



## Wednesday Prayer

18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost – LOVE

**Then they came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the way?” But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” Then he took a little child and put it among them, and taking it in his arms he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.” Mark 9: 33-37**

Jesus shows such grace and love in this encounter, I’m reluctant to share what my reaction might have been, but here goes. More like, “Really? That’s what you’re all focused on as I’m teaching about my death and resurrection? Your own greatness?” (And that’s the nice version.)

Jesus continues to teach the disciples (and us) that our focus on status, position, and greatness takes us far away from his teachings and vision for a just world. He raises up children in this lesson – children who had no status or rights in this time. They were completely vulnerable and dependent on others for their well-being. Welcoming and loving children – and *all* the most vulnerable in society – this is how we are to welcome Jesus.

This week I listened to a podcast titled “Centering Love in the Journey to End Gender-Based Violence” by [PreventConnect](#). The speakers acknowledged that talking about love and love’s role in the context of people who have been harmed, often by those who have claimed to love them, is tricky. But they go on to share that beginning with love can shift the dynamics of power and what we’re focusing on:

*“I have always truly felt that I love people – I don’t always like everyone – but I truly want to see everyone’s humanity. And that has been kept separate from our prevention work. In order to do prevention work that is responsive to communities that have experienced the most harm...and acknowledge the role that years of racist policies and practices have created these environments where sexual and domestic violence is more likely to happen – the work to undo that, if it’s not rooted in love, what is it rooted in?”*

**Loving God, you continue to teach us your vision for a just world, always raising up those who are most vulnerable. May we let go of our selfish ways, our holding on to power, and turn toward loving all your children and truly welcoming all. Amen.**

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Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

Join us Sunday, October 13 for a screening of [Screenagers Next Chapter: Addressing Youth Mental Health in the Digital Age](#) and explore solutions together!