



COURAGEOUS RELATIONSHIP

Affinity Groups

EPIPHANY 2020

Week 5: Identity based on Accomplishment/Accumulation versus Identity based on Claim

Big Idea: In Christ, we are freed from proving our worth and freed for being who we have been created to be in God's own image. God's claim for reminds us *"you are God's"*.

What are we talking about? An example of Identity based on accomplishment/accumulation vs. identity based on claim:

(have someone read aloud)

Somewhere along the way I learned or assumed from my family system that what I accomplished or achieved had direct correlation to my belonging or worthiness to that particular system. Good grades equaled praise, and "bad" grades made earning my way back into the good graces, my spot on the roster represented my commitment to or lack of commitment to the sport and so on. I became good at impressing people with my accomplishments, by doing the best, being the best, and covering those things that fell short of "best". It's likely a message I made up in my head, but from my perception it was truth and it became a dominant narrative that informed my life.

Years ago, I came across a tool called the Enneagram. In self-discovery I realized that I am a three or "the achiever/performer" type. It became clear that my moving thru life was all about how I achieve or perform and my actions as well as reactions were driven by the ability to be seen as best, or my achievements/accomplishments. It's a wonderful tool that I feel acts as a mirror of our own blind spots. Within the reading of each type are suggestions for growth to be the healthiest version of that number, and within my reading of type three's one thing haunted and continues to haunt me. It reads: "You are more than what you accomplish." A foreign concept for me! Could it be that my claim as child of God had no connection to what I do to achieve that claim?!

Our reading from 1st Peter today the language of chosen, or dare I say wanted turns this achievement/accumulation idea on its head. For Peter our hope that suffering will end is not a mirage, but a "living hope" in the one who has conquered death and gives the only claim worth seeking. In Christ, we are freed from proving our worth and freed for being who we have been created to be in God's own image. It feels as if Peter is also looking in the mirror, reminding himself of God's claim for him, and reminding us too, *"you are God's people"*.

Make it personal: Identity based on accomplishment/accumulation vs. identity based on claim:

Hemingway receives credit as the inventor of the six word story. Supposedly, fellow writers challenged him to write a story in only six words. Subsequently, he produced, "For sale: baby shoes, never worn."

The short phrase, though lacking many elements of traditional stories, did, in a sense, possess a beginning, middle, and end.

The difficulty of creating a definition together is remembering all of it, if you were to boil down the definition we created together into a 6 word definition of vocation, personal to you and your role as _____ what would it be? Remind them of their collective definition then give people some time to think, and then come back to share the definitions.

How did you arrive at this definition, or what is "behind" these 6 words?

Then ask: What is the greatest challenge to living out the vocation of _____ well?

When it comes to identity based on accomplishment/accumulation versus identity based on claim, which drives your basic understanding of identity?

How would your life be different if it was based only on the identity that comes from being a claimed and called Child of God?

Spiritual practice

Ballast

In the bottom of a sailboat there is weight that helps the sailboat weather rough seas and strong winds and remain upright. If we think of the weight or ballast as positive traits we know to be true of ourselves, it helps us to call these to our attention when we weather tough and challenging times in our life. Another way to say this is, who does God know you to be? Write down a list of those positive traits and qualities about you. Ask God to grow and develop these so that you might use them in your vocations.

Close with the prayer of good courage.

O God, You have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen