

Home Group Reading for May 5-11, 2024

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:42-44

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Luke 19:8-10

Excerpts

"Power that refuses to exercise "power over" persons. Instead, this is a power of relationship, a power released in being "with" people. Whether you agree with a person or not, whether they are your adversaries or not, is irrelevant. This is a power released in the mutuality between people." David Fitch

"[T]rue "power with" is made possible where we give up "power over" in order to be "under God's power." Jesus' person and work have inaugurated this power." David Fitch

We are generous with power, sharing it freely and using it where we have it to amplify others. We take seriously Jesus' model of self-emptying as the way of God. We practice mutual submission in all our engagements with each other." Jesus Collective Value

"God-styled power is exercised in doing the work that is hardest, messiest, most unappreciated. Power is kneeling before others to help them rise up whole. Power is picking up your enemy's tab. Power is bearing on yourself other peoples' dirt and shame so they don't have to wear it on themselves. Power is breaking your life open like bread so others can be nourished." Meghan Good

Reflection Questions

1. Jesus' ultimate display of godly power was through the cross, rather than coercion. How does this perspective challenge common understandings of power in our society today, and how might it reshape our own approach to wielding power in our lives?
2. It was noted that there are limitations of coercive power and yet there's also a necessity of sometimes employing it in our lives. How can we discern when it is appropriate to use power "over", and how can we ensure that it remains aligned with the principles of godly power?
3. What are some relationships in your life that you particularly struggle with in practicing power "with" vs power "over"? If you reflect on this, what do you think might be at the source of this struggle?
4. Reflect on the idea that results may vary when employing power "with" rather than power "over." How does this understanding challenge our expectations of outcomes when we choose to practice godly power in our interactions with others?
5. As followers of Jesus, how can we practically embody the principles of godly power in our daily lives, especially in contexts where worldly power structures may be prevalent or influential? What are some concrete steps or examples of aligning our actions with the example set by Jesus in his life and ministry?