



THE KING'S GAMBIT

"THE FIRST SHALL BE LAST, AND SERVANT OF ALL"

Sept. 23, 2018 Mark 9: 30-37 & Wis. 2: 12, 17-20

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ENTERING THE SCENE:

Stephen Mitchell reminds us: "We forget, often, that the powerful want something from the weak. And what they want isn't power (which they already possess in spades), but legitimacy – the right to power. Ironically, the weak have power over the one thing the mighty value most – namely, *the right to confer or withhold legitimacy.*"

Jesus will teach where legitimate power comes from. He seems to sense that there is a need for more intensive explanation of what real power is about so he takes them aside for some one on one time. He also senses the issue that no one wants the answer to so the question remains unspoken. Jesus himself names the "elephant in the room" as the one of power over others. He reveals that true power is power with others not over others. This kind of awareness was not welcomed then, and isn't welcomed today either. But

this is exactly the kind of power that love has when it seeks only the well-being of the beloved.

Let us sit with those disciples and listen attentively to Jesus' words.

Mk. 9:30-37

30 They left that place and passed through **Galilee**. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, 31 because he was **teaching** his disciples. He said to them, "The **Son of Man** is going to be **betrayed** into the **hands of men**. They will kill him, and after **three days** he will **rise**." 32 But they did not **understand** what he meant and were **afraid to ask** him about it. 33 They came to **Capernaum**. When he was in the **house**, he asked them, "What were you **arguing** about **on the road**?" 34 But they kept **quiet** because on the way they had **argued** about who was the **greatest**. 35 **Sitting down**, Jesus called the **Twelve** and said, "If anyone wants to be **first**, he must be the very **last**, and the **servant** of all." 36 He took a little **child** and had him stand among them. Taking him in his **arms**, he said to them, 37 Whoever **welcomes** one of these little **children** in my name **welcomes** me; and whoever **welcomes** me does not **welcome** me but the **one who sent me**."

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Welcoming Jesus is accepting his understanding of God's love. How welcoming are you to his understanding?

PRAYER: Teacher Jesus, you used a little child to illustrate the kind of powerlessness that opens itself to God's love. When I love, I glimpse this truth ever so fleetingly. But then I recoil from the vulnerability that this exposes me to. It is hard to trust that God is like you say God is. Be with me as I let down my guard in loving others so that I can live into the truth of your revelation about the Father. Amen.