

We've been talking this summer about the five core values of Reservoir Church. So far we've thought about Connection, Everyone, and Action; today we're going to talk about the last two: Freedom and Humility. Thinking about those values, I'm reminded of a moment from Kids Church a few years ago. I was part of the discussion in the third grade class and we were talking about Jesus—you know, like we do—when one kid had a pressing question: “Why are you talking about Jesus like he's real?!”

There was a bit of a pause. The first response came from another kid: “If you don't think Jesus is real, then why are you here?” Great question! A lot of the time it feels like if there's one thing that we're all about here at church, it's Jesus—and if you're not on board, you should go somewhere else.

But maybe not. Remember the stories we've been sharing about Paul, and how he made it his mission to bring God's word to the gentiles—people who weren't Jewish. That led to some arguments about how Jewish you had to act in order to follow Jesus. In the end, the group of believers decided that the specific details of Jewish law didn't matter that much, as long as people were interested in connecting with God through Jesus. And we feel the same way here! Obviously, we have some rules to make sure everyone feels safe and comfortable. But when it comes to figuring out how you feel about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit—you'll have a lot of freedom to do that for yourself. As I mentioned a couple weeks ago, we want everyone to feel welcome: even people with different traditions, different ways of praying, and even different beliefs. Including different beliefs about Jesus!

And when we're offering freedom, there's another thing that's important too. Because it doesn't work to say, “sure, you're free to think whatever you want, but I actually know the right answer.” The important value then is humility. What is humility? It's not a word we talk about all the time. It means being humble: not acting big and important, and letting people go in front of you.

Jesus had something to say about humility one time when he was at dinner with a bunch of religious leaders. He noticed how they were all trying to maneuver themselves to sit near the head of the table, to show that they were important people. Jesus offered them some advice: “Hey, when you're at a party you shouldn't sit in the best seat. If you do, someone will come in who's more important than you and the host will make you move—that'll be embarrassing. But if you sit in the worst seat to begin with, the host will see you and invite you to take a better seat, and you'll be honored. See, if you try and puff yourself up you'll be humbled, but if you humble yourself you'll be raised up!”

That's good advice in general. Being humble—having humility—keeps you from getting into fights about whether you're better than other people, and it helps you to be kinder and to notice the people around you. Here at church we think about being humble when it comes to what we know about God and the Bible. God is big! When we think we know all about God we might tell someone else that they're wrong, but really they probably have a piece of the picture that we haven't seen yet.

That's why, as I work to teach you about the Bible, I'm hoping to learn from you too! When we get together to talk about the story each week, I'm hoping and expecting that I'll learn things about the Bible and about God from you even as you learn from me. And not just from your answers and your ideas, but from your questions

flip over for more!

too! As we wonder together we're opening ourselves up to valuable new ideas about God's story and God's love. And then all through the week we can continue to learn from our friends and from books we read and shows we watch and things we notice in the world around us. And we can trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us as we keep learning, our whole lives long, more and more about God.

Wondering Questions

I wonder if it feels easy for you to let someone have a different opinion than you do, or see something differently?

I wonder how it feels when you're able to have your own voice heard and listened to?