



## Week #1: "Submitting to Be More Vile"

### Daily Devotions for January 15-20, 2024

#### Monday, January 15 Read Psalm 27:1-14

Note that the root of the psalmist's confidence is to be found in his closeness to God and to God's Way, not in his own abilities or resources. Take some time to reflect on this as it applies to your own life. In what ways are you moving closer to God and where do you expect God to come to you? Why must our relationship with God work this way?

#### Tuesday January 16 Read Joshua 1:1-9

Truly following God can be an overwhelming and daunting task. Re-read vv. 7 & 9. What do they mean for you in particular? Where is your courage and willingness to dedicate yourself to God most challenged? Why? How is Joshua (and us) to be encouraged?

#### Wednesday, January 17 Read Matthew 16:24; 6:25-34

After two millennia of religious symbolism the cross has lost the fearful and challenging meaning it would have held for those first disciples. But at its heart following Jesus is about sacrificing ourselves, our need to control and our need to be comfortable for a life of trusting in God. What aspects of discipleship do you say you would *never* do and why? What does this say about our understanding of what it means to be a disciple?

#### Thursday, January 18 Read Acts 9:1-5;19:8-10

There are a few things to note in these passages. First, before the title "Christian," followers of Christ were precisely that: people who lived a certain and distinctive Way. Secondly, when following that Way they are to be understood literally as the embodied presence of Jesus (9:5). Finally, close adherence to the Way brings opposition and possible persecution. Is this how you have experienced being a Christian? How is a "Way" different from a "belief?"

#### Friday, January 19 Read 1 Peter 2:9-12

Verse 9 reminds us that God chose us for the express purpose of proclaiming His Way to the world. Of course, we can't be proponents of that way if we don't live it ourselves. What does it mean to you, in terms of your goals, schedules and priorities, to be part of God's People? In what specific ways are you a living witness? Where do you need change or strengthening?

#### Saturday, January 20 Read Psalm 118:1-2;19-29

Read this psalm through a few times as your own personal song of praise. What in it speaks most directly to you and why? What does this psalm tell you about God and what does it tell you about yourself? Discuss this with God in prayer today.



## Lesson #1: “Submitting to Be More Vile”

### Small Group Study & Discussion Guide

#### Sermon Notes for

#### **“Submitting to Be More Vile” January 14, 2024**

- To take up the cross is to reject fitting in with what the world calls acceptable.**

*“If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me.”-Matthew 16:24*

- Such missional discipleship requires Spirit-driven trust.**

*“But more than anything else, put God’s work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well.” -Matthew 6:33*

- We must reclaim our vile reputation for being willing to share the gospel where people are.**

*“What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off?”-Matthew 18:12*

#### Part I. Pernicious Roots

- Share:** *The Methodist movement was a renewal movement, seeking to rekindle passionate and personal discipleship in a time of religious and spiritual decline. Wesley longed to see a “return to holiness of heart and life,” or a people set apart, special and dedicated to making disciples and helping folks to “flee the wrath to come.”* Discuss the following:
  - In what ways should the church (not just the Methodists) always be a renewal movement? Are we living in a period in need of revival and if so, why and what would such a revival look like?**
- Many in England fervently opposed the Methodists, as made clear in this comment from the Duchess of Buckingham:** *“Their doctrines are most repulsive, and strongly tainted with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors in perpetually endeavoring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth.”* With this criticism in mind, discuss the following:
  - Read Matthew 16:24 aloud.** After two millennia of religious symbolism the cross has lost the fearful and challenging meaning it would have held for those first disciples. But at its heart following Jesus is about sacrificing ourselves, our need to control and our need to be comfortable for a life of trusting in God. **What aspects of discipleship do you say you would never do and why? What does this say about our understanding of what it means to be a disciple?**
  - What might be considered ‘vile’ about your own discipleship? If nothing is, why not?**

#### Part II. Reclaiming Vile-tality

- Look at the Sermon notes to the left and the scriptures that go with them. Then discuss the following:**
  - How does putting God’s work first (Matt. 6:33) help us overcome our reluctance to be challenged or criticized?
  - What are some creative and dynamic ways we as a church (and as a study group) can reach out to the “99?”
- This week, challenge your group to reflect on our church’s ‘vile-tality.’ Are we making a Kingdom-difference as individuals as well as as a Body? Why or why not?**