



Go Outside
October 18, 2020
Matthew 18:1-5

Connect:

- Drive down any road and you will see a sign expressing an opinion. How do ours get formed? What circumstances shape them? When has being in relationship with someone who thought differently than you changed your perspective? Could you go outside of your “box” to see differently?

Engage:

- Read **Matthew 18:1-5**. Read this passage through twice (2nd time aloud). Upon a second reading/hearing, think about the counter-cultural illustration/invitation. Note there are three phrases that begin with who/whoever.
- The disciples start with the question of **who**. They are competing for an eternal place of greatness at the side of Jesus. They have just seen him in Matthew 17 with Elijah and Moses at his side. These are the ancient leaders of their faith! Then Jesus, in recognizing their ambition, brings up a child. What innate characteristics of children would change the disciples’ ambitious behavior?
- *Truly I tell you, unless you **change** and become like children you will never **enter** the kingdom of heaven,* (let alone achieve greatness). The only observable behavior in this passage is that Jesus called the child to come to him, and they did. Make up a scenario of anything/nothing going on in the mind of the child that incentivized their running to Jesus.
- We are so busy being adults. We are less spontaneous than children and way more preoccupied. If Jesus were to call you over to himself, what could you imagine him saying to you? What would you say to Jesus? Could competing adults be changed by humility? What is this need to be first or right or “great”?
- Jesus is calling us. He is calling the children, the ones without titles, the nobodies as somebodies. Who are we **outside** of our tributes, positions, ambition, opinions, campaigns, and alliances? Can we imagine laying down those inner aspirations to **go outside**, sit with Christ and hear what matters to his heart? Is it worth our time to go, even if nothing is said? How might we be changed?
- Imagine yourself in the presence of someone who thinks differently than you. Imagine Jesus being there too. With Christ how might your willingness to listen unlock doors of resistance?

Next Steps:

- Name some of the polarizing, paralyzing pain in our days that has you growling.
- Practice *listening*. Repeat back to a person a phrase that expressed a different opinion than your own. Acknowledge that you hear what they are saying and that their heart matters to you. If so prompted, humbly say, “We see that differently.” They may invite you to elaborate, but let it be at their invitation. Have no agenda other than to listen hard and to honor them.
- Find sometime this week to **go outside** and sit quietly with Jesus in thought. Let Jesus say a prayer for you.

Pray:

“Oh Great Lord, Greatness is yours and your earthly titles were won from the love that poured from your heart. Loving God and loving neighbors draw us closer to you and to one another in humility and relationship. Take from us the need to be right and place in us a right heart, the childlike heart, that runs to be with you. Then open us to change and become kingdom builders, together. Amen”