

PRACTICING A ONE ANOTHER CULTURE

Small Group Discussion Guide

Sermon Title: Be at Peace with One Another

Date preached: October, 18, 2026

Opening prayer: Our God, we pray that we may enter together into fellowship with you – Father, Son and Spirit – and as we experience fellowship with you, we may also develop fellowship with one another so that we might reflect the love and care for One Another that brings you honor and us joy. Amen (~John 17:20-22)

Opening question: How were you able to practice getting in tune with Jesus to live more harmoniously with others?

Sermon Focus: Jesus' final word to his bickering disciples in Mark 9:50 is "Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other." The Greek root of peace means "to join," so being at peace is about being joined or re-joined, not just keeping things quiet. With children we move them closer together after a conflict, but as adults we tend to pull away. Jesus calls us to four responses: be childlike, keep the kingdom in mind, expect conflict to be a test and a mirror, and have salt in ourselves. The last one changes the rest, because peace is something Christ has already made possible (Eph 2:14-16), so we receive it and extend it.

Sermon Question:

- What part of the sermon has stayed with you since Sunday?
OR What challenged, encouraged, or surprised you in the sermon?

Scripture reading: Mark 9:50

Optional expanded reading: Mark 9:33-50; Matthew 18:1-5

Scripture Context: The setting of the events captured in chapter 9 of Mark's gospel take place as Jesus' earthly ministry is coming rapidly toward its tragic and triumphal conclusion. Jesus has already warned the disciples of his coming death and resurrection (Mark 8:31-34), but they are ignorant or in denial. On a mountain, Peter, James and John watch Jesus transfigured, revealing his divine glory, alongside Moses (the Law) and Elijah (the prophets): the greatest sign yet that Jesus is the Son of God. So, what do the disciples do with this newfound clarity? If you answered squabble among themselves about who is greatest in God's kingdom, give yourself a pat on the back. As the chapter proceeds, both Jesus' actions and words re-direct the disciples toward a kingdom of God mindset. Predicting his death and resurrection once again, Jesus tells them that to be greatest in God's kingdom they must become servants of all, embracing his upside-down posture of the kingdom. This is the posture they will see Jesus living out in the days ahead in His own humiliation, suffering and death to accomplish God's purpose.

Word in focus: Eireneuete (Be at Peace) – Greek: εἰρηνεύετε (ee-ree-NEV-eteh)

The word εἰρηνεύετε found in Mark 9:50, translated in the NRSV as ‘be at peace’ is the present imperative version of the verb εἰρηνεύω (to be peaceful or keep the peace). These verbs, along with the noun εἰρήνη (peace) are thought by many linguists to be derived from the root word εἰπω which means to be joined or rejoined with. In Greek the present imperative is used to give a command which implies an action to be taken on the part of the hearer. In this passage, Jesus instructs the believer to ‘have salt in yourselves’ and then be joined together with one another. The result of God’s inward action of salting (pardoning, preserving, and purifying) the believer enables them to be joined with one another in peace. Both the Hebrew Shalom and the Greek Eirini imply a peace much richer than an absence of conflict, being conjoined with God to then be conjoined with God’s people.

Questions:

1. Read Mark 9:33-37. The disciples are arguing about who is the greatest. What is the advantage of being the greatest? What rank does a ‘servant of all’ have? How does thinking about ranking ourselves work against peace?
2. Read Mark 9:38-41. Why might John’s question sting, given that the disciples had just failed to cast out a demon in Mark 9:18? What does Jesus’ answer (“whoever is not against us is for us”) say about how we treat insiders and outsiders? How are we to evaluate who is with Jesus and who is against Jesus? Why might we need to do this?
3. Read Mark 9:49-50 together with Ephesians 2:14-16 and Colossians 4:6. Salt could suggest testing, preserving, seasoning, or offering. What do you think Jesus means by “have salt among yourselves”? How does Ephesians 2 help explain where the ability to be at peace comes from?
4. The sermon contrasted kids moving closer after a fight with adults pulling away (going quiet, avoiding, finding another table). When you’re in conflict, how do you tend to pull away? What’s the difference between “keeping the peace” and the peace Jesus describes?
5. How have you experienced restoration or reconciliation in places of conflict?
6. Jesus says we will be tested, and conflict can act as a mirror. Think of a past conflict and ask what it showed you about yourself (pride, a need to be right, keeping score).
7. Is there someone you’ve been moving away from, or a person or group you’ve treated as “not one of us”? What is one small step you could take toward them this week, and how does knowing that peace is possible change how you approach it?

Sharing life together: Pray for the courage to move towards places of conflict towards peace.

Closing prayer: Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)