

CHAPTER 9: TRUE DIVERSITY

QUESTION: What's the most diverse group you have been a part of? In what ways was it diverse? How does diversity affect the way the group functions?

QUOTE: "Every church on the planet claims to desire, seek, and welcome diversity—until real, messy, diverse diversity shows up at the door, looking for a home, and then there's suddenly no room in the inn."

QUESTION: The author says on p.85, "The work of diversity is often left as only a noble aspiration that hopes the desire for inclusive community is itself enough to create it—and usually it isn't." What actions are required to make true diversity a reality?

QUESTION: What kinds of conflict can flare up when people are pursuing diversity? How can you work through these conflicts?

QUOTE: One of the truths we operated under was that people are naturally disarmed by serving together. When you place disparate folks alongside on another to do something meaningful, they aren't preoccupied or hindered by their differences, and in fact begin to see the great value in differences. p.86

GOSPEL: Mark 9:38-41 — John said to him, “Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.” But Jesus said, “Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. Whoever is not against us is for us. For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward.”

QUESTION: What is the nature of John's complaint? Can you think of ways that modern Christians are guilty of saying the same thing?

ALTERNATE VERSIONS

"Why, anyone by just giving you A cup of water in my name Is on our side. Count on it that God will notice." *[THE MESSAGE]*

"Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward." *[Mt 10:42, NRSV]*

"Give a cool cup of water to someone who is thirsty, for instance. The smallest act of giving or receiving makes you a true apprentice. You won't lose out on a thing." *[Mt 10:42, The Message]*

QUESTION: Do any of these version shed more light on the original text?

QUOTE: Real diversity demands that we hold loosely to our preconceived ideas of what God looks like. Jesus didn't dine with the sinners that he could convert them all to Pharisees, but to remind the Pharisees that God speaks as loudly though the prostitutes as he does through them. p.90

QUOTE: We've been led to believe that the goal of equality is to somehow make differences disappear, yet in reality it is to be profoundly aware of them and to recognize them as a beautiful and valuable necessity...The virtue is not in ignoring our various distinctions but in celebrating them; not in pretending as though they don't exist, but in believing that their existence makes us a better version of humanity as we live together in community. p.92

QUOTE: There is much about us that is universal: the desire to be heard and known, the need to be loved and to love, the joy of finding our place and purpose, and the need to live into these without restraint. Championing equality is to see every person as fully deserving of such things and to work so that each can pursue them with as little obstacle as possible from both without and within. Yet we also need to realize and name the ways in which equality is not a default setting in the world and to acknowledge the very real barriers many experience simply because of the color of their skin or their gender identity or land of origin. p.92

QUOTE: Our distinctions of race, gender, orientation, and place of origin all shape how easy or difficult it has been for us to claim the same inherent needs we have to be seen and heard and respected, and they craft the specific lens through which we filter the world. The very specific intersection of our various differences alters how we individually have experienced life, and so we need to bring these all to bear as we build community, each being informed by one another. p.94
