

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
For groups meeting from September 30 through October 5

Prayer of the Day: Sovereign God, you have created us to live in loving community with one another. Form us for life that is faithful and steadfast, and teach us to trust like little children, that we may reflect the image of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER:

Share: How did last week's scripture (Mark 9:38-50) work in your life?

Mission: What was most satisfying about your ministry last week? Where do you see God at work? How did you participate in God's missional activity? ***How did inviting go last Saturday and Sunday? How many new people did you talk to?***

Hear: Mark 10:2-16**

*** Textual note on vv. 2-12 regarding divorce: this passage and Jesus' words must be understood in the context of 1st century marriage which is entirely different than 21st century marriage. Marriage was a business arrangement between two families which was mutually beneficial as the families merged for political or economic gain. Marriage was viewed as a "blood relationship" not a legal one. Therefore, according to Jesus, laws did not apply to that relationship which was believed to be determined by God. Divorce and remarriage at that time constituted challenges to honor and loss of extended family power. The Pharisees approached Jesus to test him with their question aimed to get him to answer in a way that would offend the royal family (Herod was divorced) which was sensitive to criticism by prophets (John the Baptist was executed for criticizing Herod).*

Explore Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

1. The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus in front of the crowds on one side or other with their test question. How did Jesus change the conversation entirely when he skipped the legalities and went to the purpose and intention of the marriage relationship?
2. In this entire passage, how was Jesus emphasizing dependence on God?
3. How did Jesus turn things upside down by saying the kingdom of God belongs to little children who were least and powerless in that society?

Connect Questions: (Use these or develop your own.)

4. How can we think about Jesus' idealistic words about marriage in a global sense to think about a model for God's intentions for all relationships?
5. How do we ignore the well-being of individuals and relationships by focusing on legalities of issues or arguing about who is right and who is wrong? For example, on the TV show, Chicago P.D., two officers were arguing about the best way to obtain evidence, and finally one of the officers said, "Do you want to be right, or do you want to save lives?" How does that statement or concept apply to us as Christians living out our faith?
6. Who are the "little children" today as the most vulnerable and powerless in our society? Where do you see the church welcoming and embracing these populations? Where can we do better?

Prepare: Memorize this verse: *“Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.”* (Mark 10:15). How do you hear God calling you?

BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:

Obey: During this week follow through on your intentions.

Meditate: Read Psalm 8. How does this speak into your life?

Reflect: What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

OUR MISSION TOGETHER: As a missional congregation we celebrate Christ’s presence, invite people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and equip them to serve in a broken world.

Notes for ChristCare leaders:

The Pharisees tried to test and trap Jesus by questioning him about the laws of divorce. Jesus, as usual, rendered them speechless as he changed the conversation to the intention of marriage and the relationship of love that God desires. Jesus was changing all of the assumptions and cultural norms of his day, because he wanted people to focus on what really mattered: love of God and love of people. He basically ended the conversation by saying it’s a moot point, and he wasn’t going to argue about who was right and who was wrong – he was interested in saving lives by bringing people into relationship with him and with God. In the church and in our lives, sometimes we lose focus on what is most important and damage relationships as we argue about who is right and who is wrong instead of focusing on Jesus and his call for peace, love, and care for the least. Then we miss opportunities to do great ministry and make a difference in people’s lives. The Pharisees were so busy trying to prove Jesus wrong that they were missing his amazing grace changing their lives forever.

Thanks be to God,
Pastor Andrea acain@desertcross.org

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
As we forgive those
Who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
And deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
And the glory are yours,
Now and forever. Amen

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
Born of the virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified died and was buried;
He descended to the dead,
On the third day he rose again;
He ascended into heaven,
He is seated at the right hand of the Father,
He will come to judge the living and the
dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The holy catholic church,
The communion of saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body,
And the life everlasting. Amen