking about it when they wrote letters to the early church decades later.)

They came back telling Jesus that demons submit themselves to them in Jesus name. They found out that they have the Holy Spirit, and they found out that God gave them the power through faith and in the name of Jesus. They have followed Jesus. They have learned from him. They have been with him. They have special status and see themselves as important. Suddenly there is somebody else, who did not follow, was not from their group and doing the same thing. It is hard scenario.

So my question would be how to be angry and not to sin? They were ready to go and stop that person. Jesus did not ask who he or she was. Jesus did not ask where or how. Jesus said: "Whoever is not against you is for you." If I am angry that somebody does it in some other way, at another speed, at a different time... you want to correct, to stop, to let them know the right way to do it (your way)...

I love Jesus' answer. He is not wasting time or energy on what is not important. I think it very important to keep in mind that respect is not a feeling. It is how we treat another person. It does not matter how I feel about that person. Respect is choice of mine. Jesus was not interested in deeper into the details. He helps us to focus on what is the most important. Keep the main thing the main thing. Good things are happening. If someone else casts out demons, so what?



Jesus was determined to go to Jerusalem. He knew the road he must follow. He knew his destination. He was resolute.

“On the way there he entered a Samaritan village, but the Samaritan village refused to welcome him, because he was determined to go to Jerusalem”. Samaria is on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem. It would be the shortest route. Why the lack of welcome? It says because he was going to Jerusalem. It was no secret that Rabbi, Jesus was going with his disciples to celebrate Passover. The Samaritans not only hated the Jews, but they also hated the worship that took place in Jerusalem. They therefore had no interest in Christ’s agenda at all. James and John had very normal human reaction – revenge. If someone hurts my best friend, my teacher, my family, then send down the fire on them.

As I believe that God has written His name, engraved his name in every human heart and nothing and nobody will be able to change or fill it, I think choosing to follow and walk with God is everybody’s choice every single day. “Jesus turned to them and spoke sternly rebuking them. He was very clearly saying “no” to revenge. When somebody wanted to curse him, he did not say anything to them, but he spoke very strongly to those who wanted to make their own judgment and revenge.

Yes, the Samaritans were wrong. They refused the Messiah and refused to provide basic hospitality. But Jesus rebuked those who wanted to make justice from the human perspective.

So how we can get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger? I hope we as Jesus are on our journey destined to be with God, to see Jesus, to meet the Holy Spirit. So if we are journeying that direction, of course we will face a lot of opposition. We will hear people saying to us things we do not understand. We will be afraid to ask, “What do

you mean.” We try to ignore and make false peace. We are humans and will know the pressure to be first. We compare and want to be greater and the greatest. Who prays for humbleness? If you pray for humility God just might give it.

How hard it is to be refused. We know where we are going and we are not afraid to ask. Instead of thinking we know what other persons means we realize we are not reading other people minds. We respect the different ways of people preaching, reaching and ministering to others. If we are journeying toward the heaven we enter into the towns and into the lives of those who will not welcome us. We still go there. If people kick us out, if people do not want us, we bless them and we continue our journey.