

2024 11 03 – Power & Privilege

Scripture: Mark 10:35-45 (*The Inclusive Bible*)

First of all, thank you to Deb, Sharon and Linda for leading us through such an eye-opening exercise.

You may have noticed in the [video](#) that we watched the participants had an opportunity afterwards to express how they felt or what they learned from their experience. I'm going to invite you now to break into pairs and for a couple of minutes share with each other whatever came up for you during this exercise; feelings, thoughts, learnings, joys or fears. I will let you know when one minute is up to make sure that we make time for both participants.

(allow for 2 minutes of sharing)

I'm going to ask you to end your conversations, and I now want to check to see if there's anyone who wants to offer a word or phrase from your discussion, something from your own experience. What did this exercise bring up for you?

(wait for responses from the congregation)

As Sharon expressed earlier this exercise is not about making anyone feel guilty or embarrassed. It's not about negating the hard work that any of us have put in to get where we are or to obtain what we have in our lives. It is about becoming aware of both our unearned privileges and our undeserved hardships. We all have stories to tell, stories that include pain and struggle, stories that include joy and celebration. But it is also true that some people's stories begin from hard

places that we can only imagine and are filled with challenging barriers different from our own.

Janaya Khan, a member of the Black Lives Matter movement, put it this way:

Privilege isn't about what you've gone through;
it's about what you haven't had to go through;
and right now, we are in a time that is calling on us
to learn the stories that we don't know.

<https://www.vogue.co.uk/arts-and-lifestyle/article/janaya-future-khan-privilege>

This exercise is about making us aware of the differences in our stories so that we can increase our understanding of ourselves and each other. Then, with that understanding, we can use whatever power or privilege we may have to make a difference in someone else's life.

That's what Jesus was saying to James and John, the sons of Zebedee and to his other disciples in today's scripture passage. Having greatness, power or privilege, doesn't mean that we have the best seat in heaven, or the biggest house on the street, or the most friends on Facebook. It's about doing what we can to help those who are struggling even more than we are. It's about serving those whose breastplates haven't got as many stickers as ours, who, through no fault of their own, have ended up with more barriers, more hardships in their lives.

Yesterday, I voted in the municipal election. I don't personally know many of the people we are running for office, so I read everything I could, even checking out some of their Facebook pages and I chose those who expressed a desire to help others, those who understood the concept of justice, those who seemed to have a sense of service rather than a sense of entitlement.

May we all live as Jesus would have us live. May we all be aware of the stories and the hardships of others. May we recognize oppression and injustice when it occurs and may we stand for what is right. May we serve the needs of others and thus love as Jesus loved.

May it be so. Amen.