



This past week, we practiced the discipline of living into our identity as beloved children of God. What was it like to claim that identity intentionally? How did it change your focus for the week? This week, we will be focusing on shifting our human tendency to respond to difficulties with fear instead of love.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 8:31-33

DISCUSSION:

- What do you think Jesus meant by human things instead of divine things?
- When you feel afraid, what are some things you have done to let go of the fear? What hasn't worked? What has worked?
- When someone says the word fear, what are some thoughts, feelings, or images that come to mind?
- What does fear look like? What does fear feel like?
- What is something or someone you fear?
- What would responding with love look like?

ACTIVITY:

Supplies needed: Small envelopes, paper, crayons or markers

Jesus does not promise us a life of no fear and no trouble. However, Jesus does promise to be with us and to be in relationship with us in the midst of trouble. This week, the act of fasting is to focus on working to let go of something that we are fearful of and instead respond to that fear with love. As you gather today to read, color, and discuss, take a few moments to think about something or someone you fear. Take a piece of paper and draw or write about what that is. Then take that paper and fold it into the envelope. During the week, when you are in a situation that reminds you of that fear, take out the paper from the envelope, think about what responding with love would look like, then draw a heart around the fear as a symbol of replacing your fear response with love. At the end of the week, gather together and share about what was easy about letting go of fear and what was difficult.

PRAYER:

God of love, we live in a world that is often full of fear.

We encounter many things we don't understand.

We experience painful events and memories, which cause us to wall our hearts, guard our minds and close us off from being open to respond in hope, in peace, and in love.

Help us to remember the promise that you walk with us both in good and troubling times. We turn from human insecurities to your eternal security.

Help us to respond to fear in love.

In the name of Jesus, AMEN.