

Lenten Devotional April 4, 2022

Scripture

Mark 9:30-41

30 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; 31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." 32 But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

33 Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" 34 But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. 35 He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." 36 Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 37 "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

38 John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." 39 But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. 40 Whoever is not against us is for us. 41 For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward."

Devotional

The Rev. Joshua Demi '20

Easter and Christmas, Lent and Advent: it is utterly unexpected that the two great festivals and two great seasons of the church year surround times when God was vulnerable. Eternity, infinity, majesty, and glory, cooed and cried, bled and died. The Almighty One became small, in order to lift up the lowly. The Immortal One died, to lead those held captive by death through the grave and out the other side, into a new creation, into a world made whole, made new.

There is a lot of talk in the world today, even (or perhaps particularly) in ministry settings, about success. Discussions of "What is a successful ministry?" often quickly become discussions of "Who is the greatest?" What constitutes success? What is greatness? Where do we find it, and how ought we to measure it? Is it in the size of our platform? Is it in our talents, or skills, or personal charisma? What Jesus teaches in both word and deed is that greatness is found in humility and love. Do not let anyone tell you that you are too small, too poor, too weak to matter. Do not let anyone tell you that you or your church is too small, too weak to matter. Every act of humility and love is a fragrant offering to God. In every community that shares the love of God with the lowly and welcomes the outcast, in every person who comforts the afflicted and loves their neighbor, there is greatness.

Prayer

God of humble glory and glorious humility, who lifts up the lowly and comforts the afflicted, may we not seek to be great in the eyes of the world, but seek the greatness revealed in you. Thank you for the ways you are at work in countless small communities—feeding the hungry, welcoming the outcast, and comforting the afflicted. In the name of Christ, the Incarnate One, who cooed and cried, bled and died, we pray. Amen.