

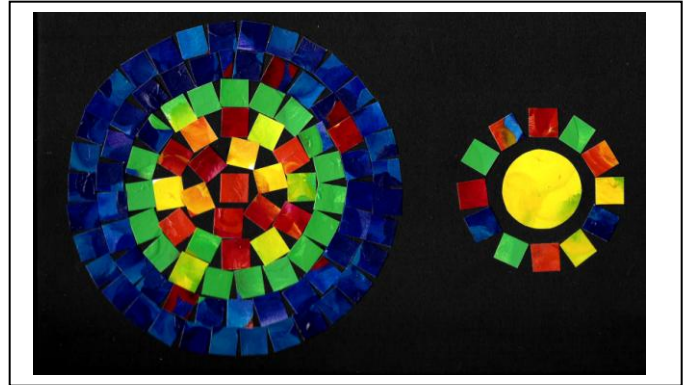
Making Space for God

Lessons from Mark #5—Leaving the Crowd

Opening Prayer

*I am giving thee worship with my whole life,
I am giving thee assent with my whole power,
I am giving thee praise with my whole tongue,
I am giving thee honor with my whole utterance,
I am giving thee love with my whole devotion,
I am giving thee kneeling with my whole desire,
I am giving thee love with my whole heart,
I am giving thee affection with my whole heart,
I am giving thee affection with my whole sense,
I am giving thee my existence with my whole mind,
I am giving thee my soul O God of all gods.*

A Celtic Prayer When Dressing



Arrival

Take some time to settle into the environment and calm your restless mind. Breathe deeply. Review the past month and make a list of what you are grateful for. Thank Jesus. Where you have struggled? Explore with Jesus how your struggles reveal your fears and longings.

Scripture—Mark 3:7-15

⁷ Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. ⁸ When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. ⁹ Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. ¹⁰ For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. ¹¹ Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” ¹² But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

¹³ Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. ¹⁴ He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach ¹⁵ and to have authority to drive out demons.¹

What Thaddaeus Saw

Maladies of the mangled were made whole; frail and forlorn were healed. Word spread.

Then they came in droves wearing the perfume of desperation and death. Pushing and grabbing replaced civility and grace. Demons shrieked as Hell’s hold was wrecked.” Be silent, unholy ones! You have no place at my table.”

“I choose you instead,” said He. “Follow me to a place where the air is clear. Learn from me to see the unseeable, the hidden, the disguised. Move beyond craving, clutching, and fussing. Be with Me.

Leave at lakeside your small life. Walk with me to a place higher up and deeper in. Put on new shoes and dream my dreams for you. Wrap your bones in a new name.

See with my eyes, hear with my ears, hold with my hands, and walk with my feet. Let me love my world through you. Daily die with me that others might live."

And so we walked past the gremlins of fear and lethargy towards His house of joy with anxiety or depression as our constant companions.²

Reading for Reflection

We all walk in shoes too small for us.

Carl Jung

We mostly spend our lives conjugating three verbs: to Want, to Have, and to Do. Craving, clutching, and fussing, on the material, political, social, emotional, intellectual—even on the religious—plane. We are kept in perpetual unrest: forgetting that none of these verbs have any ultimate significance, except so far as they are transcended by and included in, the fundamental verb to be: and that Being, not wanting, having, and doing, is the essence of the spiritual life.

Evelyn Underhill in The Spiritual Life, page 20

Each morning the twin gremlins of fear and lethargy sit at the foot of our bed and smirk. Fear of further departure, fear of the unknown, fear of the challenge of largeness intimidates us back into our convenient rituals, conventional thinking, and familiar surroundings... The daily confrontation with these gremlins of fear and lethargy obliges us to choose between anxiety and depression, for each is aroused by the dilemma of daily choice. Anxiety will be our companion if we risk the next stage of our journey, and depression our companion if we do not.

James Hollis in Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life

As a person finds himself increasingly drawn into friendship with God he will more and more be driven to do battle with the tendencies in himself which he now sees to be opposed to love. Habits of self-gratification and self-indulgence which at one time he has supposed essential to his peace of mind now take on the aspect of chains which hamper his freedom; they begin to look like spoiled children who for their own sake need a touch of the rod; they appear as false friends who have deceived him with promises they could not fulfill. He is in deadly earnest in his warfare with what he now sees to be the enemies of love. If he is wise he will dwell on the humorous side of his change of attitude and mingle a certain light-heartedness and gaiety with the grimness of the battle. Remembering that love of God and love of neighbor cannot be disjoined he will look for opportunities of doing service to others and he will teach his imagination to dwell on the difficulties and burdens of his neighbor that he may find out ways to lightening them.

Christopher Bryant in The Heart in Pilgrimage page 74

Benediction

Father, help us this month to distinguish your voice from that of my fractured ego, parents, or social expectations. Give us the courage to follow you to the quiet place where we can be with you and receive our new name. Make your hands our hands, your eyes our eyes, your words our words as we serve those you love. Amen

² *What Thaddaeus Saw*, Poem by Steven Stuckey, 2017

³ *The Crowd, The Twelve*, Acrylic Collage on Form Board, 11 x 6.5 inches, Steven Stuckey, 2017