

The Father's House
Encounters With Jesus
Volume III - Encounter Companions
41-60

By: Dee Wayne Cullum

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Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version (NKJV), unless otherwise noted.
Printed in the United States of America.

Note: When an encounter appears in more than one Gospel, a Steward's Combined Reading is sometimes provided. These readings bring the Gospel accounts together so that the encounter may be received as a whole. They are not presented as a new translation of Scripture and should always be read alongside the individual Gospel accounts from which they were drawn.

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Before We Begin...

Come...

sit with us
for a while.

We are simply
going to walk
through the Gospels...

one encounter
at a time...

and look
at Jesus.

Listen
to His words.

Watch
what He does.

Notice
who He sees.

How He responds.

How He loves.

And through Him...

perhaps
we will begin
to see
the Father.

We do not need
to hurry.

We do not need
to have everything
figured out.

We can simply
receive
what is before us.

One encounter.

One moment.

Today's bread...

and no more.

So...

let's begin.

Let's look
at Jesus.

Companion List for Volume III 41-60

Companion #	Historical Encounter	Scripture
41	Jesus Foretells His Death (First Prediction)	Matthew 16:21–28 · Mark 8:31–9:1 · Luke 9:22–27
42	The Transfiguration	Matthew 17:1–13 · Mark 9:2–13 · Luke 9:28–36
43	Jesus Heals the Boy with an Unclean Spirit	Matthew 17:14–21 · Mark 9:14–29 · Luke 9:37–43
44	Jesus Foretells His Death Again	Matthew 17:22–23 · Mark 9:30–32 · Luke 9:43–45
45	The Temple Tax and the Coin in the Fish	Matthew 17:24–27
46	Who Is the Greatest?	Matthew 18:1–5 · Mark 9:33–37 · Luke 9:46–48
47	Whoever Is Not Against Us Is For Us	Mark 9:38–41 · Luke 9:49–50
48	Warnings About Causing Others to Stumble	Matthew 18:6–14 · Mark 9:42–50 · Luke 17:1–2
49	The Parable of the Lost Sheep	Matthew 18:12–14
50	A Brother Who Sins / Restoration	Matthew 18:15–20
51	The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant	Matthew 18:21–35
52	The Feast of Tabernacles — Jesus Goes Up	John 7:1–13
53	Jesus Teaches at the Feast	John 7:14–36
54	Living Water Promised	John 7:37–52
55	The Woman Caught in Adultery	John 7:53–8:11

56	Jesus, the Light of the World	John 8:12–30
57	The Truth Will Make You Free	John 8:31–59
58	Jesus Sends Out the Seventy (Seventy-Two)	Luke 10:1–24
59	The Good Samaritan	Luke 10:25–37
60	Martha and Mary	Luke 10:38–42

Encounter Movement 41

Jesus Foretells His Death (First Prediction)

Scripture — Matthew 16:21–28 · Mark 8:31–9:1 · Luke 9:22–27 (NKJV)

Steward's Combined Reading

From that time, Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day.

Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord! This shall never happen to You!”

But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

Then Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”

“Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Kingdom of God having come with power.”

The Harvest

Jesus begins:

"From that time..."

We paused.

Something has changed.

Peter has just confessed:

"You are the Christ,

the Son

of the living God."

Now Jesus begins

to reveal

something His disciples

had not yet understood.

The Christ

must go

to Jerusalem.

The Christ

must suffer.

The Christ

must be rejected.

The Christ

must be killed.

The Christ

must be raised.

We paused.

The One Peter
has just confessed
as the Christ

is now revealing
a path
Peter did not expect.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father often reveals
truth
before revealing
the fullness
contained within
that truth.

Peter had received:

Who Jesus is.

But Peter was still receiving:

What it means
that Jesus is
the Christ.

Jesus says:

"He must..."

We lingered.

There is purpose
in these words.

This is not
an interruption.

This is not
a loss of control.

The One who has just been revealed
as the Christ
is walking
the Father's path.

We simply preserve
the observation.

Then Jesus speaks
of rejection.

We paused.

The elders.

The chief priests.

The scribes.

Those who knew
the Scriptures.

Those who waited
for the promises
of God.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

Knowing the words
of God

does not automatically mean
recognizing
the One
to whom those words point.

Then Jesus says:

"...and be raised
the third day."

We paused.

The promise
is spoken.

The disciples hear.

But their understanding
is still unfolding.

Again we simply preserve:

The Father reveals
according to His timing.

Then Peter takes Jesus aside.

We paused.

The same Peter
who has just received:

"You are the Christ."

Now he says:

"Far be it from You, Lord!"

We lingered.

Peter's words come
from a place
that appears loving.

He does not want
Jesus to suffer.

He does not want
the One he loves
to be rejected.

We simply preserve
the tension.

How can Peter
receive such a beautiful revelation
of Jesus

and still struggle
with what Jesus reveals?

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

Receiving revelation
does not mean
the journey
of understanding
is complete.

Jesus responds:

"Get behind Me..."

We paused.

Strong words.

But Jesus immediately explains:

"You are not mindful
of the things of God,
but the things
of men."

We lingered.

The issue Jesus reveals
is not merely
Peter's words.

It is the perspective
from which those words came.

Peter had received
from the Father.

But Peter's understanding
was still being formed.

Again we receive:

The Father does not only reveal
what is true.

The Father transforms
the way His children see.

We paused.

Jesus calls Peter
back into position.

"Get behind Me."

Not:

Leave Me.

Not:

You are no longer My disciple.

Follow Me.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father's correction
is an invitation
to continue following.

Then Jesus calls
His disciples
to Himself.

We paused.

This lesson
is not only for Peter.

It is for all
who desire
to come after Him.

Jesus says:

"If anyone desires
to come after Me..."

We noticed:

After Me.

Follow.

The disciple
does not lead
the Son.

The disciple
does not determine
the path.

The disciple follows.

Again we receive:

The Father does not ask
His children
to create the way.

He invites them
to walk with
the One
who is the Way.

Then Jesus says:

"Let him deny himself."

We paused.

We do not rush
to define this.

We simply preserve
the question:

What is Jesus asking
His disciples
to surrender?

We notice:

Jesus is not denying
the person
created by the Father.

He is revealing
the need to surrender

the life
that attempts
to exist apart
from the Father's perspective.

Again we remember Peter.

Peter wanted
the Christ.

But Peter was still learning
the way
of the Christ.

Then Jesus says:

"Take up his cross
and follow Me."

We paused.

The disciples hear
these words
before they understand
their fullness.

The meaning
is still unfolding.

We simply preserve:

The disciple follows
where the Master leads.

Then Jesus says:

"Whoever desires
to save his life
will lose it,

but whoever loses
his life
for My sake
will find it."

We lingered.

The words appear
opposite
to human understanding.

To save.

To hold on.

To preserve.

Jesus presents
another question:

What life
is truly life?

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father is not seeking
to take life away.

The Father is leading
His children
toward the life
that can truly be received.

Then Jesus asks:

"What profit is it
to a man
if he gains
the whole world

and loses
his own soul?"

We paused.

The soul.

The deepest place
of a person.

The place where
desires,
identity,
and perception
meet.

The question is not merely:

"What can we gain?"

But:

"What is forming us?"

Again we receive:

The Father is concerned
with the restoration
of the whole person.

Finally Jesus speaks
of glory
and the Kingdom.

We paused.

The disciples have heard:

suffering.

rejection.

death.

Jesus leaves them
with a promise.

There is more.

The path
they cannot yet fully understand
is still held
within the Father's purpose.

We remain.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that receiving the Son is the beginning of a journey into seeing as the Father sees.

Peter had truly received the revelation that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God.

But Peter was still learning what that revelation meant.

The Father does not only reveal:

Who Jesus is.

He reveals:

The way of the Son.

We paused.

Peter's confession was true.

His love for Jesus was true.

But his understanding was still being formed.

Peter desired to protect Jesus from suffering.

Yet Jesus revealed that Peter's understanding was still being shaped by the things of men.

The correction was not rejection.

"Get behind Me"

was not a closing of the door.

It was an invitation:

Follow Me.

We receive that the Father patiently transforms not only our actions,

but our perception.

The things of God often appear different from the things of men because the Father sees from a higher perspective.

We receive that the Father does not abandon His children when their sight is incomplete.

He continues walking with them.

He continues revealing.

He continues opening their eyes.

The journey of discipleship is not merely confessing Christ.

It is learning to follow Christ.

The Son does not merely reveal the Father's truth.

The Son reveals the Father's way.

The Father is teaching His children not only to know the Christ,

but to receive the life revealed through the Christ.

What We Receive

We receive that revelation begins a journey rather than ending one.

We receive that Peter's confession was true, even though his understanding was still developing.

We receive that the Father patiently opens our eyes according to His timing.

We receive that Jesus reveals not only who He is, but the way He walks.

We receive that sincere love can still need the Father to transform our perspective.

We receive that Jesus corrects Peter without rejecting Peter.

We receive that the things of God and the things of men represent different ways of seeing.

We receive that following Jesus requires surrendering every perspective that prevents us from receiving the Father's way.

We receive that denying self is surrendering the life shaped apart from the Father.

We receive that the Father is restoring the whole person, including the soul.

We receive that the journey continues as the Father reveals the Son more fully.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Peter.

He has just confessed:

"You are the Christ,

the Son

of the living God."

Now Jesus invites him to receive more.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we received who Jesus is,

but still struggle to receive His way?

Are there places where we desire the Kingdom,

but resist the path by which the Father leads?

Are there places where our understanding is sincere,
but still shaped more by the things of men
than the things of God?

Peter was not rejected because his sight was incomplete.
He was invited to continue following.

The invitation remains:
Stay with Jesus.
Allow the Father to continue opening your sight.
Follow the Son.

Peter had seen.
But Peter had not yet seen clearly.

The Father was still revealing.
The Son was still leading.
The journey was still unfolding.

Encounter Movement 42

The Transfiguration

Scripture — Matthew 17:1–13 · Mark 9:2–13 · Luke 9:28–36 (NKJV)

Steward's Combined Reading

Now after six days, Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and brought them up on a high mountain by themselves. And as He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His face shone like the sun. His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them.

And behold, two men talked with Him: Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep. And when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him.

Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, “Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”

While he was saying this, a bright cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!”

When the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.” When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”

And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”

Jesus answered and said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise, the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.”

Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

The Harvest

Jesus takes
Peter,
James,

and John
up the mountain.

We paused.

The timing matters.

Only days before,

Peter had confessed:

"You are the Christ,
the Son
of the living God."

The Father had opened
Peter's eyes.

But Peter was still learning
what that revelation meant.

Peter had received:

Who Jesus is.

But he was still receiving:

The way of Jesus.

Jesus had just revealed:

The Christ
must suffer.

The Christ
must be rejected.

The Christ
must die.

Peter struggled
to receive this.

Not because
he did not love Jesus.

But because
his sight was still developing.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father does not reject
incomplete sight.

He continues
to reveal.

Jesus leads them
up the mountain.

We paused.

The mountain changes
their physical position.

But perhaps something deeper
is taking place.

The disciples had been looking
through the understanding
of men.

Now they are invited
to receive
a higher perspective.

Not because earth
is abandoned.

But because the Father
is revealing something
that cannot be fully received
through earthly sight.

Jesus is transfigured
before them.

We paused.

The glory was not created
in that moment.

The Son did not become
something He was not.

The disciples were allowed
to behold
what had always been true.

Again we receive:

The Father does not make
the Son glorious.

The Father opens eyes
to behold
the glory already present
in the Son.

We paused.

The glory is not limited.

The receiver
is being enlarged.

The same Jesus
who walked with them,
who ate with them,
who taught them,

is the One
whose glory
is now unveiled.

The glory did not change Him.

The glory revealed Him.

Then Moses and Elijah appear.

We paused.

The Law.

The Prophets.

Everything that had prepared
the way
now points toward Him.

They stand with Jesus.

But the Father directs
their attention beyond
all that surrounds Him.

Then Peter speaks.

"Master,
it is good
for us to be here."

We smiled.

Again we see Peter's heart.

He desires to honor
what he has received.

He desires to preserve
the moment.

But Peter does not yet know
that the gift
is not the destination.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father gives gifts.

But the gift
must never replace
the Giver.

Then the cloud comes.

The voice speaks.

"This is My beloved Son.

Hear Him!"

We stopped.

The Father does not say:

Hear the mountain.

Hear the experience.

Hear the miracle.

Hear Him.

The awe had captured
their attention.

But the Father knew
what would sustain them.

Not the moment.

Not the vision.

Not the gift.

The Son.

Again we receive:

The Father's ultimate revelation
is not merely something
given through Jesus.

It is Jesus Himself.

The disciples fall
on their faces
and are greatly afraid.

We paused.

The glory was beyond
what they could carry
in that moment.

But the Father knew.

Jesus comes.

Jesus touches.

We lingered.

Why does Jesus touch them?

Because they did not only need
understanding.

They needed His presence.

The One revealed
in glory

is the One
who comes near
to fearful children.

The same Jesus
who touched the leper.

The same Jesus
who reached out
to those who could not see.

The same Jesus
who comes near
to His disciples.

Again we receive:

The Father's glory
and the Father's tenderness
are the same heart.

Then Jesus says:

"Arise,
and do not be afraid."

The touch comes first.

Then the words.

We paused.

The Father knew
what they needed.

Then they lifted
their eyes.

They saw no one
but Jesus only.

We remained there.

The mountain.

The glory.

The cloud.

The voice.

The fear.

The awe.

All had brought them
back to the Son.

Jesus only.

Not because the other things
were without meaning.

But because everything
the Father reveals
finds its completion
in Him.

The mountain would end.

The moment would pass.

But Jesus would remain.

Again we receive:

The Father does not give revelation
merely to create
a memory.

He gives revelation
to continue drawing
His children
into the life
of His Son.

The gift was real.

The glory was real.

The voice was real.

The touch was real.

But the Giver
was greater.

The disciples received
a glimpse
of His glory.

The glory was already present.

Their ability
to receive it
was being enlarged.

The Father knew
what they could receive
at that moment.

And the Father knew
there would always be

more to receive
in Him.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that His glory is not something created in a moment.

His glory simply is.

The mountain did not make Jesus glorious.

The mountain unveiled what had always been true.

We paused.

The disciples did not receive a different Jesus.

They received a greater sight of the Jesus who had already been walking with them.

Again we receive:

The Father's work is not to create the glory of the Son.

The Father's work is to open the eyes of His children to behold the glory already present in Him.

We received that Peter's journey continued.

Peter had truly confessed:

"You are the Christ,
the Son
of the living God."

The Father honored that revelation.

But the Father knew there was more for Peter to receive.

Peter had received the identity of the Son.

He was now being invited to receive the glory of the Son.

We received that revelation is not a single moment that completes the journey.

Revelation begins a journey.

The Father continually opens the eyes of His children.

We received that the Father is patient with developing sight.

The blind man at Bethsaida saw partially before he saw clearly.

Peter confessed truly before he understood fully.

The Father did not reject the first sight.

He continued bringing sight.

We received that the glory of Christ is infinite, but our ability to behold Him is continually being enlarged by His grace.

The Father knows what His children can receive.

He knows when they are ready.

He knows what they need for the path ahead.

The gift of the mountain was given because the Father knew what Peter, James, and John would face.

The Father did not remove the valley.

He revealed the Son before they entered it.

We received that the mountain was not a place to remain.

Peter desired to preserve the moment.

"Lord, it is good for us to be here."

We understood Peter.

Who would not want to remain where glory was so clearly revealed?

But the Father was showing them something greater.

The goal was not the mountain.

The goal was Jesus.

We received that even beautiful gifts from the Father can become distractions if they cause us to look at what was given rather than the One who gave.

The experience is not greater than the Person.

The revelation is not greater than the One revealed.

The gift is not greater than the Giver.

We received that the Father's voice in the midst of the glory was:

"Hear Him."

The Father did not direct them to the experience.

He directed them to the Son.

The awe was real.

The glory was real.

The moment was real.

But the Father knew what would sustain them.

Not the mountain.

Not the miracle.

Not the memory alone.

Jesus.

We received that "Hear Him" is not merely a command to listen to words.

It is an invitation to receive the Person.

The Word became flesh.

The One before them was not merely speaking words of life.

He was the Word of Life.

We paused.

The Father's revelation is not primarily information about Jesus.

The Father's revelation is Jesus.

We received that the steward's first responsibility is not to speak.

It is to hear.

Before Peter would speak.

Before Peter would strengthen others.

Before Peter would feed the sheep.

Peter first had to hear.

The Father forms the steward before entrusting the stewardship.

We received that the same Jesus who is revealed in glory is the Jesus who comes near to the fearful.

The disciples fell because the experience was beyond them.

But Jesus did not remain distant.

He came.

He touched.

He spoke.

We paused.

The One whose face shone like the sun is the One who reaches toward His children.

The glory of the Father is never separated from the tenderness of the Father.

We received that Jesus' touch reveals the heart of the Father.

The Father does not merely reveal Himself as magnificent.

He reveals Himself as near.

We received that the final movement of the mountain was not that they understood everything.

They did not.

They looked up.

They saw Jesus only.

The Father brought them back to the center.

Not:

Jesus and Moses.

Not:

Jesus and Elijah.

Not:

Jesus and the experience.

Jesus only.

We received that "Jesus only" does not mean the other things were meaningless.

It means everything finds its proper place in relation to Him.

The Law.

The Prophets.

The glory.

The voice.

The mountain.

The memory.

All lead to the Son.

We received that the Transfiguration was not given merely as an event to remember.

It was given as a continuing invitation to receive the Person.

The mountain ended.

The glory remained.

Because the One who is glorious remained.

The disciples received a glimpse.

But the One they glimpsed was inexhaustible.

The Father gave according to what they could receive.

But He gave them the One in whom there is always more to receive.

We received:

The steward does not create the music.

The steward receives the song.

The steward does not capture glory.

The steward beholds the One who is glorious.

The steward does not possess revelation.

The steward faithfully carries what has been received.

Behold Him.

Hear Him.

Remain with Him.

What We Receive

We receive that the Father reveals the Son according to His wisdom and love.

We receive that the glory of Christ is not something that increases.

The Son is already full.

The Father continually enlarges our ability to behold Him.

We receive that Peter's first revelation was true, even though his understanding was still unfolding.

We receive that the Father is patient with His children as they learn to see.

We receive that the Father does not reject those whose sight is incomplete.

He continues to reveal.

He continues to lead.

He continues to draw His children deeper into the life of His Son.

We receive that the Transfiguration was a gift entrusted to Peter, James, and John.

Not because they were greater.

But because the Father had a purpose for what He entrusted.

We receive that every gift from the Father carries a responsibility of stewardship.

We receive that the gift must never become greater than the Giver.

The moment becomes secondary to the Person.

The experience becomes secondary to the Son.

We receive that the Father's instruction remains:

"Hear Him."

We receive that before the steward speaks, the steward listens.

Before the steward carries, the steward receives.

Before the steward gives, the steward remains with the Giver.

We receive that Jesus is not merely the One who gives revelation.

Jesus is the Revelation.

We receive that the Father did not give the disciples the mountain so they could escape the valley.

He gave them the mountain so they could continue following the Son through the valley.

We receive that the same Jesus who shines in glory is the Jesus who touches those who are afraid.

We receive that the Father's greatness and the Father's gentleness are revealed together in the Son.

We receive that the final answer to every revelation is not an experience.

It is Jesus.

We receive that all things the Father has spoken and revealed find their fullness in Him.

We receive that the glory we behold will never be exhausted because the One we behold is inexhaustible.

We receive that the journey of receiving never ends.

The Father continues unveiling.

The Son continues revealing.

The Spirit continues opening our eyes.

We receive:

Behold Him.

Hear Him.

Remain with Him.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Peter, James, and John on the mountain.

They came seeking nothing.

They were simply led.

They received something they could not have created.

Something they could not have produced.

Something they could not have fully understood in that moment.

They were given a glimpse of the glory of the Son.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we mistaken the gifts of God for God Himself?

Have we sought the mountain,
but missed the One who stands upon it?

Have we desired moments of revelation,
but forgotten that the greatest gift is the One who is revealed?

The Father knew what Peter, James, and John needed.
He knows what we need.

The Father does not withhold because He is distant.
He reveals according to His perfect love.

The invitation remains:
Do not merely seek what He gives.
Seek Him.

When the awe fades,
Hear Him.

When the path becomes difficult,
Hear Him.

When our understanding is incomplete,

Hear Him.

The glory is already present.

The Son is already revealed.

The Father is still drawing near.

Remain with Jesus.

The Beloved Son.

The One the Father reveals.

The One whose glory cannot be exhausted.

The One whose words are Spirit and Life.

The One we behold.

The One we hear.

The One who remains.

Encounter Movement 43

Jesus Heals the Boy with an Unclean Spirit

Scripture — Matthew 17:14–21 · Mark 9:14–29 · Luke 9:37–43 (NKJV)

Steward's Combined Reading

And when they had come down from the mountain, a great multitude met Him. Suddenly, a man from the crowd cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. So I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cast it out."

Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here."

And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father. Then they were all amazed at the majesty of God.

And when Jesus had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, saying, "Why could we not cast it out?"

So Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief. For assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

The Harvest

Jesus comes down
from the mountain.

We paused.

Only moments before,

Peter,
James,
and John
had witnessed
the glory of the Son.

They had heard
the Father's voice:

"This is My beloved Son.

Hear Him."

Now they enter
a valley.

A crowd.

Confusion.

A suffering child.

A desperate father.

We paused.

The transition matters.

The Father does not reveal
the glory of the Son
so His children can escape
the brokenness of the world.

He reveals the Son
so His children can enter
the brokenness with Him.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The mountain is not
the destination.

The mountain is preparation
for the valley.

The same Jesus
who was revealed
in glory

is the Jesus
who comes near
to suffering.

The father approaches Jesus.

We paused.

Before we look
at the disciples,

we look
at the father.

He comes carrying
a child he cannot restore.

He has no solution.

No ability.

No answer.

He simply comes
to Jesus.

Again we receive:

The beginning of receiving
is recognizing

our need
for the One
who can give life.

The father says:

"Lord,
have mercy
on my son."

We lingered.

The father does not come
with a perfect understanding.

He does not come
with a perfect faith.

He comes
with a desperate heart
turned toward Jesus.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father does not require
His children
to have everything resolved
before coming near.

He invites them
to bring
what they cannot carry.

The father says:

"If You can do anything,
have compassion
on us
and help us."

We paused.

There is uncertainty
in his words.

But there is also trust.

He does not walk away
because his understanding
is incomplete.

He brings his incomplete faith
to the One
who is complete.

Then Jesus says:

"If you can believe,
all things are possible
to him who believes."

We stopped.

Not because Jesus is demanding
a perfect confidence
before He acts.

But because He is inviting
the father deeper.

And the father responds:

"Lord,
I believe;
help my unbelief!"

We remained there.

What a beautiful prayer.

The father does not say:

"I have no doubts."

"I have everything understood."

"I have enough faith."

He simply says:

"I believe."

And:

"Help me."

Again we receive:

Faith is not the absence
of weakness.

Faith is bringing
our weakness
to Jesus.

The father does not overcome
his unbelief
and then come to Christ.

He comes to Christ
with his unbelief.

And Jesus receives him.

We paused.

The disciples were learning
a lesson they did not yet understand.

The father knew:

"I cannot."

The disciples were learning:

"We cannot
apart from Him."

The father came
with empty hands.

The disciples came
with hands
that had received much.

But both were brought
to the same place.

Jesus.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

Everyone came to Jesus
needing something.

But everyone was invited
to receive Someone.

The father comes to Jesus.

The disciples come to Jesus.

Both are seeking an answer.

But their journeys are different.

The father comes from desperation.

The disciples come from confusion.

The father knows:

"I cannot."

The disciples are learning:

"We cannot apart from Him."

We paused.

The father may have had less understanding,
but he had the posture.

The disciples had received much,
but they were still learning the posture.

Again we receive another beautiful thread.

The Father is not measuring His children by how much they know.

He is drawing them into the posture of receiving.

The father says:

"Help my unbelief."

We lingered.

This is not a prayer of defeat.

It is a prayer of surrender.

The father is not saying:

"My unbelief is greater than my faith."

He is saying:

"Even the faith I have must come from You."

Again we receive:

Faith is not something we possess apart from Christ.

Faith is our participation in the life of the One we receive.

The father does not place confidence in the strength of his own belief.

He places confidence in the One before him.

Jesus.

We paused.

Then Jesus heals the child.

The child is restored.

The father receives his son.

We lingered.

The words are beautiful:

"He gave him back to his father."

Jesus does not merely remove the affliction.

He restores relationship.

The Father is revealing His own heart.

The Son does not come merely to make broken things function.

He comes to restore what was created for love.

Again we receive:

All things were created through Him and for Him.

The child.

The father.

The disciples.

Everything is being drawn toward the Son.

Then the disciples ask privately:

"Why could we not cast it out?"

We paused.

This is an important moment.

Because the disciples do something beautiful.

They ask.

They do not hide their inability.

They do not pretend.

They do not defend themselves.

They bring their question to Jesus.

Again we receive:

The disciple is not one who never discovers weakness.

The disciple is one who brings weakness to the Son.

Jesus responds:

"Because of your unbelief."

We linger.

We must be careful here.

The Father is not revealing:

"You simply did not try hard enough."

He is not revealing:

"You needed to create a stronger human confidence."

The deeper question is:

Where were they receiving from?

We return to the beginning.

When Jesus first sent them out, He told them:

Take nothing for the journey.

We paused.

No bag.

No bread.

No money.

Why?

Because before they carried authority,

they had to learn dependence.

They had to discover:

The work of God does not flow from what they possess.

It flows from the One they remain connected to.

Again we receive:

The first lesson of discipleship was not power.

It was dependence.

Now, later in their journey, they have received much.

Authority.

Experience.

Witness.

Participation.

And the Father gently brings them back.

Remember.

The gift came from somewhere.

We paused.

This may be one of the quiet dangers of receiving from God.

Empty hands naturally reach toward Him.

But full hands can forget where the gift came from.

Again we receive another beautiful thread.

It is very easy for full hands to forget where the gift came from.

The disciples were not without faith.

They loved Jesus.

They followed Jesus.

They had received from Jesus.

But the Father was continuing to form them.

The question was not:

"Do you have authority?"

The question was:

"Do you remain dependent upon the One who gave it?"

We paused.

This is why Jesus says:

"This kind can come out by nothing but prayer."

We linger.

Prayer is not merely a method.

It is not a formula.

Prayer is the posture of remaining.

Prayer says:

"I cannot apart from You."

Prayer says:

"My life comes from You."

Prayer says:

"I receive."

Again we receive:

The Son Himself lived this way.

He did not act independently from the Father.

He continually received from the Father.

The disciples were not being taught merely how to do what Jesus did.

They were being invited into the life from which Jesus lived.

Receive.

Remain.

Participate.

The disciples were not being stripped of what they had received.

They were being reminded of where it came from.

We paused.

The Father does not take away gifts in order to teach dependence.

He reveals the Source of the gifts.

The authority was real.

The calling was real.

The participation was real.

But none of it existed apart from Jesus.

Again we receive:

The gift is not the problem.

Forgetting the Giver is the danger.

When Jesus first sent them out, they carried nothing.

They had no reason to trust in themselves.

No reason to trust in their resources.

No reason to trust in their experience.

They went because He sent them.

They spoke because He gave them words.

They acted because He was with them.

We paused.

But now they have experienced success.

And success itself can become a place of testing.

Failure reveals our weakness.

But success can reveal whether we remember the Source.

Again we receive:

Empty hands teach dependence.
Full hands require remembrance.

This is such a beautiful stewardship lesson.

A steward is not someone who owns what has been entrusted.

A steward is someone who continually remembers:

"This came from Another."

The disciples had received authority.

But authority without dependence can become something dangerous.

Not because the gift is wrong.

Because the heart can slowly shift.

From:

"Lord, work through me."

To:

"I know how to do this."

From:

"I receive."

To:

"I possess."

From:

"Remain in Him."

To:

"Use what I have been given."

We paused.

And the Father, in His kindness, allows the disciples to encounter a place where they cannot.

Not to shame them.

To preserve them.

Again we receive:

The Father sometimes allows our inability to become a mercy.

Because if the disciples had continued believing that the gift operated independently of the Giver, the very thing entrusted to them could have become the thing that separated them from Him.

The father in the story becomes a teacher.

He has no authority.

No reputation.

No previous victory to remember.

But he has the posture:

"I need You."

We paused.

Perhaps this is why Jesus says:

"If you have faith as a mustard seed..."

The mustard seed is small.

Hidden.

Dependent.

It does not appear impressive.

But it contains life.

Again we receive:

Faith is not impressive human confidence.

Faith is dependence upon the Living One.

A small seed connected to the source of life can grow.

The question is not:

"How large is the faith?"

The deeper question:

"Where is the faith rooted?"

We paused.

The disciples were learning this.

The father already knew it.

The father did not need a mountain first.
He did not need a revelation of glory first.
He simply came.

The disciples had seen the mountain.
They had heard the voice.
They had beheld glory.

And yet Jesus brought them back to the same place:
Dependence.

Again we receive:
The purpose of revelation is not to make us less dependent.
It is to make us more aware of our need for the One revealed.

This is why the glory of the Son is such a gift.

Beholding Him does not make us say:
"Now I have enough."

It makes us say:
"I want to remain with Him."

We paused.

And perhaps this is the deeper connection between Encounter 42 and Encounter 43:

On the mountain:

They saw who He is.

In the valley:

They learned who they are without Him.

And both revelations are necessary.

Because if we only see our weakness without seeing His glory, we can fall into despair.

But if we only see His glory without recognizing our dependence, we can fall into self-reliance.

The Father gives both.

Behold Him.

Remain in Him.

The Father said:

"Hear Him."

Jesus said:

"Remain dependent upon Me."

The lesson is the same.

Receive the Son.

Receive His life.

Remain in Him.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that the purpose of beholding the glory of the Son is not merely to witness something extraordinary.

It is to be drawn deeper into the life of the One who is glorious.

We paused.

The disciples came down from the mountain.

The glory did not disappear.

The Son remained.

Again we receive:

The greatest gift of the mountain was not the memory of what they saw.

The greatest gift was the Person they saw.

The Father revealed:

"This is My beloved Son.

Hear Him."

We receive that the Father's ultimate revelation is not merely information about Christ.

It is Christ Himself.

The Father does not simply reveal what Jesus can do.

He reveals who Jesus is.

The mountain revealed His glory.

The valley revealed His compassion.

The same Jesus was present in both places.

We receive that the Father does not give glimpses of glory to remove His children from the valleys of life.

He gives glimpses of glory to sustain them as they walk through the valleys with His Son.

The mountain was preparation.

The valley became participation.

We paused.

The father came with empty hands.

The disciples came with hands that had received much.

Yet both were brought to the same place.

Jesus.

We receive that everyone came to Jesus needing something.

But everyone was being invited to receive Someone.

The child needed restoration.

The father needed hope.

The disciples needed understanding.

But beneath every need was the same invitation:

Receive the Son.

We receive that the father demonstrated a posture of faith that the disciples were still learning.

He did not bring Jesus his strength.

He brought Jesus his weakness.

He did not say:

"I have enough faith."

He said:

"Help me."

We receive that faith is not confidence in our own ability to believe.

Faith is trust in the One who is faithful.

Faith is not something possessed apart from Christ.

Faith is participation in the life of Christ received.

The father did not wait until his unbelief disappeared before coming to Jesus.

He brought his unbelief to Jesus.

We receive that the Father does not require His children to become complete before coming near.

He draws near so that they may be transformed.

We paused.

The disciples asked:

"Why could we not cast it out?"

The Father was revealing a deeper question beneath their question:

"From where are you living?"

We receive that the issue was not simply the presence of authority.

The disciples had received authority.

The issue was continued dependence upon the One who gave it.

We receive that the first lesson Jesus taught them when He sent them out was:

Take nothing.

Not because they would never receive anything.

But because everything they received must always remain received.

We receive that empty hands teach dependence.

And full hands require remembrance.

We paused.

It is very easy for full hands to forget where the gift came from.

The danger was not the gift.

The authority was not the problem.

The calling was not the problem.

The danger was forgetting the Source.

We receive that a steward does not possess what belongs to the Master.

A steward receives, carries, and returns everything to the One who gave.

We receive that the Father sometimes allows His children to encounter their inability, not to shame them, but to return them to dependence.

The disciples' inability became a gift.

It brought them back to the same place where they began.

Jesus.

We receive that prayer is not merely a method for obtaining power.

Prayer is the posture of remaining.

Prayer says:

"I cannot apart from You."

Prayer says:

"My life comes from You."

Prayer says:

"I receive."

We receive that the Son Himself lived in perfect dependence upon the Father.

The disciples were not merely being taught how to perform the works of Jesus.

They were being invited into the life from which Jesus lived.

Receive.

Remain.

Participate.

We receive that all things were created through Him and for Him.

The child.

The father.

The disciples.

Their weakness.

Their questions.

Their need.

All were being drawn toward the Son.

We receive that the Father is always doing more than we initially see.

The father came for his son.

The disciples came with a question.

But the Father was revealing Christ.

Again we receive:

The deepest gift is not what comes from His hand.

The deepest gift is the Hand itself.

What We Receive

We receive that the Father gives glimpses of the glory of the Son not so that we may remain on the mountain, but so that we may continue walking with Him through every valley.

We receive that the glory of Christ does not remove our need for Him.

It deepens our desire to remain in Him.

We receive that the mountain reveals who Jesus is.

The valley reveals our need for Jesus.

We receive that both revelations are gifts from the Father.

We receive that the father came to Jesus not because he had perfect faith, but because he knew where his need belonged.

We receive that faith is not confidence in our own ability to believe.

Faith is receiving and remaining in the One who is faithful.

We receive that the prayer:

"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief"

is not a prayer of failure.

It is a prayer of surrender.

We receive that the Father meets His children in their weakness and draws them deeper into the life of His Son.

We receive that the disciples were not rejected because they encountered inability.

They were being formed through it.

We receive that the Father's correction is an invitation to deeper dependence.

We receive that the gift must never become greater than the Giver.

We receive that full hands must remember where the gift came from.

We receive that everything entrusted to the steward remains received.

We receive that the disciple does not become the source of life.

The disciple receives life from the Source.

We receive that authority apart from dependence is not the Father's way.

We receive that prayer is not merely a means of accomplishing the work of God.

Prayer is remaining connected to the One who does the work.

We receive that the Son Himself reveals the perfect posture of dependence.

He continually receives from the Father.

We receive that the Father is not forming people who simply perform works for Him.

He is forming children who participate in His life.

We receive that everyone in this encounter came needing something.

But everyone was invited to receive Someone.

We receive that all things were created through Him and for Him.

The needs.

The questions.

The weakness.

The restoration.

All things are being gathered toward the Son.

We receive:

The mountain says:

Behold Him.

The valley says:

Remain in Him.

The heart says:

Receive Him.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with the father.

A father standing before Jesus.

A son who needed healing.

A heart that knew:

"I cannot."

Perhaps we ask:

Where do we come before Jesus believing we must first have enough?

Enough faith.

Enough understanding.

Enough strength.

Enough confidence.

The father teaches us another way.

Come.

Bring what you have.

Bring what you lack.

Bring even the places where you struggle to believe.

"Lord, I believe; help my unbelief."

Perhaps we also ask:

Have our hands become so full of what God has entrusted that we have forgotten the One who gave it?

Have we begun to trust the gift more than the Giver?

Have we begun to rely upon yesterday's receiving rather than today's dependence?

The Father is not inviting us back because He has withdrawn.

He is inviting us deeper because He loves us.

The invitation remains:

Hear Him.

Remain in Him.

Receive from Him.

The glory we behold is a gift.

But the Giver is greater than the gift.

The work we participate in is a gift.

But the One we participate with is greater than the work.

The faith we receive is a gift.

But the One who is faithful is greater than the faith itself.

Remain with Jesus.

The Beloved Son.

The One revealed in glory.

The One who comes near in compassion.

The One who receives our weakness.

The One who restores what is broken.

The One through whom all things were created.

The One for whom all things exist.

The One in whom all things are gathered.

Jesus only.

Encounter Movement 44

Jesus Foretells His Death Again

Scripture — Matthew 17:22–23 · Mark 9:30–32 · Luke 9:43–45 (NKJV)

Steward's Combined Reading

Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up.” But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, "Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."

But they did not understand this saying; it was hidden from them, so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying. And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

The Harvest

Jesus had just brought them
down from the mountain.

Only moments before,

Peter,

James,

and John

had beheld His glory.

They had heard
the Father's voice:

"This is My beloved Son.
Hear Him."

Now they enter
a valley.

A multitude.

A suffering world.

A question.

A sorrow
they could not yet understand.

We paused.

The timing matters.

The disciples had just witnessed
the glory of the Son.

Now Jesus speaks
of His suffering.

We lingered.

The One who had revealed
the Father's glory

would willingly enter
the hands of men.

The One who had healed.

The One who had delivered.

The One who had displayed
the authority of God.

Would be betrayed.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father's love
does not avoid
the path before Him.

Jesus does not speak
as One losing control.

He speaks
as the Son
walking faithfully
in the Father's purpose.

Jesus says:

"The Son of Man
is about to be betrayed
into the hands of men."

We paused.

Those hands.

Human hands.

Hands that would reject Him.

Hands that would strike Him.

Hands that would crucify Him.

Yet the Son willingly
places Himself there.

Again we receive:

The One who came
to restore humanity

would allow Himself
to be placed
into humanity's hands.

Then Jesus says:

"They will kill Him."

We lingered.

The disciples hear
the words.

But they cannot yet
receive their fullness.

They had received:

"You are the Christ."

They were still receiving:

What it meant
for Jesus
to be the Christ.

We paused.

Perhaps this was the tension
within their hearts.

They knew who He was.

They were struggling
with the way
He would accomplish
what He came to do.

Then Jesus says:

"On the third day
He will be raised."

We smiled.

Even before the cross,

Jesus continually holds
life before them.

But we remain careful.

The disciples knew
the words.

They did not yet understand
the reality.

The seed had been planted.

The Father was already working.

Again we receive:

The Father often speaks
before His children
have the capacity
to fully carry
what He has spoken.

Luke records:

"Let these words
sink down
into your ears."

We stopped.

What a beautiful invitation.

Jesus does not say:

"Understand everything now."

He says:

"Let these words sink down."

The words must move.

From hearing.

To the heart.

From the heart.

Into life.

Again we receive:

The Father prepares hearing
before understanding.

The disciples were carrying
words they could not yet explain.

But Jesus knew.

The Word had entered.

The seed had been planted.

Then Scripture tells us:

"They were exceedingly sorrowful."

We paused.

Their sorrow reveals
something beautiful.

They were not sorrowful
because they did not love Jesus.

They were sorrowful
because they loved Him.

Their understanding
was incomplete.

But their love
was real.

Again we receive:

Incomplete understanding
does not mean
absence of love.

Then we read:

"They were afraid
to ask Him."

We paused.

We do not rush
beyond what Scripture reveals.

But we can observe:

They encountered something
greater than they could presently receive.

They were not walking away.

They remained.

They listened.

The Father was still forming them.

The seed was still growing.

And Jesus continued leading them.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

We paused.

The disciples had just experienced
their own inability.

They had seen the need.

They had desired to help.

They had attempted
to bring freedom.

Yet they discovered
that the work of God
could never rest
upon their own strength.

And then Jesus speaks
of being delivered
into the hands of men.

We paused.

The connection is profound.

The disciples had just learned:

"We cannot."

Jesus now reveals:

"The Son must."

Their inability was not the end
of the lesson.

It was an invitation
to discover the true source.

Again we receive:

The Father continually turns His children away from dependence upon themselves and toward dependence upon the Son.

The disciples had received
authority from Jesus.

But they were still learning
that authority was never something
they possessed apart from Him.

The gift could never replace
the Giver.

We paused.

How easy it is
for full hands
to forget
where the gift came from.

The disciples had seen
what Jesus could do.

They were now learning
that what Jesus does
flows from who Jesus is.

Again we receive:

The Father is not merely teaching His children to do His work. He is teaching them to remain in His Son.

Then Jesus says:

"The Son of Man
will be delivered
into the hands of men."

We lingered.

The Father reveals
His heart through this surrender.

The Son is not taken
because He is powerless.

The Son gives Himself
because He is love.

Again we receive:

The surrender of the Son is not the absence of authority; it is the revelation of the Father's heart.

We paused.

The disciples heard
words about death.

But Jesus was revealing
the way of life.

They saw:

loss.

He saw:

the Father's purpose.

They saw:

an ending.

He saw:

what the Father was bringing forth.

Again we receive:

The Father sees beyond what His children can presently see.

Then Jesus says:

"Let these words
sink down
into your ears."

We remained there.

The Father knows
that His children often receive
before they understand.

The word must first enter.

The seed must first be planted.

The hidden work must first begin.

Again we receive:

The Father is patient with the process by which His children receive His Word.

The disciples were not abandoned
because they did not yet understand.

They were being formed.

They were remaining near
the One who would, in the Father's timing,
open their understanding.

We paused.

This reveals something beautiful
about the patience of Jesus.

He knew:
they would struggle.

He knew:
they would misunderstand.

He knew:
they would scatter.

Yet He continued
to speak.

He continued
to walk with them.

He continued
to love them.

Again we receive:

The Father does not wait for perfect understanding before beginning His work in His children.

The Word goes forth.

The Father knows the soil.

The Father knows the timing.

The Father knows the fruit
before His children see it.

We paused.

The disciples' sorrow is also revealing.

They could not yet reconcile:

The Christ.

and

The cross.

But perhaps the Father was beginning
to separate their expectation
of what Jesus would do

from

their love for who Jesus is.

They were learning:

Do not only follow
the blessings of the Son.

Remain with the Son Himself.

Again we receive:

The Father is continually moving His children from receiving what Christ gives to receiving Christ Himself.

The disciples had seen His glory.

Now they were learning His heart.

They had seen His power.

Now they were learning His love.

And the Father was preparing them
for a revelation they could not yet carry.

The Seed had been planted.

The Father would bring forth
what He had purposed.

What We Receive

We receive that the Father often speaks words before His children are able to fully understand them.

The disciples heard:

"The Son of Man
will be delivered
into the hands of men."

They heard:

"They will kill Him."

They heard:

"He will be raised
the third day."

But they could not yet carry
the fullness of what they had heard.

We receive that delayed understanding does not mean the absence of the Father's work.

The Word can be planted
before the fruit is visible.

The seed can enter the soil
before the harvest appears.

The Father can be working
before His children recognize His work.

We receive that the effectiveness of the Word does not depend upon immediate understanding.

The Word carries life
because of the One who speaks it.

The Father sends.

The Son speaks.

The Spirit brings forth life.

We receive that the Father prepares hearing before understanding.

"Let these words sink down into your ears."

The Father was not merely giving information.

He was preparing hearts.

The words would need to pass through:

confusion,

sorrow,

fear,

waiting,

before they would become:

faith,

understanding,

boldness,

witness.

We receive that the disciples' sorrow was not evidence that they did not love Jesus.

Their sorrow revealed that Jesus had become precious to them.

Their love was real.

Their understanding was still being formed.

We receive that the Father is patient with incomplete understanding.

He does not abandon His children

because they cannot yet receive

all that He is revealing.

He continues walking with them.

He continues speaking.

He continues forming them.

We receive that Jesus' surrender was not the loss of His authority.

The Son was not overcome by humanity.

The Son willingly entered
the Father's purpose.

The One who held all things together
would willingly place Himself
into the hands of men.

We receive that the Father's purpose is greater than humanity's immediate perception.

The disciples saw:
death.

The Father saw:
life.

The disciples saw:
an ending.

The Father saw:

His purpose unfolding.

We receive that the valley was not separate from the mountain.

The glory they had witnessed
was leading them toward a deeper revelation
of the Son.

They had seen His power.

Now they were learning His heart.

They had seen what He could do.

Now they were learning who He is.

We receive that the moments where our own strength fails can become invitations to discover
the sufficiency of Christ.

The disciples had asked:

"Why could we not?"

And the Father was gently turning their eyes:
away from themselves,

and toward the Son.

We receive that the gift must never replace the Giver.

Authority.

Calling.

Ability.

Experience.

All are gifts.

But Christ Himself

is the treasure.

We receive that the Father is faithful with what He begins.

The disciples did not yet understand.

But the Word had been spoken.

The seed had been planted.

And the Father already knew
what He was bringing forth.

We receive:

The Son is faithful.

The Word is living.

The Father is faithful.

Therefore, even when we do not yet understand,

we can remain with Him.

Hear Him.

Allow His words to sink down.

Trust the One who speaks.

Quiet Invitation

Have we ever stood

before a word from the Father

that was true,

yet beyond our present ability

to fully understand?

Have we ever heard Him speak,

yet wondered how His words

could possibly become reality?

The disciples remind us:

The Father may plant
before we recognize
what He is bringing forth.

The Word may enter
before understanding arrives.

The seed may be hidden
and still be alive.

We paused.

The disciples did not understand
what Jesus was telling them.

But they remained with Him.

They did not yet comprehend
the path before Him.

But they continued walking

with Him.

And the One they followed
was faithful.

Perhaps we ask:

Do we trust the One who speaks
more than our ability to understand
what He has spoken?

Do we measure the Father's work
only by what we can presently see?

Or do we trust that the Father
is still working
even when the seed remains hidden?

We paused.

The disciples had seen His glory.

Now they were being prepared
to walk with Him through suffering.

They had received the mountain.

They were learning the valley.

And both were revealing
the same Son.

The Son who reveals
the Father's heart.

The Son who willingly
walks the Father's path.

The Son who trusts the Father
beyond what His disciples
could yet understand.

Hear Him.

Let His words
sink down
into your ears.

Do not run ahead

of what the Father is revealing.

Remain with Jesus.

The Seed is His.

The Word is His.

The growth is His.

And the Father is faithful.

Encounter Movement 45

The Temple Tax and the Coin in the Fish

Scripture — Matthew 17:24–27 (NKJV)

When they had come to Capernaum,

those who received the temple tax

came to Peter

and said,

"Does your Teacher

not pay

the temple tax?"

He said,

"Yes."

And when he had come into the house,

Jesus anticipated him,

saying,

"What do you think, Simon?

From whom do the kings of the earth

take customs

or taxes?

From their sons

or from strangers?"

Peter said to Him,

"From strangers."

Jesus said to him,

"Then the sons are free."

"Nevertheless,

lest we offend them,

go to the sea,

cast in a hook,
and take the fish
that comes up first."

"And when you have opened its mouth,
you will find a piece of money."

"Take that
and give it to them
for Me
and you."

The Harvest

The collectors approach Peter.

We paused.

Not Jesus.

Peter.

The question appears simple.

A tax.

A payment.

A requirement.

But Jesus reveals

a deeper question.

Who belongs?

Again we receive:

The Father often reveals

what is beneath the question

rather than merely answering

what is being asked.

Peter answers:

"Yes."

We smiled.

Peter responds

before speaking with Jesus.

Yet before Peter can explain,

Jesus already knows.

Again we receive:

Nothing arrives

before the Father's awareness

revealed through His Son.

Jesus asks:

"What do you think, Simon?"

We paused.

Again the Son asks a question.

He does not merely correct Peter.

He invites Peter

into understanding.

The Son is not simply forming

what Peter knows.

He is forming

how Peter sees.

The collectors ask:

"Does your Teacher pay?"

Jesus reveals:

"Who belongs?"

We paused.

The question moves

from payment

to identity.

Jesus speaks of kings,

sons,

and strangers.

Then He says:

"Then the sons are free."

We lingered there.

The sons.

Not strangers.

Not outsiders.

Sons.

Jesus reveals belonging
before responsibility.

A son does not become
a son by payment.

A son belongs
because he has been received.

Again we receive:
The Father establishes identity
before He reveals obedience.

Jesus is revealing something
far greater than exemption
from a tax.

He is revealing
the heart of sonship.

The son does not live
trying to earn a place.

The son lives
from the reality
that he belongs.

Then Jesus says:
"Nevertheless..."

We paused.

This word carries
the heart of the Son.

The Son is free.

Yet the Son chooses.

The Son has no obligation.

Yet the Son loves.

The Son does not insist
upon His rights.

He willingly chooses
the path of love.

Again we receive:
Freedom in the Son
is not freedom from love.

It is freedom
to love.

Jesus sends Peter
to the sea.

We paused.

The provision was already prepared.

Peter did not create
the coin.

Peter did not create

the miracle.

Peter entered into
what the Father
had already prepared.

Again we receive:
The Father's provision
often exists before
His children recognize
their need.

The fish.

The coin.

The timing.

All were already
within the Father's knowledge.

Jesus is Lord
over creation.

Yet the Lord of creation
uses creation
to provide for His child.

We paused.

The greatness of the Son
is revealed not only
in His authority
over all things,
but in His tenderness
toward those who belong to Him.

Then Jesus says:
"Take that
and give it to them
for Me and you."

We lingered.

For Me.

And you.

The Son includes Peter.

Peter participates
in what the Father
has already prepared.

The Father did not need Peter
to accomplish His purpose.

Yet the Father invited Peter
to participate.

Again we receive:
Participation itself
is a gift from the Father.

The coin was not ultimately
about payment.

It was about belonging.

It was about freedom.

It was about love.

The One who was free
chose love.

And the disciple who belonged
was invited
to participate
with Him.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

We paused.

The collectors came with a question about a tax.

But Jesus revealed something much deeper.

The question was not ultimately:

"What must be paid?"

The deeper question was:

"Who belongs?"

Again we receive:

The Father continually reveals identity beneath the circumstances of life.

Jesus speaks of kings,
sons,
and strangers.

Then He says:

"The sons are free."

We lingered there.

The Son reveals that belonging comes before obligation.

A son does not become part of the household
by earning his place.

A son belongs
because he is received.

Again we receive:

The Father does not call His children to earn belonging; He reveals belonging, and from belonging love begins to flow.

The Son Himself reveals this perfectly.

He is the true Son.

He is not a stranger.

He is not an outsider.

He belongs completely to the Father.

And because He knows the Father's heart,

He is free.

Yet in His freedom,

He chooses love.

Again we receive:

The freedom of the Son is not freedom from the Father; it is the freedom that comes from perfect union with the Father.

Jesus says:

"Nevertheless..."

We paused.

This single word reveals the heart of the Son.

He does not insist upon His rights.

He does not use freedom
as an opportunity for Himself.

He willingly chooses
the path of love.

Again we receive:

The Son reveals that true freedom is not found in holding onto what belongs to us, but in freely giving ourselves in love.

We paused.

The world often understands freedom as independence.

But Jesus reveals a greater freedom.

The freedom to love.

The freedom to serve.

The freedom to give.

The freedom that flows
from knowing:

"I belong to the Father."

Again we receive:

The Father is forming children who obey not from fear or obligation, but from love and relationship.

Then Jesus provides the coin.

We paused.

The provision was already prepared.

Peter did not create it.

Peter did not prepare it.

Peter did not control the timing.

He simply entered into
what the Father had already arranged.

The fish.

The coin.

The sea.

All remained within the Father's knowledge.

Again we receive:

The Father's provision often exists before His children recognize their need.

But the Father does something even more beautiful.

He invites Peter to participate.

Jesus could have provided the coin
without Peter.

Yet He says:

"Go."

Peter casts.

Peter receives.

Peter brings.

Again we receive:

The Father does not need His children to accomplish His purposes, yet He delights to invite them into His work.

This is the beauty of participation.

Peter is not earning sonship.

Peter is not proving his worth.

Peter is participating
because he belongs with Jesus.

Again we receive:

The Father does not invite His children into His work so they can become worthy; He invites them because they are already loved.

Then we paused before the deeper temple reality.

They asked the Temple
to pay the temple tax.

Yet they did not know
the One before them.

The One who would reveal
the true dwelling place of God among humanity.

The One in whom the Father's presence is revealed.

The One who would ultimately give Himself.

Again we receive:

The Son does not merely fulfill what the temple pointed toward; He reveals the Father's presence among His children.

The earthly temple received offerings.

The Son becomes the offering.

The earthly temple pointed toward reconciliation.

The Son accomplishes reconciliation.

The earthly temple testified of God's dwelling.

The Son reveals God dwelling with humanity.

Again we receive:

The Father's greatest provision is not merely something He gives from His hand; it is the gift of His Son.

And finally, we returned to Peter.

"Take that and give it to them
for Me and you."

For Me.

And you.

We paused.

The Son does not merely solve Peter's immediate need.

He brings Peter into His own relationship with the Father.

The disciple receives from what belongs to the Son.

Again we receive:

The Son shares with His children what He has received from the Father.

The Father gives.

The Son receives.

The Son gives.

And the children participate.

This is the heart of the Father's house.

Not strangers seeking entrance.

But sons and daughters receiving
what the Father delights to give.

What We Receive

We receive that the Father first reveals belonging.

Before the question:

"What must I do?"

The Father reveals:

"You are Mine."

The sons are free.

We paused.

Freedom begins not with independence,

but with identity.

The child who knows he belongs
does not live trying to earn a place.

The child who knows he is loved
is free to respond in love.

Again we receive:

The Father frees His children from striving for acceptance so they may live from the reality of being accepted.

We receive that the Son reveals a freedom unlike the freedom of the world.

The world often says:

Freedom means:

"No one can require anything of me."

But Jesus reveals:

Freedom means:

"I am free to love."

The Son was free.

Yet He served.

The Son was free.

Yet He humbled Himself.

The Son was free.

Yet He willingly gave.

Again we receive:

True freedom is not the absence of love's demands; it is the ability to respond to love without fear.

We receive that obedience flows differently when it comes from belonging.

A stranger obeys because he fears losing something.

A son obeys because he already knows he is loved.

The Father is not forming children who merely fulfill requirements.

He is forming children who know His heart.

Again we receive:

The Father desires relationship that produces obedience, not obedience that attempts to produce relationship.

We receive that Jesus is always drawing His disciples beneath the surface.

The collectors ask about a tax.

Jesus reveals sonship.

Peter sees a payment.

Jesus reveals belonging.

Again we receive:

The Son continually moves us from seeing circumstances alone to seeing the Father's purpose within them.

We receive that the Father's provision is already present.

Peter did not create the coin.

Peter did not prepare the fish.

Peter did not control the timing.

He simply entered into what the Father had already prepared.

Again we receive:

Faith is not confidence in our own ability to provide; faith is trust in the One who has already provided.

We receive that participation is itself a gift.

The Father could accomplish His purposes without us.

Yet He invites us.

He allows His children to experience the joy of participating in His work.

Again we receive:

The Father does not merely work through His children; He shares His work with His children.

We receive that all creation remains under the authority of the Son.

The sea.

The fish.

The coin.

Nothing is outside His knowledge.

Nothing is outside His care.

Again we receive:

The One who commands creation is the same One who tenderly provides for His children.

We receive that the greatest provision of the Father is not merely what He gives.

It is who He gives.

The coin met a temporary need.

The Son meets the deepest need.

The temple tax was paid.

But the greater revelation was the Son Himself.

Again we receive:

The Father's greatest gift is not found in what we receive from His hand, but in receiving His Son.

We receive that we may appear as strangers in this world,
yet in the Father's house we are not strangers.

Through the Son,
we are invited into belonging.

Through the Son,
we receive freedom.

Through the Son,
we participate in the Father's love.

The Father gives.

The Son reveals.

The children receive.

And love becomes the response.

Quiet Invitation

Have we ever approached the Father
thinking first about what we must pay,
rather than realizing what He desires to give?

Have we ever lived as strangers,
while the Father was inviting us
to receive the place of sons and daughters?

We paused.

The collectors saw a tax.

Peter saw a question.

Jesus revealed a family.

The Father is not merely looking for those who fulfill obligations.

He is drawing His children home.

We paused.

Do we believe we belong?

Do we live as sons and daughters,
or do we continue trying to earn
what the Father has already given?

The Son reveals true freedom.

Not freedom from the Father.

Freedom in the Father.

Not freedom to walk away.

Freedom to love.

The Son was free.

Yet He gave.

The Son belonged completely to the Father.

And from that belonging,

He loved completely.

May we receive what Jesus reveals:

The Father is not a distant King
demanding payment.

He is the Father

welcoming His children home.

The provision is already prepared.

The invitation has already been given.

The Son has revealed the Father's heart.

Remain with Him.

Receive from Him.

And walk as sons and daughters

in the Father's house.

As We Continue Walking...

Encounters 41–45

As you walk...

perhaps remain here
for a moment.

Five more encounters.

Five more steps
with Jesus.

And something
has begun to change.

Peter has confessed:

"You are the Christ,
the Son
of the living God."

He has seen.

Truly seen.

Yet seeing truly
does not mean
seeing fully.

Now Jesus begins
to reveal
what it means
that He is
the Christ.

Jerusalem.

Suffering.

Rejection.

Death.

Resurrection.

Peter struggles.

The path does not look
like the path
he expected.

And Jesus says:

"Get behind Me."

We pause.

Not:

Go away.

Not:

You are no longer
My disciple.

But...

return to the place
of following.

Peter had received
who Jesus is.

Now he must learn
to follow Jesus
where Jesus leads.

Again we receive:

The disciple
does not create
the way.

The disciple follows
the One
who is the Way.

Then Jesus leads
Peter, James, and John
up a mountain.

And there...

the veil seems
to open.

The glory
that was always present
becomes visible.

The One they had walked beside...

the One who had eaten
with them...

the One whose voice
they knew...

shines before them.

Moses.

Elijah.

The cloud.

The voice
of the Father:

"This is My beloved Son...

Hear Him."

We linger.

So much
is happening.

So much
could capture
their attention.

Yet the Father
directs their eyes
toward One.

His Son.

And when they look again...

Jesus only.

Perhaps the Father
is teaching His children
something very simple.

Behold Him.

Hear Him.

Remain with Him.

The experience
is a gift.

The revelation
is a gift.

The mountain
is a gift.

But the greatest gift
is the One
who has been revealed.

Then...

they descend.

From glory
into suffering.

From the mountain
into the valley.

A crowd.

Confusion.

A desperate father.

A suffering child.

And disciples
who could not help him.

We pause.

Only moments before,
they had beheld
the glory of the Son.

Now they encounter
their own inability.

Perhaps these two places
belong together.

The mountain reveals
who Jesus is.

The valley reveals
our need
for Jesus.

The Father had not shown them
the glory of His Son
so they could remain
upon the mountain.

He revealed the Son
so they could enter
the brokenness below
with Him.

And a father cries:

"Lord, I believe;
help my unbelief!"

What a beautiful posture.

He brings Jesus
what he has.

And he brings Jesus
what he lacks.

Faith.

Unbelief.

Hope.

Need.

Everything
comes to Him.

And Jesus receives him.

Then the disciples ask:

"Why could we not...?"

Again...

Jesus draws them
back toward dependence.

They had received authority.

They had participated
in His work.

But what had been received
could never make them
the Source.

Perhaps full hands
had begun to forget
where the gift came from.

And inability
became an invitation
to return.

Again we receive:

The Father is not forming
children who learn
to live independently
of Him.

He is forming children
who continually receive
from Him.

The gift
must never become greater
than the Giver.

The work
must never become greater
than the One
with whom we work.

The authority
must never become separated
from dependence.

Then Jesus speaks again.

The disciples are still amazed
at the majesty of God.

And Jesus says:

"Let these words
sink down
into your ears."

Betrayal.

Death.

Resurrection.

Again...

they do not understand.

We pause.

They have seen His glory.

They have witnessed
His power.

They know:

"You are the Christ."

Yet they are still learning
the way
of the Christ.

The glorious Son
will give Himself.

The One who holds
all authority
will place Himself
into the hands of men.

The One who restores
will allow Himself
to be rejected.

And still...

He speaks
of resurrection.

Life remains
before them...

even when they cannot yet
understand the path
that leads there.

Perhaps again
we recognize
the Father's patience.

He does not require
complete understanding
before continuing
to lead His children.

He reveals.

They receive.

They struggle.

He reveals more.

And they continue
walking with Him.

Then...

a tax.

A seemingly ordinary question.

"Does your Teacher
not pay
the temple tax?"

Peter answers.

But before Peter
can even explain...

Jesus knows.

And Jesus asks
a deeper question:

"What do you think, Simon?"

Again...

the Son is forming
how Peter sees.

The collectors ask
about payment.

Jesus speaks
about belonging.

Kings.

Strangers.

Sons.

"Then the sons
are free."

We linger.

Before responsibility...

identity.

Before payment...

belonging.

The son does not pay
in order to become
a son.

The son begins
from the reality
that he belongs.

Perhaps this too
is part of learning
to follow Jesus.

The Father is not forming
strangers
who perform enough
to earn a place.

He is forming children
who live
from the place
they have received.

And then Jesus says:

"Nevertheless..."

The Son is free.

Yet the Son gives.

He does not insist
upon His rights.

He chooses
the path of love.

Again we receive:

Freedom in the Son
is not freedom
from love.

It is freedom
to love.

And then...

a fish.

A coin.

Provision
already prepared.

Peter does not create it.

Peter does not arrange it.

Peter does not control
the timing.

He simply participates
in what the Father
has already provided.

How familiar
this is becoming.

The disciple follows.

The disciple receives.

The disciple participates.

But the disciple
never becomes
the Source.

Perhaps that is what
these five encounters
have quietly been teaching us.

Seeing Jesus
is not the end
of the journey.

Seeing Him
invites us
to hear Him.

Hearing Him
invites us
to follow Him.

Following Him
teaches us
to depend upon Him.

And dependence upon Him
teaches us
to live from what
the Father has already given.

We do not walk
toward belonging.

We walk
because we belong.

We do not create
the Father's provision.

We receive
and participate
in what He provides.

We do not create
the way.

We follow
the One
who is the Way.

And perhaps we begin
to recognize something
even more beautiful.

This is the life
Jesus Himself reveals.

The Son receives
from the Father.

The Son remains
with the Father.

The Son follows
the Father's purpose.

The Son lives
from belonging.

And because He is free...

He freely loves.

The Father is not merely
showing His children
who His Son is.

Through His Son...

He is showing His children
the life
into which they are being invited.

As we continue walking...

perhaps we carry
this question:

Am I trying
to create for myself
what the Father
is inviting me
to receive from Him?

Remain with Jesus.

Behold Him.

Hear Him.

Follow Him.

Depend upon Him.

Receive from Him.

The Beloved Son.

The One revealed
in glory.

The One who enters
the valley.

The One who walks
the Father's path.

The One who is free
to love.

The One who provides.

The One who invites
His children
to participate.

The Son
who reveals
the Father's heart.

Encounter Movement 46

Who Is the Greatest?

Scripture — Matthew 18:1–5 · Mark 9:33–37 · Luke 9:46–48

Steward's Combined Reading

At that time, the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

Then they came to Capernaum. When He was in the house, Jesus asked them, “What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?” But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.

Jesus sat down, called the Twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.”

Then Jesus called a little child and set him in the midst of them. And taking the child in His arms, He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.”

“Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”

“Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.” And whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

“For he who is least among you all will be great.”

The Harvest

The disciples ask:

"Who is greatest?"

We paused.

The question reveals
the place where their hearts
still needed to be formed.

They had walked with Jesus.

They had witnessed
His compassion.

They had witnessed
His humility.

They had witnessed
His service.

Yet they were still measuring

greatness by the world's eyes.

Again we receive:

The Father patiently forms His children, not merely by giving answers, but by transforming the way they see.

Jesus asks:

"What was it
you disputed
among yourselves
on the road?"

We smiled.

He already knows.

The question is not
for His information.

It is for their revelation.

Again we receive:

The Father's questions gently awaken the heart to what He desires to transform.

The disciples become silent.

We paused.

Their silence speaks.

Perhaps they are beginning to see
the difference between
what they were seeking
and what Jesus had been revealing.

Again we receive:

The Father's gentleness often leads us into understanding before He leads us into correction.

Jesus sits down.

We lingered there.

The One who has all authority
takes the posture of a teacher.

The One who is greatest
humbles Himself
to reveal greatness.

Again we receive:

The Son does not merely teach humility; He reveals the Father's heart through His own humility.

Jesus says:

"If anyone desires

to be first,

he shall be last

of all

and servant

of all."

We paused.

Jesus does not merely reverse

the world's definition of greatness.

He reveals

that the world's definition

was incomplete.

The world seeks:

position.

The Kingdom reveals:

love.

The world seeks:

recognition.

The Kingdom reveals:

service.

Again we receive:

The Father's Kingdom measures greatness by love expressed, not by position attained.

Then Jesus calls a child.

We smiled.

The answer to their question

is not another argument.

It is a person.

A child.

No title.

No achievement.

No position.

Yet fully received.

Again we receive:

The Father does not measure His children by what they can present; He receives them because they belong to Him.

Mark tells us:

Jesus took the child
into His arms.

We lingered there.

The embrace.

The welcome.

The tenderness.

The child did not earn
the place in Jesus' arms.

The child simply received.

Again we receive:

The Father's embrace is not the reward after significance is achieved; it is where true significance is discovered.

Jesus says:

"Unless you are converted
and become
as little children..."

We paused.

Not childish.

Childlike.

Jesus is not calling His disciples
into immaturity.

He is calling them
into trust.

To receive.

To depend.

To rest.

Again we receive:

The Father does not mature His children by teaching them to need Him less; He matures them by teaching them to trust Him more.

The child reveals
the posture of the Kingdom.

Not striving.

Not comparison.

Not proving.

Receiving.

Again we receive:

The Kingdom begins where striving ends and receiving begins.

Then Jesus says:

"Whoever receives

one little child

like this

in My name

receives Me."

We paused.

The child becomes connected

to Christ Himself.

And Christ reveals

the Father.

"Whoever receives Me

receives Him

who sent Me."

Again we receive:

Receiving the Son opens our eyes to the heart of the Father.

The disciples wanted to know:

"Who is greatest?"

Jesus reveals:

"The one who receives."

They sought:

importance.

Jesus revealed:

belonging.

They sought:

position.

Jesus revealed:

relationship.

Again we receive:

True significance is found not in rising above others, but in belonging to the Father through the Son.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

We paused.

The disciples asked:

"Who is greatest?"

But Jesus revealed:

"What does greatness look like in the Father's Kingdom?"

Again we receive:

The Father does not merely correct the questions of His children; He reveals the deeper desires beneath them and brings them into His heart.

The disciples were seeking significance.

Jesus revealed belonging.

They were seeking position.

Jesus revealed relationship.

They were seeking to rise above.

Jesus revealed the beauty of receiving.

Again we receive:

The Father does not remove the desire for significance; He fulfills it by revealing where true significance is found.

The desire to matter was not created by the world.

It was placed within humanity by the Father.

Humanity was created to reflect Him.

To participate with Him.

To receive from Him.

To express His love.

We paused.

The problem was never the desire itself.

The problem was seeking its fulfillment apart from Him.

Again we receive:

The Father does not destroy the desires He placed within humanity; He restores them by revealing their true purpose in the Son.

The disciples wanted greatness.

Jesus did not say:

"Stop desiring greatness."

He revealed:

"Let Me show you what greatness truly is."

Greatness is not found in being above others.

Greatness is found in love.

Greatness is not found in being served.

Greatness is found in serving.

Greatness is not found in being recognized.

Greatness is found in reflecting the Son.

Again we receive:

The Father does not merely remove lesser desires; He reveals the greater desire that fulfills them.

We paused.

Jesus places a child before them.

The child has no position.

No title.

No accomplishment.

No achievement to present.

Yet Jesus receives the child.

We lingered there.

What did the child receive from Jesus?

The child received:

welcome.

The child received:

security.

The child received:

belonging.

The child received:

unhindered acceptance.

Again we receive:

The Father's love creates a place where His children do not have to strive to belong.

The child did not become significant because of what the child accomplished.

The child was significant because of whose arms held him.

Again we receive:

Significance is not found in what we can bring to the Father; it is found in being received by the Father.

We paused.

This is the beauty of childlike faith.

Not childish.

Not immature.

Not unaware.

Childlike.

Trusting.

Receiving.

Resting.

The child does not wonder:

"Have I earned this embrace?"

The child simply rests within it.

Again we receive:

The childlike heart is the heart that knows it is loved before it understands everything.

Jesus says:

"Unless you are converted..."

We paused.

Conversion is a turning.

A turning of the heart.

A turning of the mind.

A turning away from the world's way of seeing

toward the Father's way of seeing revealed through the Son.

Again we receive:

The Father does not merely change what His children think; He invites them into His own way of seeing.

The disciples were thinking:

Who is above?

Jesus reveals:

Who receives?

They were thinking:

Who has earned greatness?

Jesus reveals:

Who trusts?

They were thinking:

Who will be recognized?

Jesus reveals:

Who will love?

Again we receive:

The Father transforms the mind by revealing the heart of the Son.

We paused.

Jesus connects receiving the child
with receiving Himself.

And receiving Himself
with receiving the Father.

The movement is complete.

The child.

The Son.

The Father.

All connected through love.

Again we receive:

**The Father's heart is revealed through the Son, and the Son teaches us to receive others
as the Father has received us.**

We paused.

The world measures significance by what is held in our hands.

Jesus reveals significance by whose hands hold us.

A child in the hands of the world may be overlooked.

A child in the hands of Jesus reveals the Father's heart.

A coin in human hands is ordinary.

A coin in the Father's purpose reveals provision.

A cup of water given in the Son's name becomes significant.

Again we receive:

Outside of Christ, no ordinary thing can provide true significance; but in Christ, even the ordinary becomes a place where the Father's love is revealed.

Nothing placed into the hands of the Son remains ordinary.

The least becomes treasured.

The hidden becomes seen.

The servant becomes great.

The child becomes a revelation of the Kingdom.

Again we receive:

The Father's hands do not merely use what is valuable; His hands reveal the value of what He holds.

What We Receive

We receive that the Father does not ask us to create significance apart from Him.

He invites us to receive our significance from Him.

The disciples were searching for greatness.

Jesus revealed belonging.

They wanted to know:

"Where do I stand among others?"

Jesus revealed the deeper question:

"Do you know where you stand with Me?"

Again we receive:

True significance begins when we receive our identity from the Father through the Son.

We receive that the desire to matter is not something to reject.

The Father placed within humanity
a longing to belong.

A longing to participate.

A longing to reflect His image.

A longing to love and be loved.

But apart from Christ,
these desires become distorted.

We begin seeking from others
what can only be received from the Father.

We seek:
recognition.

approval.

achievement.

importance.

Yet Jesus reveals another way.

Again we receive:

The Son does not erase the deepest desires of the human heart; He restores them by returning them to their true source in the Father.

We receive that conversion is a turning.

A turning of the heart.

A turning of the mind.

A turning away from the world's way of seeing
toward the Father's way of seeing.

The disciples needed more than new information.

They needed a new vision.

They needed to see greatness as the Father sees greatness.

They needed to see themselves as the Father sees them.

They needed to see others as the Father sees them.

Again we receive:

The Father transforms the mind by revealing the heart of the Son.

We receive that childlike trust is the posture of the Kingdom.

Not childishness.

Not immaturity.

Not the absence of growth.

But trust.

Receiving.

Resting.

The child does not strive to be embraced.

The child rests because he has been embraced.

Again we receive:

The Father's love creates the security from which His children can grow.

We receive that the Father's embrace frees us from comparison.

Comparison asks:

"Am I greater than another?"

The Son asks:

"Will you love another?"

Comparison asks:

"Who is above me?"

The Son asks:

"Whom can you serve?"

Again we receive:

The Father's love frees us from looking for our value above others and releases us to love others.

We receive that significance is found in whose hands we are in.

The ordinary becomes significant in Christ.

A child.

A coin.

A cup of water.

A hidden act of love.

A faithful step of obedience.

The world may overlook these things.

But the Father does not.

Again we receive:

Outside of Christ, no ordinary thing can provide lasting significance; but in Christ, even ordinary things become expressions of the Father's love.

We receive that the Son reveals the path to true greatness.

Not by climbing higher.

But by lowering ourselves in love.

Not by seeking to be served.

But by becoming servants.

Not by demanding recognition.

But by receiving the Father's love and giving it freely.

Again we receive:

The greatest life is not the life that gathers the most attention; it is the life that most fully expresses the Father's love.

We receive that the Father does not merely remove what is false.

He reveals what is greater.

He does not merely empty.

He fills.

He does not simply take away misplaced desires.

He fulfills the desires He placed within humanity.

Again we receive:

The Father does not leave His children empty; He replaces striving with receiving, comparison with belonging, and self-exaltation with love.

We receive that everything changes when life is placed into the hands of the Son.

The ordinary becomes meaningful.

The hidden becomes seen.

The least becomes treasured.

The servant becomes great.

The child becomes a revelation of the Kingdom.

Again we receive:

Nothing surrendered into the hands of Christ remains insignificant.

The invitation of Jesus remains:

Become as little children.

Not smaller.

Not less.

But free.

Free to trust.

Free to receive.

Free to love.

Because the child who knows he is held
does not need to fight to be seen.

The child who knows he belongs
is free to give.

And the child who receives the Father's love
becomes able to reveal the Father's love.

Quiet Invitation

Have we ever found ourselves asking:
"Who is greatest?"

Perhaps not with those exact words.

But beneath our thoughts:

"Am I enough?"

"Do I matter?"

"Am I seen?"

"Have I done enough?"

"Where is my significance found?"

We paused.

The Father knows these questions.

He knows the desires beneath them.

The desire to belong.

The desire to matter.

The desire to love.

The desire to be loved.

Again we receive:

The Father does not reject the longing of the human heart; He invites us to discover its fulfillment in Him.

The disciples sought greatness.

Jesus placed a child before them.

The world would have overlooked the child.

Jesus brought the child to the center.

We paused.

Whose eyes define significance?

The world's?

Or the Father's?

The world measures:

achievement.

position.

recognition.

influence.

The Father reveals:

belonging.

love.

trust.

relationship.

Again we receive:

The Father sees what the world overlooks and treasures what the world cannot measure.

We looked again at Jesus holding the child.

The child did not earn the embrace.

The child did not achieve the embrace.

The child did not prove the embrace.

The child received the embrace.

We paused.

Can we receive that the Father desires the same for us?

Not first:

perform.

Not first:

prove.

Not first:

achieve.

But:

receive.

Receive the Son.

Receive the Father's love.

Receive the identity that comes from Him.

Again we receive:

The Kingdom begins not with our reaching toward God, but with our receiving what He has already revealed through His Son.

Jesus says:

"Whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

We paused.

Everything returns to the Father.

The child.

The disciple.

The Son.

The Father.

The Son is the One through whom we discover who we truly are.

Again we receive:

In receiving the Son, we receive the revelation of the Father's heart and discover our true place within His love.

The invitation remains.

Will we continue trying to create significance apart from Him?

Or will we receive the significance already given through the Son?

Will we continue asking:

"How do I become great?"

Or will we receive the greater invitation:

"Become like the Son."

We paused.

The Son was greatest.

Yet He served.

The Son possessed all things.

Yet He gave.

The Son was above all.

Yet He welcomed the least.

Again we receive:

The path to true greatness is not found in rising above others, but in becoming like the Son who loves and serves.

May we receive the invitation of Jesus.

To turn.

To see differently.

To lay down the measurements of the world.

To receive the Father's love.

To rest in the Son's embrace.

To discover that our significance was never found in what we could achieve apart from Him.

It was always found in belonging to Him.

Remain with Him.

Receive from Him.

And walk as beloved children
in the Father's house.

Encounter Movement 47

Whoever Is Not Against Us Is For Us

Scripture — Mark 9:38–41 · Luke 9:49–50

Steward's Combined Reading

Then John answered Him, saying, “Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us.”

But Jesus said, “Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side.”

“For no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me.”

“For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.”

The Harvest

John says,

"We saw someone..."

We paused.

Again,

the disciples

are looking

at someone else.

Again,

they are asking:

"Who belongs?"

But we paused

with the question

beneath the question.

They had just asked Jesus:

"Who is the greatest?"

Jesus had placed

a child

before them.

The Kingdom

was being revealed

through receiving,

dependence,

and humility.

Now John says:

"We forbade him,

because he does not follow with us."

We lingered.

The same heart
that sought greatness
was now seeking
to define belonging.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.
The Father continually teaches
His children
that the Kingdom
is not centered
upon their circle.
It is centered
upon His Son.

John says:
"He does not follow with us."

We stopped there.

Not:

"He does not follow You."

But:

"He does not follow us."

Again we receive:

The disciples
were learning
that they were not
the source
of the Father's work.
They were recipients
of the Father's work
through the Son.

They had received authority.

But authority received
was never authority possessed.

We paused.

When Jesus sent them out,
they went with nothing.

No earthly security.

No human strength.

Only dependence

upon the One who sent them.

Again we receive:

The power was never

in what they carried.

The power was always

in the One

from whom they received.

Jesus says:

"Do not forbid him."

We smiled.

What a gentle correction.

Jesus does not condemn them.

He does not humiliate them.

He simply reveals

that their understanding

is still being formed.

Again we behold
the Father's heart.
The Father patiently forms
His children
to see as He sees.

We paused.

The disciples were attempting
to exercise discernment.
But discernment
apart from dependence
can become judgment.

Again we receive:
The disciple cannot recognize
the Father's work
by standing apart
from the Father's work.
The disciple recognizes
through remaining
in the Son.

Jesus says:

"In My name."

We lingered.

The name of Jesus

is not merely a phrase

attached to an action.

It is participation

in the life

of the One who bears the name.

Again we receive:

The true question

is not merely:

"Is His name being used?"

The deeper question:

"Is His life being revealed?"

Then Jesus moves

from the extraordinary:

A miracle.

A mighty work.

Casting out demons.

To the ordinary:

A cup of water.

We paused.

Would the disciples
have been concerned
if they had only seen
a cup of water?

Would they have recognized
the Father's work
in something hidden?

Again we receive:

The Father's measurement
is not the greatness
of the act.

It is the presence
of His life
flowing through the act.

The world notices
what appears great.
The Father notices
what reveals love.

A miracle may reveal power.
A cup of water may reveal love.
But both are only meaningful
because they come
from Him.

We remembered
the Samaritan woman.
She came seeking water.
She encountered
Living Water.
What she received
then flowed outward
to others.
She was never
the source.
She became
a vessel.

Again we receive:
The child of the Father
does not create
the life he gives.
He receives
from the Son
and becomes

a vessel
through which
His life flows.

The disciples wanted to know:

"Is he with us?"

Jesus was teaching them

to ask:

"Is he receiving from Me?"

Again we receive:

The same dependence

that enables the disciple

to participate

in Christ's work

is the dependence

that enables the disciple

to recognize

Christ's work in others.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that His children are never the source of His work.

They are receivers of His life through the Son.

The disciples had received authority from Jesus, but they were learning that authority was not a position above others.

It was participation in the life of the One who sent them.

The Father revealed that discernment does not come from our experience, our circle, or our understanding.

It comes from remaining in the Son.

The Father revealed that the Son Himself is the pattern.

The Son received from the Father.

The disciple receives from the Son.

All true authority is received authority.

All true discernment is received discernment.

All true life is received life.

The Father revealed that His children learn to recognize His work in others only as they remain dependent upon Him themselves.

What We Receive

We receive that the Kingdom is centered upon Christ, not our circles.

We receive that the disciple receives before the disciple acts.

We receive that authority is received, never possessed.

We receive that discernment comes through remaining in the Son.

We receive that we cannot recognize the Father's work apart from receiving from the Father through Christ.

We receive that the name of Jesus is not merely spoken; it is lived.

We receive that the Father values the hidden act of love as well as the visible work of power.

We receive that the measure of the Father's work is not the size of the act, but the presence of His life flowing through it.

We receive that the mature child does not ask only:

"Is this with us?"

The mature child asks:

"Is Christ being revealed?"

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Jesus.

The disciples saw

someone they did not recognize.

Jesus saw

someone responding to Him.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we ever confused

our understanding

with the Father's work?

Have we ever measured

what the Father was doing

by what we could see?

Have we remembered
that we also are those
who have only what we have received
from Him?

The invitation remains:
Remain in the Son.
Receive from Him.
Learn to see through Him.
And rejoice wherever
the Father's life
is being revealed.

Encounter Movement 48

Warnings About Causing Others to Stumble

Scripture — Matthew 18:6–14 · Mark 9:42–50 · Luke 17:1–2

Steward's Combined Reading

Jesus continued, “Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

“It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they come.”

Jesus continued, “If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and cast it from you.”

“And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out.”

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones.”

“For I say to you that in heaven their angels always behold the face of My Father who is in heaven.”

“What do you think?”

“If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?”

“And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray.”

“Even so, it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

The Harvest

Jesus speaks

with remarkable strength.

We paused.

The Father

protects

His children.

The strength

of the warning

reveals
the value
He places
upon
His little ones.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.
The Father's warnings
flow
from the Father's love.

Jesus says:
"Whoever causes
one of these little ones
who believe in Me
to stumble..."

We lingered.

The little ones
are not insignificant.

They are not interruptions.

They are not those
the Father overlooks.

They belong
to Him.

Again we receive:

The value
of the little one
is not determined
by strength,
maturity,
or usefulness.

The value
of the little one
is revealed
by the love
of the Shepherd
who calls them His.

We paused.

Jesus had just taught
His disciples
about receiving
the child.

Now He teaches them
how to treat
the child.

The Kingdom
is not only entered
through becoming like
a little one.

The Kingdom
is lived
by caring for
those who are.

Again we receive:
The disciple
never graduates
from being one
who receives

from the Father.

Jesus says:

"See
that you do not
despise
one of these
little ones."

We stopped there.

To despise
is to fail
to see
as the Father sees.

The disciples
had just looked
at another person
and said:
"He does not follow
with us."

Now Jesus reveals:

Do not look
upon any of My children
as less than
what I see.

Again we receive:

The closer
the disciple remains
to the Shepherd,
the more clearly
the disciple sees
the Shepherd's sheep.

Jesus speaks
of their angels
always beholding
the face
of His Father.

We paused.

The Father's children
are continually
before His face.

The Father's attention

is not distant.

The Father's love

is not occasional.

Again we receive:

What the Father beholds,

the disciple must learn

to honor.

The Father's messengers

behold Him.

And the disciple

who serves His children

must also remain

beholding Him.

We paused.

The disciple

cannot lead another

toward the Father's face

while turning away
from the Father's face.

Again we receive:

The only way
the disciple can faithfully
care for the Father's children
is by continually receiving
from the Father
through the Son.

Jesus then speaks
of the hand,
the foot,
and the eye.

We paused.

Why such strong words?

Because Jesus reveals
that anything
which prevents
His love

from flowing through us
must be surrendered.

The hand:
what we do.

The foot:
where we go.

The eye:
how we see.

Again we receive:
The Father calls His children
to surrender
anything within themselves
that becomes a barrier
between another
and the life of Christ.

Not merely:
"What harms me?"

But:

"What prevents another
from receiving Him?"

We paused.

Then Jesus tells
of the shepherd.

One sheep
wanders.

The shepherd goes.

Not reluctantly.
Not reluctantly at all.

He seeks
until
he finds.

Again we receive:
The Father's love
does not wait
for the wandering one

to return alone.

The Father moves
toward
the wandering one.

We paused.

And we remembered:
The one who wanders
and the one who causes
another to stumble
both need
the same Shepherd.

The Father does not ignore
what destroys His children.

But neither does He abandon
the one who has wandered.

Again we receive:
The Father's correction
and the Father's pursuit

flow from the same love.

Jesus concludes:

"It is not
the will
of your Father
who is in heaven
that one
of these little ones
should perish."

We paused
for a long time.

Not one.

Not the one
who has been wounded.

Not the one
who has caused harm.

Not the one
who has wandered.

The Father's heart

continues

protecting,

correcting,

seeking,

and restoring.

Again we receive:

The Father's will

is always

toward life,

restoration,

and communion

with Him.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that His little ones are precious because they belong to Him.

The Father's warnings do not flow from a desire to condemn, but from a love that fiercely protects what He treasures.

The Father revealed that the disciple must never stand between the Shepherd and His sheep.

The disciple is not the owner of the Father's children.

The disciple is a servant beneath the Shepherd.

The Father revealed that the same dependence required to recognize Christ's work in others is the dependence required to care for those who belong to Him.

The disciple must continually receive from the Father through the Son.

The Father revealed that anything within us that prevents another from receiving the life of Christ must be surrendered.

The Father revealed that His correction and His pursuit come from the same heart.

He confronts what destroys.

He seeks what has wandered.

He restores what has been lost.

The Father revealed that His will is not that one of His little ones should perish, but that all would remain receiving His life and love.

What We Receive

We receive that the little ones belong to the Shepherd.

We receive that the Father fiercely protects what He treasures.

We receive that the disciple must never despise what the Father values.

We receive that we also remain little ones before the Father, continually dependent upon Him.

We receive that the greatest danger is not only causing harm, but becoming a barrier that prevents another from receiving Christ.

We receive that our actions, our paths, and our vision must all be surrendered to the Father's heart.

We receive that the Shepherd seeks the wandering sheep.

We receive that the wounded and the wanderer both need the same Shepherd.

We receive that the Father's correction and pursuit are expressions of His restoring love.

We receive that we can only help others behold the Father's face as we remain beholding Him ourselves.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Jesus.

The Shepherd sees

the little one.

The Shepherd knows

the wandering one.

The Shepherd seeks

the one who is lost.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we forgotten

that we also are

little ones

who live by receiving

from the Father?

Have we ever looked

at another child

of the Father

without seeing

what He sees?

Have we allowed anything
within us—
our actions,
our paths,
our vision—
to become a barrier
between another
and the life of Christ?

The invitation remains:
Remain before His face.
Receive from the Son.
See His children
as He sees them.
And allow His love
to flow through you
toward all
who belong
to Him.

Encounter Movement 49

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Scripture — Matthew 18:12–14

Jesus said,

"What do you think?

If a man has

a hundred sheep,

and one of them

goes astray,

does he not

leave

the ninety-nine

and go

to seek

the one

that has wandered?

And if he finds it,

truly I say to you,

he rejoices

more over that one

than over

the ninety-nine

that did not
go astray.

Even so,
it is not
the will
of your Father
who is in heaven
that one
of these little ones
should perish."

The Harvest

Jesus begins
with a question.

We paused.

Again,
the Father
does not begin
by simply giving
an answer.

He invites
the heart
to see.

"What do you think?"

The question
opens the door
to receive.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father's questions
awaken the heart
to His truth.

Jesus speaks
of one hundred sheep.

One wanders.

We paused.

The Shepherd

knows

each one.

The one

is not lost

among the many.

The Father

does not see

a number.

He sees

His child.

Again we receive

another beautiful thread.

The Father's love

is personal.

The Shepherd

notices

the one.

Jesus says:

"He goes
to seek
the one."

We lingered.

The Shepherd
does not send another.

The Shepherd
goes.

Love moves
toward
the wandering one.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.
The Father's love
is not passive
toward the lost.
It seeks.

We paused.

The sheep's greatest need
is not merely
to return
to a location.

The deeper need
is to return
to the Shepherd.

For the Shepherd
is the source of:
life,
care,
guidance,
and presence.

Again we receive:
To wander
from the Shepherd
is to move away
from the life
that is found
in Him.

Then Jesus says:

"He rejoices."

We paused.

The joy
of the Shepherd
becomes
the center
of the story.

The Shepherd
does not rejoice
because the one
was more valuable
than the ninety-nine.

The Shepherd
rejoices
because the one
who wandered
is once again
receiving

the life found
in His presence.

Again we receive:

The Father's joy
is the joy
of restored communion.

The ninety-nine
are not forgotten.

They remain
with the Shepherd.

They remain
under His care.

They remain
within the flock.

Again we receive:

The Father's pursuit
of one
never diminishes

His love
for the many.

We paused.

The Shepherd
loves every sheep
because they belong
to Him.

The one
who returns
does not become
more loved.

The Father's joy
reveals
the greatness
of His restoring love.

Again we receive:
The Father's celebration
is not because
one child

is valued above another,
but because
one child
is once again
experiencing
the Father's life.

We remembered
the Father
of the prodigal son.

The Father
loved both sons.

The son
who remained.

The son
who wandered.

The Father's love
did not begin
when the younger son
returned.

The celebration
came because
the son
who was outside
was once again
experiencing
the Father's house.

Again we receive:
The Father's heart
does not change
toward His children
when they wander.

His joy
is revealed
when they return
to receiving
His love.

Then Jesus says:
"These little ones."

We paused.

Again we return
to the child.

The child revealed
the posture
of the Kingdom.

Dependence.

Receiving.

Trust.

Need.

The wandering sheep
is not merely
one who changed location.

The wandering sheep
is one who moved away
from the Shepherd's
life-giving presence.

Again we receive:

Every child of the Father
remains
a little one
before Him,
continually dependent
upon receiving
His life.

The flock also matters.

The ninety-nine
remain together.

They share
in the Shepherd's care.

The Shepherd alone
restores.

But the Shepherd
also forms
a people
who share
in His life together.

Again we receive:

The Father does not form

isolated children.

He gathers

a family

who receive

and walk together

under the Shepherd's care.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that His questions awaken the heart to receive His truth.

The Father revealed that every one of His children is personally known and never lost among the many.

The Father revealed that the Shepherd Himself seeks the wandering sheep.

The Father does not wait for His child to find the way back alone.

The Father revealed that wandering is not merely separation from a place, but separation from the life that is found in Him.

The Father revealed that restoration is not merely recovery; it is restored communion.

The Father revealed that His joy is found when His child is once again receiving His life and presence.

The Father revealed that His pursuit of one never diminishes His care for the many.

The Father revealed that every child remains a little one before Him, continually dependent upon receiving from Him.

The Father revealed that He gathers His children into a flock where they share in His life and care for one another beneath the Shepherd.

What We Receive

We receive that the Father's questions invite us into His heart.

We receive that the Shepherd knows each sheep personally.

We receive that no wandering child is forgotten.

We receive that the Shepherd Himself moves toward the one who has wandered.

We receive that life is found in the Shepherd.

We receive that restoration is the return to receiving His life and presence.

We receive that the Father's joy is found in restored communion.

We receive that the one and the ninety-nine are both precious to Him.

We receive that the Father's love is not divided among His children.

We receive that every child remains a little one before the Father.

We receive that the Shepherd gathers His children into a shared life with Him and with one another.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Jesus.

The Shepherd knows

the little one.

The Shepherd seeks

the wandering one.

The Shepherd rejoices
when the lost one
is found.

Perhaps we ask:
Have we forgotten
that we also
are little ones
who live
by receiving
from the Father?

Have we believed
that wandering
has placed us
outside His love?

Have we remembered
that the Shepherd
does not wait
for us to find Him,
but comes seeking us?

The invitation remains:
Remain near the Shepherd.
Receive from Him.
Walk with His flock.
And rejoice
in the restoring love
of the Father
who desires
that none
of His little ones
should perish.

Encounter Movement 50

A Brother Who Sins / Restoration

Scripture — Matthew 18:15–20

Jesus said,
"Moreover,
if your brother
sins against you,
go and tell him
his fault

between you
and him alone."

"If he hears you,
you have gained
your brother."

"But if
he will not hear,
take with you
one or two more,
that by the mouth
of two or three witnesses
every word
may be established."

"And if
he refuses
to hear them,
tell it
to the assembly."

"And if
he refuses

even to hear
the assembly,
let him be
to you
like a heathen
and a tax collector."

"Assuredly,
I say to you,
whatever you bind
on earth
will be bound
in heaven,
and whatever you loose
on earth
will be loosed
in heaven."

"Again,
I say to you,
if two of you
agree on earth
concerning anything
that they ask,

it will be done
for them
by My Father
in heaven."

"For where
two or three
are gathered together
in My name,
I am there
in the midst
of them."

The Harvest

Jesus begins:

"If your brother sins..."

We paused.

Jesus does not begin
with:
the offender.

He does not begin

with:

the failure.

He begins:

your brother.

Again we receive

another beautiful thread.

The Father's children

are not reduced

to their failures.

They remain

those whom He desires

to restore.

Jesus says:

"Go and tell him

his fault

between you

and him alone."

We lingered.

The Father's first movement

is not exposure.

It is restoration.

He begins privately.

He protects dignity.

He creates opportunity
for hearing.

Again we receive:

The Father's heart

does not rush

toward separation.

It patiently moves

toward reconciliation.

Jesus says:

"If he hears you,

you have gained

your brother."

We paused.

The goal

is not:

to win.

The goal

is not:

to prove

who was right.

The goal

is:

to gain

your brother.

Again we receive:

In the Kingdom,

restoration

is more precious

than being right.

We lingered

with the word:

hears.

The issue beneath

the outward failure
is the posture
of the heart.

We will all miss
the mark.

The question is not:
"Who has never fallen?"

The question is:
"Will we hear
the Shepherd
when He calls us
back?"

Again we receive:
The posture
of the child
is not perfection.
It is a heart
willing to hear
and return
to communion.

The sheep
who hears
the Shepherd's voice
remains near.

The sheep
who refuses
to hear
continues wandering.

Again we receive:
Restoration begins
when the heart
returns
to receiving.

Jesus provides
a progression.

First:
brother to brother.

Then:

with one or two more.

Then:

before the assembly.

We paused.

The movement

is not increasing punishment.

The movement

is increasing opportunity

for the child

to hear.

Again we receive:

The Father's patience

provides every opportunity

for restoration.

Jesus then speaks:

"Whatever you bind

on earth

will be bound

in heaven."

We paused.

Again the disciples
are learning
the nature
of authority.

They have already asked:
"Who is greatest?"

They have already struggled
with recognizing
the source
of power.

Jesus now reveals:
Authority received
is never authority
possessed.

Again we receive:
All true authority

comes from remaining
in Him.

The disciple
does not bring
his own will
to heaven.

The disciple
receives
the Father's will
through the Son.

We paused.

The posture is:
Not my will.

Not my thoughts.

Not my understanding.

His will.

His thoughts.

His mind.

His life.

Again we receive:

Kingdom authority

is not control

over others.

It is participation

in the Father's purpose

through Christ.

Jesus says:

"If two of you

agree..."

We lingered.

Agreement is deeper

than simply

sharing an opinion.

The question becomes:

Agreement with whom?

Again we receive:

True agreement

begins

with sharing

the Father's heart.

Finally Jesus says:

"Where two or three

are gathered together

in My name..."

We paused.

"In My name."

Not merely:

using His name.

But:

remaining in His name.

His character.

His heart.

His life.

Again we receive:

Christ's presence

is found

where His life

is being expressed.

The brother who sins.

The brother who confronts.

The brothers who gather.

The authority to bind and loose.

The presence of Christ.

All return

to one center.

Remain in Him.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that His heart is always toward restoration.

The Father revealed that His children are not defined by their failures, but are continually invited back into communion with Him.

The Father revealed that the goal of correction is not to win a case, but to gain a brother.

The Father revealed that restoration begins with hearing.

The Father revealed that the deepest issue is not merely that His children fall, but whether they remain willing to hear His voice and return.

The Father revealed that His children participate in His restoring work only as they remain dependent upon Him.

The Father revealed that authority in the Kingdom is never possessed independently; it is received through abiding in the Son.

The Father revealed that true agreement is agreement with His heart.

The Father revealed that when His children gather in the name of Christ — in His character, His life, and His purpose — Christ Himself is present among them.

What We Receive

We receive that the Father's desire is restoration, not separation.

We receive that our brother remains our brother even when he has missed the mark.

We receive that love seeks restoration before judgment.

We receive that hearing the Shepherd's voice returns us to communion.

We receive that we all remain dependent children before the Father.

We receive that authority comes only from remaining in Christ.

We receive that the disciple's posture is not "my will," but "His will."

We receive that true agreement begins with the Father's heart.

We receive that Christ is present wherever His restoring life is being expressed.

We receive that gaining our brother is participating in the Father's own work of restoration.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Jesus.

The Shepherd seeks

the wandering sheep.

The Father restores

the wandering child.

The Son invites

His brothers

to participate

in His restoring work.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we valued

being right

more than

gaining our brother?

Have we remembered

that we also

live by receiving
from the Father?

Have we sought
our own will,
or have we remained
in His?

The invitation remains:
Remain in the Son.
Receive from the Father.
Hear His voice.
And allow His restoring love
to flow through you
toward your brother.

As We Continue Walking...

Encounters 46–50

As you walk...
perhaps remain here
for a moment.
Five more encounters.
Five more steps
beside Jesus.

And perhaps the question
has quietly changed.

We have been learning
what it means
to live as children
who belong to the Father.

Now...

perhaps the Father
is teaching His children
how to see
one another.

The disciples ask:

"Who then
is greatest
in the kingdom
of heaven?"

We pause.

They have walked
with Jesus.

They have witnessed
His compassion.

His humility.

His service.

Yet somewhere
within their hearts...

they are still measuring.

Who is greatest?

Who is first?

Who matters most?

And Jesus answers
their question...

with a child.

He calls
a little child.

Places the child
in their midst.

And then...

takes the child
into His arms.

We linger.

No position.

No achievement.

No title.

Nothing
to present.

Simply...

received.

Perhaps the disciples
were asking:

How do we become significant?

And Jesus reveals:

Significance begins
with belonging.

The child does not earn
the embrace.

The child
receives it.

And Jesus says:

"Unless you are converted
and become
as little children..."

Again we receive:

The Father does not mature
His children
by teaching them
to need Him less.

He matures His children
by teaching them
to trust Him more.

To receive.

To depend.

To rest.

Then John speaks.

"Teacher,
we saw someone
who does not follow us..."

We pause.

Us.

Perhaps another place
within the disciples
is being revealed.

They have been called.

They have been sent.

They have received authority.

And perhaps now
they are beginning
to mistake participation
for possession.

This man
is not following us.

But Jesus
is the center.

The work
belongs to Him.

The authority
comes from Him.

The people
belong to Him.

Again we receive:

The disciple
is never
the Source.

And the disciple
is never
the owner.

We are stewards
of what belongs
to Another.

Perhaps learning
to see the Father's children
begins by remembering:

They are His.

Then Jesus speaks
with great seriousness
about His little ones.

Do not cause them
to stumble.

Do not become
a barrier
between them
and Me.

The words become strong.

A hand.

A foot.

An eye.

What we do.

Where we walk.

How we see.

Anything within us
that prevents
the Father's love
from flowing toward another
must be surrendered.

We pause.

Perhaps the question
is no longer merely:

What harms me?

But:

What within me
might hinder another
from receiving Him?

Because the little one
does not belong
to us.

The little one
belongs
to the Shepherd.

And those who serve
the Shepherd's sheep
must remain
before the Shepherd's face.

Receiving from Him.

Seeing as He sees.

Loving what He loves.

Protecting
what He treasures.

Then Jesus tells us
about a sheep.

One sheep.

Wandering.

And the Shepherd...

goes.

We linger.

The sheep wanders.

But the Shepherd
does not cease
to be Shepherd.

The sheep is lost.

But the sheep
has not ceased
to belong.

The Shepherd moves
toward the wandering one.

Seeking.

Finding.

Rejoicing.

And Jesus reveals
the Father's heart:

"It is not
the will

of your Father
who is in heaven

that one
of these little ones
should perish."

Not one.

We remain there.

The wounded one
belongs to Him.

The wandering one
belongs to Him.

Even the one
who has caused another harm
needs the same Shepherd.

The Father confronts
what destroys.

The Father seeks
what wanders.

The Father restores
what has been lost.

His correction
and His pursuit
flow from
the same heart.

Then Jesus says:

"If your brother
sins..."

We pause again.

Your brother.

Before Jesus speaks
of the failure...

He reminds us
of the relationship.

The one who has sinned
is not reduced
to the sin.

The one who has wandered
is not reduced
to the wandering.

The one who has failed
is still called:

your brother.

And Jesus says:

"If he hears you,
you have gained
your brother."

There is the goal.

Not:

You have won.

Not:

You have proven
you were right.

Not:

You have exposed
what he did.

But:

You have gained
your brother.

Perhaps this is
the Father's measure
of restoration.

Not victory
over another...

but communion
restored with another.

Jesus gives
a progression.

Go privately.

Then take
one or two.

Then bring it
before the assembly.

And perhaps
what appears outwardly
to be increasing action...

is actually increasing
opportunity.

Opportunity
to hear.

Opportunity
to return.

Opportunity
to be restored.

Because the Father's heart
does not rush
toward separation.

It patiently moves
toward reconciliation.

Again we receive:

The goal of correction
is restoration.

The goal of authority
is not control.

The goal
is the Father's purpose.

And perhaps now
these five encounters
begin to gather
into one beautiful movement.

Become
as a child.

Receive
the child.

Do not hinder
the child.

Seek
the wandering child.

Gain
your brother.

Again and again...

the Father is teaching us
how to see
those who belong to Him.

Not according
to position.

Not according
to accomplishment.

Not according
to usefulness.

Not according
to failure.

But according
to the Father's heart.

His child.

His little one.

His sheep.

Your brother.

Perhaps this is what happens
as we learn
that we belong.

We begin learning
to see the belonging
of others.

And perhaps another truth
is becoming clearer.

The disciple
does not become
the Shepherd.

We serve
beneath the Shepherd.

We do not own
His sheep.

We do not determine
their value.

We do not abandon
the wandering.

We do not define
the fallen
by their failure.

We remain near
the Shepherd...

so that His heart
may become visible
through us.

As we continue walking...

perhaps we carry
this question:

When I look
at another...

do I first see
what they have done...

or do I see
someone
who belongs
to the Father?

Remain with Jesus.

Become
as a child.

Receive
His children.

Protect
His little ones.

Seek
with the Shepherd.

Gain
your brother.

And remain
before His face...

until we begin
to see His children
as He sees them.

The Son
who reveals
the Father's heart.

Encounter Movement 51

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Scripture — Matthew 18:21–35

Then Peter came to Jesus and said,

"Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?

Up to seven times?"

Jesus said to him,

"I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."

Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made.

The servant therefore fell down before him, saying,

"Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all."

Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii.

He laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying,

"Pay me what you owe!"

So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying,

"Have patience with me, and I will pay you all."

And he would not, but went and threw him into prison until he should pay the debt.

So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.

Then his master, after he had called him, said to him,

"You wicked servant!

I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?"

And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

"So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

The Harvest

Peter asks:

"Lord,
how often
shall my brother
sin against me?"

We paused.

Peter is asking
for a measure.

A boundary.

A number.

He has just heard Jesus speak
of gaining his brother.

Now he asks:

"How many times?"

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The heart of man
often seeks
the limit of mercy.

The heart of the Father
reveals
mercy without limit.

Peter offers:

"Seven times?"

We smiled.

Peter believes
he is extending
great mercy.

But Jesus responds:

"Seventy times seven."

We paused.

Jesus is not merely
giving a larger number.

He is removing
the foundation
of measurement itself.

Again we receive:

The Father's mercy
cannot be contained
within human calculation.

Then Jesus gives
the picture
of the servant
who owed
an impossible debt.

We lingered.

This servant
could not repay.

Not with effort.

Not with time.

Not with ability.

He had nothing
that could satisfy
what was owed.

Again we receive:

The child of the Father
comes before Him
with empty hands.

The king
was moved
with compassion.

We paused.

The debt was not released
because the servant
had earned mercy.

The mercy came
because of the heart
of the king.

Again we receive:

The Father's forgiveness
flows from who He is,
not from what we can offer.

The servant received.

The debt was gone.

But then he went out
and found another servant
who owed him.

We stopped there.

The tragedy was not
that he had failed
to receive forgiveness.

He had received.

The tragedy was that
he did not remain
in what he received.

He experienced compassion.

But he did not become compassionate.

He received mercy.

But he did not extend mercy.

Again we receive:

The gift of the Father
cannot be separated
from the heart of the Father.

The servant forgot.

He forgot
the size of his own debt.

He forgot
the compassion shown to him.

He forgot
that he was also
one who needed mercy.

Again we receive:

When we forget
what we have received
from the Father,
we begin demanding
from others
what we ourselves
could never provide.

The king asks:

"Should you not also
have had compassion
on your fellow servant,
just as I had pity on you?"

We paused.

The king was not asking
the servant
to create something
he did not possess.

He was asking him
to release
what he had already received.

Again we receive:

The Father never asks
His children
to produce from themselves
what He has not first
placed within them.

The rhythm of the Kingdom:

Receive.

Remain.

Extend.

The Father gives.

The child receives.

The child extends.

Again we receive:

What comes from the Father's heart
is meant to flow
through the Father's children.

Then Jesus says:

"From his heart."

We lingered.

The Father is not merely
forming outward actions.

He is restoring
the heart itself.

Forgiveness is not simply
a gesture.

It is the expression
of a heart
that has remained
in the Father's mercy.

Again we receive:

The Father does not merely
teach His children
to forgive.

He forms
His forgiveness
within them.

Then Jesus concludes
with a solemn warning.

We paused.

We do not dismiss
His words.

The refusal to extend mercy
reveals something deeper.

The servant had been forgiven.

Yet he remained imprisoned
by unforgiveness.

He had received freedom.

Yet he continued living
as though he were still a debtor.

Again we receive:

The Father restores
anything within His child
that prevents His child
from remaining
in His mercy.

The Father's correction
does not move away
from restoration.

It moves toward it.

Again we receive:

The same love
that forgives the debt
also restores the heart
that refuses to forgive.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that His mercy cannot be measured by human limits.

The Father revealed that every child comes before Him with an impossible debt that cannot be repaid apart from His compassion.

The Father revealed that forgiveness begins with His heart moving toward us.

The Father revealed that the forgiven child becomes forgiving only by remaining in the mercy received.

The Father revealed that what He gives is never intended to terminate within us, but to flow through us.

The Father revealed that forgiveness is not merely an action; it is participation in His own heart.

The Father revealed that the greatest danger is not only failing to receive mercy, but receiving mercy while refusing to remain in the heart from which it came.

The Father revealed that His correction restores His children from anything that separates them from His life.

The Father revealed that restoration remains the purpose of His mercy.

What We Receive

We receive that the Father's mercy is greater than our calculations.

We receive that we also come before Him with empty hands.

We receive that forgiveness flows from what the Father has first given.

We receive that gratitude opens the heart to extend mercy.

We receive that receiving and extending are inseparable in the life of the Kingdom.

We receive that the Father desires more than forgiven actions; He desires a transformed heart.

We receive that restoration remains the Father's ultimate desire.

We receive that we cannot give what we have not received, but what we receive from Him is meant to flow through us.

We receive that the Father's forgiveness becomes the life of the Father expressed through His children.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Jesus.

The Father has forgiven.

The Son has revealed mercy.

The Spirit invites us

to receive.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we remembered

the mercy we have received?

Have we attempted

to forgive from ourselves,

rather than allowing

the Father's mercy

to flow through us?

Have we held another

in the place

from which the Father

has already released us?

The invitation remains:

Receive His mercy.

Remain in His heart.

Extend what you have received.

And allow the Father's forgiveness

to flow through you

toward your brother.

Encounter Movement 52

The Feast of Tabernacles — Jesus Goes Up

Scripture — John 7:1–13

After these things, Jesus walked in Galilee.

He did not want to walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him.

Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was near.

His brothers therefore said to Him,

"Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing."

"For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly."

"If You do these things, show Yourself to the world."

For even His brothers did not believe in Him.

Then Jesus said to them,

"My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready."

"The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil."

"You go up to this feast."

"I am not yet going up to this feast, for My time has not yet fully come."

When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret.

Then the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said,

"Where is He?"

And there was much murmuring among the people concerning Him.

Some said,

"He is good."

Others said,

"No, on the contrary, He deceives the people."

However, no one spoke openly of Him for fear of the Jews.

The Harvest

Jesus says:

"My time
has not yet come."

We paused.

Not:

"My opportunity."

Not:

"My moment."

Not:

"My recognition."

"My time."

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Son
does not move
according to
the urgency
of men.

The Son moves
according to
the Father's purpose.

Jesus is not delayed.

He is not uncertain.

He is not afraid.

He is receiving
and walking
within the Father's timing.

Again we receive:

The Son's time is the Father's time.

His brothers look
at the feast
as an opportunity.

A moment
for visibility.

A moment
for recognition.

A moment
for public acceptance.

But Jesus sees
something deeper.

The Father has a purpose
that cannot be hurried
by human expectation.

Again we receive:

The Father's timing is not measured by opportunity, but by the Son's complete communion with the Father.

Jesus says:

"Your time
is always ready."

We paused.

The world moves
according to:

desire,
ambition,
recognition,
appearance.

But the Son moves
from another source.

The world asks:

"What can happen now?"

The Son asks:

"What is the Father doing now?"

Again we receive:

The child of the Father finds peace by remaining in the Father's life and receiving His timing.

Then Jesus says:

"The world cannot hate you,
but it hates Me..."

We lingered.

Why?

Because Jesus reveals
the reason.

"I testify of it
that its works
are evil."

The Son's life
reveals another Kingdom.

Another source.

Another way.

He is not shaped
by the world.

He is not controlled
by the world.

He is not seeking
what the world seeks.

Again we receive:

The life received from the Father will always reveal a different source than the life formed by the world.

Then Jesus goes
to the feast.

Not publicly.

Not according
to human expectation.

Quietly.

We paused.

The Father does not need
human recognition
to accomplish
His purposes.

The Son does not need
to announce Himself.

The Father knows Him.

The Son knows the Father.

That communion
is enough.

Again we receive:

The Father's work is often accomplished in ways the world does not recognize.

Then the people
search for Jesus.

Some say:

"He is good."

Others say:

"No."

We paused.

The same Jesus.

The same words.

The same presence.

Different hearts.

The difference
was not in the Son.

The difference
was in those receiving Him.

Again we receive:

The posture of the heart determines whether revelation is received or resisted.

Then we remembered
the Feast of Tabernacles.

The feast celebrated:

dwelling,
provision,
harvest,
the Father's faithfulness.

And Jesus stands
among them.

We paused.

The feast remembered

God's presence

dwelling

with His people.

We paused.

The Son now stood

among them,

revealing

the Father's presence

in a way

they had never yet understood.

We paused.

They were celebrating
what the Father had provided.

But the fullness
of the Father's provision
stood before them.

Again we receive:

The Father's gifts point beyond themselves to the One through whom all things are received.

The feast points to Him.

The dwelling points to Him.

The harvest points to Him.

The fullness
is found
in the Son.

And again we remember:

The child does not find life
by receiving things
apart from Him.

The child finds life
by dwelling
in Him.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that the Son's every movement flows from the Father's purpose and timing.

The Father revealed that Jesus does not move according to human pressure, opportunity, or recognition, but according to the Father's "time."

The Father revealed that His timing is not delay, but perfect purpose.

The Father revealed that the world responds differently to Christ because His life reveals another Kingdom and another source of life.

The Father revealed that the Son does not need the world's recognition to accomplish the Father's will.

The Father revealed that the same Christ can be received differently according to the posture of the heart.

The Father revealed that the Feast of Tabernacles points beyond the celebration itself to the fullness found in the Son.

The Father revealed that the greatest gift is not merely what comes from His hand, but communion with the One through whom all things are given.

The Father revealed that the child's true dwelling place is found by remaining in the Son.

What We Receive

We receive that the Son teaches us to wait upon the Father's timing.

We receive that the Father's "not yet" is still His perfect purpose.

We receive that obedience is greater than recognition.

We receive that the world cannot define the movement or identity of the child of God.

We receive that Christ reveals the Father's heart because He lives completely from the Father.

We receive that gifts from the Father must always lead us back to the Giver.

We receive that the feast we seek is ultimately found in the Son Himself.

We receive that our life begins, continues, and finds fullness by remaining in Him.

We receive that the Father's invitation is not merely to receive from Him, but to dwell with Him.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain
with Jesus.

His brothers sought
the moment.

Jesus sought
the Father.

They looked
for recognition.

He waited
for obedience.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we tried
to move ahead
of the Father's timing?

Have we sought
what the Father gives
more than
the Father Himself?

Have we forgotten
that our true dwelling place
is in the Son?

The invitation remains:

Remain in Christ.

Receive from the Father.

Wait for His time.

And discover
the fullness of the feast
that is found
only in Him.

Encounter Movement 53

Jesus Teaches at the Feast

Scripture — John 7:14–36

Now about the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the Temple and taught.

And the Jews marveled, saying,

"How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

Jesus answered them and said,

"My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me."

"If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority."

"He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him."

"Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law?"

"Why do you seek to kill Me?"

The people answered and said,

"You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"

Jesus answered and said,

"I did one work, and you all marvel."

"Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath."

"If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because I made a man completely well on the Sabbath?"

"Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Then some of them from Jerusalem said,

"Is this not He whom they seek to kill?"

"But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him."

"Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?"

"However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

Then Jesus cried out as He taught in the Temple, saying,

"You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know."

"But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."

Then they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

And many of the people believed in Him.

The Harvest

Jesus teaches
in the Temple.

We paused.

The people marvel.

His words carry
an authority
they have never encountered.

They ask:

"How does this Man know?"

They are looking
for the source.

Jesus reveals:

The source
is the Father.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Son does not speak
from Himself.

The Son receives
from the Father.

Jesus says:

"My doctrine
is not Mine,
but His
who sent Me."

We lingered.

This continues
what we received
in the previous encounter.

"My time"
was not His own time.

Now:

"My doctrine"
is not His own doctrine.

His life
is completely received.

His timing.

His words.

His works.

His glory.

Again we receive:

The Son reveals the Father because the Son's entire life flows from the Father.

Jesus then says:

"If anyone wills
to do His will,
he shall know..."

We paused.

This is a profound invitation.

Jesus does not say:

"If anyone has enough knowledge..."

"If anyone has enough education..."

"If anyone has enough position..."

He speaks of the heart.

The posture.

The willingness
to receive the Father's will.

Again we receive:

The ability to recognize what comes from the Father begins with a heart willing to receive from the Father.

Jesus says:

"He who speaks
from himself
seeks his own glory."

We lingered.

The issue is deeper
than words.

The issue is source.

The Son speaks
from the Father.

The one who speaks
from himself
seeks his own glory.

Again we receive:

Self-originated life seeks self-glory. Received life reveals the Father's glory.

Then Jesus says:

"Did not Moses
give you the law,
yet none of you
keeps the law?"

We paused.

This is a difficult word.

Those who claimed
to defend the Law
were not receiving
the heart of the One
who gave the Law.

The problem was not
that they had no knowledge.

They knew much.

They studied much.

They taught much.

But knowledge
had not become communion.

Again we receive:

The Father's gifts can be received while the Father's heart is missed.

The Law was given
to reveal the Father.

Not to become something
possessed apart from Him.

The Temple.

The Scriptures.

The Feasts.

The Law.

All were gifts.

All pointed beyond themselves.

Again we receive:

The gifts of the Father are meant to lead His children back to the Father Himself.

Jesus says:

"Do not judge
according to appearance,
but judge
with righteous judgment."

We paused.

Again,
the issue is sight.

Not merely what is seen outwardly.

But seeing
through the Father's heart.

The people knew
where Jesus came from.

Or so they thought.

They knew earthly things.

But they did not know
the One who sent Him.

Again we receive:

Knowing about the Son is not the same as knowing the Father revealed through the Son.

Jesus says:

"I have not come
of Myself,
but He who sent Me."

We paused.

The Son is the perfect picture
of sonship.

He does not live independently.

He receives.

He remains.

He reveals.

Again we receive:

The highest expression of sonship is complete communion with the Father.

Then they seek
to seize Him.

Yet no one lays
a hand upon Him.

Why?

Because His hour
had not yet come.

Again we remember:

The Son is never outside
the Father's purpose.

No opposition
can move Him ahead.

No opposition
can delay Him.

Again we receive:

The Father's timing cannot be interrupted by the plans of men.

Finally,
the people remain divided.

Some believe.

Others resist.

The same Christ.

The same words.

The same revelation.

Different hearts.

Again we receive:

The posture of the heart determines whether the Father's revelation is received or resisted.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that the Son's life is completely received from the Father.

The Father revealed that Jesus does not speak from Himself, but reveals the One who sent Him.

The Father revealed that the Son's timing, teaching, works, and glory all flow from communion with the Father.

The Father revealed that recognizing truth begins with a heart willing to receive His will.

The Father revealed that self-originated life seeks its own glory, while received life reveals the Father's glory.

The Father revealed that His gifts — the Law, the Scriptures, the Temple, and the Feasts — were never meant to terminate in themselves, but to lead His children back to Him.

The Father revealed that knowledge about Him is not the same as knowing Him.

The Father revealed that the greatest danger is not lacking knowledge of God, but receiving His gifts while no longer remaining dependent upon Him.

The Father revealed that the Son is the perfect example of sonship: completely dependent, completely receiving, and completely revealing the Father's heart.

The Father revealed that His purposes unfold according to His perfect timing, which cannot be interrupted by the plans of men.

What We Receive

We receive that the Son teaches us the posture of true sonship.

We receive that our life begins by receiving from the Father through the Son.

We receive that we are never the source of the Father's life, but recipients of His life.

We receive that truth is recognized by a heart willing to receive the Father's will.

We receive that knowledge without communion can leave the heart unable to recognize the One standing before it.

We receive that the Father's gifts should always lead us back to the Father Himself.

We receive that self-glory and the Father's glory come from two different sources.

We receive that the mature child is not the one who becomes independent, but the one who remains dependent upon the Father.

We receive that Christ is the perfect revelation of a life completely received from God.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Jesus.

The people asked:

"How does this Man know?"

The answer was not:

Because He learned more.

Because He achieved more.

Because He became more independent.

The answer:

He receives from the Father.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we sought
to possess
what the Father intended
us to receive?

Have we valued
knowledge about Him
more than communion
with Him?

Have we forgotten
that the Son Himself
remains our example
of complete dependence?

The invitation remains:

Remain in the Son.

Receive from the Father.

Seek His glory.

And allow His life

to flow through you

as you continue

beholding Him.

Encounter Movement 54

Living Water Promised

Scripture — John 7:37–52

On the last day, that great day of the feast,

Jesus stood and cried out,

"If anyone thirsts,

let him come to Me and drink."

"He who believes in Me,

as the Scripture has said,

out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

John explains:

"This He spoke concerning the Spirit,
whom those believing in Him would receive."
Many in the crowd said,
"Truly, this is the Prophet."
Others said,
"This is the Christ."
Others questioned,
"Will the Christ come out of Galilee?"
So there was a division among the people because of Him.
The officers returned without arresting Him.
The religious leaders asked,
"Why have you not brought Him?"
The officers answered,
"No man ever spoke like this Man."
Nicodemus quietly spoke, asking,
"Does our law judge a man before it hears him?"

The Harvest

Jesus waits
until the last day.

We paused.

The great day
of the feast.

The culmination.

The crescendo.

The people have gathered
to celebrate
God's provision,
God's dwelling,
and God's faithfulness.

And at the moment
when the feast reaches
its fullness,

Jesus stands.

He does not merely
explain the feast.

He reveals
its fulfillment.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

**The Father's promises
are not ultimately fulfilled
in symbols,
but in His Son.**

Jesus cries:

"If anyone
thirsts..."

We paused.

What a remarkable invitation.

He does not say:

"If anyone
has enough knowledge."

"If anyone
has achieved enough."

"If anyone
has become worthy."

He says:

"If anyone thirsts."

Thirst reveals
the posture
of the child.

The thirsty person knows:

"I need."

"I cannot create
what I lack."

"I must receive."

Again we receive:

The Father continually fills those who remain aware of their dependence upon Him.

Jesus says:

"Come to Me
and drink."

We lingered.

Not merely:

Come and learn.

Come and observe.

Come and receive something
separate from Me.

Come to Me.

The Giver is the gift.

The Source is the provision.

The Person is the promise.

Again we receive:

The Father's gifts are invitations into communion with the Father Himself.

Then Jesus says:

"Out of his heart
will flow
rivers
of living water."

We smiled.

The one who drinks
becomes a fountain.

But we paused.

The fountain does not
create the water.

The vessel does not
produce the river.

The child does not
become the Source.

The child receives.

The child remains.

The child becomes
a conduit.

Again we receive:

**We are not the source of the Father's life. We are recipients of His life through the Son,
and conduits through whom His life flows.**

John tells us:

"This He spoke
concerning
the Spirit."

We paused.

This is the revelation
within the symbol.

The living water
is not merely
a blessing from God.

It is the life of God
given within.

Again we receive:

**The Father does not merely bring His children near. Through the Son and by the Spirit,
He shares His own life with them.**

We remembered
the Samaritan woman.

Again,
the Living Water appears.

There,
Jesus met one woman
at a well.

Here,
Jesus stands publicly
before the multitude.

The same invitation.

The same Source.

The same Living Water.

We paused.

The Samaritan woman
had thirst.

She received.

She became
a witness.

Many religious leaders
had the feast.

They had the Law.

They had the Temple.

They had the Scriptures.

Yet many stood beside
the Source
and would not drink.

Again we receive:

The thirsty heart receives what the satisfied heart cannot recognize.

Then the officers return.

They were sent
to arrest Him.

Instead,
they encountered Him.

They say:

"No man
ever spoke
like this Man."

We smiled.

They came
to take Him.

His words
captured them.

Again we receive:

The Father's voice reaches the heart that is willing to hear.

Then Nicodemus speaks.

We paused.

The one who once came
by night

now begins
to step into the light.

Not fully.

Not completely.

But faithfully.

Again we receive:

The Father patiently forms His children. Faith often grows quietly before it stands publicly.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that Jesus is the fulfillment of what the feast represented.

The Father revealed that His greatest gift is not merely something He gives, but Himself revealed through His Son.

The Father revealed that the posture of the child is thirst — the recognition that life must be received from Him.

The Father revealed that Jesus is not merely the giver of living water; He Himself is the Living Water.

The Father revealed that His children are not called to become the source of life, but to remain connected to the Source.

The Father revealed that through the Son and by the Spirit, His own life flows within His children.

The Father revealed that what is received from Him is never meant to terminate within us, but to overflow through us.

The Father revealed that the thirsty heart recognizes the Source, while the satisfied heart may stand beside Him and not drink.

The Father revealed that faith often grows progressively, as seen in Nicodemus.

The Father revealed that the mature child is not the one who no longer thirsts, but the one who has learned where to continually drink.

What We Receive

We receive that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promises.

We receive that true life begins with coming to Him.

We receive that we must continually receive from the Source.

We receive that the Giver Himself is greater than every gift He gives.

We receive that thirst is not weakness, but the posture of receiving.

We receive that the Father's life flows through those who remain in the Son.

We receive that we are not the source of life, but vessels and conduits of His life.

We receive that the Spirit is the living water promised by Christ.

We receive that the Father desires His life to overflow through His children toward others.

We receive that we must continually return to the Source.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Jesus.

The feast reached
its fullness.

The Source stood
among them.

And Jesus cried:

"Come to Me
and drink."

Perhaps we ask:

Have we come
to the Giver,

or have we settled
for His gifts?

Have we remembered
that we cannot create
the life we need?

Have we remained
connected
to the Source?

Have we allowed
the life we receive
from Him
to flow through us?

The invitation remains:

Remain thirsty.

Come to the Son.

Drink deeply
from the Source.

Receive His Spirit.

And allow the rivers
of His life
to flow through you
to others.

Encounter Movement 55

The Woman Caught in Adultery

Scripture — John 7:53–8:11

Early in the morning,

Jesus came again into the Temple.

All the people came to Him,

and He sat down and taught them.

Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery.

Setting her in the midst,

they said,

"Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act."

"Now Moses commanded us that such should be stoned.

What do You say?"

They said this, testing Him,

that they might have something to accuse Him.

Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger.

As they continued asking Him,

He stood up and said,

"He who is without sin among you,

let him throw a stone first."

Then He stooped down again and wrote on the ground.

One by one,

beginning with the oldest,

they left,

until Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before Him.

Jesus stood and asked,

"Woman, where are those accusers of yours?"

"Has no one condemned you?"

She answered,

"No one, Lord."

Jesus said,

"Neither do I condemn you.

Go, and sin no more."

The Harvest

The scribes and Pharisees
bring
a woman.

We paused.

They place her
in the midst.

Exposed.

Surrounded.

Reduced
to her failure.

But Jesus
responds differently.

They stand.

He stoops.

We lingered there.

The posture
reveals the heart.

The accusers
stand above
the broken.

The Savior
stoops toward
the broken.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father's heart does not approach His children from a position of superiority, but from a posture of love.

They say:

"Moses commanded..."

We paused.

The Law
was given
by the Father.

But the Law
was never given
to create
accusers.

It was given
to reveal
the Father's heart.

Again we receive:

The gifts of the Father can be held while the heart of the Father is missed.

This continues
what we received
in the previous encounters.

The leaders had:

The Law.

The Scriptures.

The Temple.

The Feast.

Yet they struggled
to recognize
the One standing
before them.

Jesus stoops.

We smiled.

Before He answers,
He lowers Himself.

He is not hurried.

He is not defensive.

He is not reacting
from Himself.

Again we behold
the Son.

The same Son
who receives
from the Father.

The same Son
who reveals
the Father's heart.

Again we receive:

The Father is never hurried in His work of restoration.

Then Jesus says:

"He who is
without sin
among you,
let him throw
a stone first."

We paused.

The stone
is no longer
only about
the woman.

The light
has turned
toward every heart.

Jesus does not say:

"There is no sin."

He does not say:

"The Law does not matter."

He reveals
that every person
stands in need
of the Father's mercy.

Again we receive:

The heart that has truly received mercy cannot remain positioned above another.

One by one,
they leave.

Beginning
with the oldest.

We paused.

Perhaps
they recognized
their own need.

Perhaps
the light
had reached
their hearts.

We simply preserve
the question
before the Father.

Then only
Jesus
and the woman
remain.

We lingered.

The accusers
have departed.

The Savior
remains.

Again we receive:

The Father desires to meet His children personally through His Son.

Jesus asks:

"Has no one
condemned you?"

She answers:

"No one,
Lord."

Then Jesus says:

"Neither do I
condemn you."

We paused
for a long time.

The woman came
surrounded
by condemnation.

Now only
the voice
of mercy remains.

Again we behold
the Father's heart.

Mercy
does not deny
truth.

Mercy creates
the place
where truth
can transform
the heart.

Then Jesus says:

"Go,
and sin
no more."

We smiled.

The order matters.

He does not say:

Change,
and then receive mercy.

He gives mercy.

Then He invites
a new way of life.

Again we receive:

The Father's love is not the reward for transformation. The Father's love is the beginning of transformation.

We remembered
the Samaritan woman.

The connection
was beautiful.

One woman
came to a well
carrying shame.

Another woman
stood publicly
exposed.

Both encountered
the same Savior.

Both received
what they could not
provide for themselves.

The Samaritan woman:

"Give me this water."

The woman caught in adultery:

"Nothing remains
for me to defend."

Both needed
the same Source.

Both needed
the same mercy.

Again we receive:

The Father does not wait for His children to become worthy before drawing near. He draws near so they may receive His life and become whole.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that His heart is revealed not through accusation, but through restoration.

The Father revealed that the posture of the heart determines whether we participate in His restoring work or stand apart from it.

The Father revealed that His justice is never partial, and His mercy is never separated from truth.

The Father revealed that His gifts — even the Law itself — are meant to lead His children back to Him.

The Father revealed that Jesus does not remove truth; He reveals a love powerful enough to transform the heart.

The Father revealed that the broken and the self-righteous both need the same Savior.

The Father revealed that the heart that has received mercy cannot remain above another.

The Father revealed that mercy precedes transformation.

The Father revealed that forgiveness is not permission to remain unchanged; it is the beginning of a new life received from Him.

The Father revealed that through the Son, His children are not defined by their failures, but invited into restoration.

What We Receive

We receive that the Father's heart moves toward restoration.

We receive that we are not called to stand above others, but to remain near the Savior who stoops.

We receive that truth and mercy meet perfectly in Christ.

We receive that the Father's gifts must always lead us back to the Father Himself.

We receive that we also stand only because mercy has been extended to us.

We receive that the stone becomes difficult to hold when we remember the grace we have received.

We receive that mercy is the beginning of transformation.

We receive that the Father changes hearts through love received, not condemnation imposed.

We receive that the same Savior who offered living water to the thirsty woman offers mercy to the broken woman.

We receive that Christ alone reveals the Father's heart.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Jesus.

The accusers
brought stones.

The Savior
brought mercy.

The woman
stood exposed.

The Father
saw His child.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we ever stood
holding stones
while forgetting
the mercy we have received?

Have we valued
being right
more than
restoring a brother?

Have we allowed
the Father's love
to transform us,

or have we only
sought to correct
what is outside us?

The invitation remains:

Remain near
the Savior who stoops.

Receive His mercy.

Walk in His life.

And allow the Father's restoring love
to flow through you
toward others.

As We Continue Walking...

Encounters 51–55

As you walk...

perhaps remain here
for a moment.

Five more encounters.

Five more places
where the Father
has revealed His heart
through the Son.

And perhaps...

something we have been seeing
is becoming clearer.

We have been learning
that we belong.

We have been learning
to see others
as belonging
to the Father.

Now perhaps
we are beginning to see
how the Father's life
moves through
His children.

Peter asks:

"How often
shall my brother
sin against me,
and I forgive him?"

How many times?

Where is the limit?

When have I done
enough?

And Jesus tells
of a servant.

A debt
he could never repay.

A king
moved with compassion.

A debt
released.

Mercy
received.

We pause.

The servant leaves
having received
what he could never
produce for himself.

Yet when he encounters
another...

the mercy stops.

He has received mercy...

but mercy does not flow
through him.

Perhaps Jesus
is showing us
something deeper

than forgiveness
as an obligation.

The Father's mercy
is not merely something
we receive
and possess.

It is His life
in which we are invited
to participate.

What we receive
from Him
is meant to flow
through us.

Then Jesus' brothers
speak of the feast.

Go.

Show Yourself.

Let everyone
see what You can do.

Opportunity.

Recognition.

Visibility.

But Jesus says:

"My time
has not yet come."

We linger.

The world sees
opportunity.

The Son sees
the Father.

The world asks:

What can happen now?

The Son receives:

What is the Father
doing now?

Jesus does not move
from pressure.

He does not move
from ambition.

He does not move
from the desire
to be recognized.

He receives
His movement
from the Father.

Again we behold
the Son.

He does not manufacture
His own life.

He lives
from Another.

And because He remains
in the Father...

the Father's life
is revealed
through Him.

Then Jesus goes
to the feast.

Quietly.

Without announcement.

Without seeking
recognition.

And the people
begin to speak.

"He is good."

"No...

He deceives
the people."

The same Jesus.

The same presence.

Different hearts.

Again we receive:

The difference
is not in the Son.

The difference
is in the heart
receiving Him.

And all around them...

the feast.

Dwelling.

Provision.

Harvest.

The Father's faithfulness.

They celebrate
what God has given...

while the fullness
of His provision
stands among them.

We pause.

Again...

the gift
points toward
the Giver.

The feast
points toward Him.

The dwelling
points toward Him.

The provision
points toward Him.

The child does not find life
by collecting
the Father's gifts
apart from Him.

The child finds life
by dwelling
in the Son.

Then Jesus teaches.

And He says:

"My doctrine
is not Mine,

but His
who sent Me."

Again...

the Source.

Jesus does not speak
from Himself.

He does not seek
His own glory.

He receives
from the Father.

He reveals
the Father.

And then:

"Do not judge
according to appearance..."

We pause.

How familiar
this is becoming.

The disciples had measured
greatness
by appearance.

They had measured
another servant
by whether he followed them.

The leaders measured
Jesus
by what they could see.

But the Father
sees differently.

And perhaps now
we understand something more.

We cannot learn
to see with the Father's eyes
while continuing
to live from ourselves.

The Son sees
as the Father sees
because the Son remains
in the Father.

He receives.

He remains.

He reveals.

Then Jesus stands
at the feast
and cries:

"If anyone thirsts,
let him come to Me
and drink."

Come.

Drink.

Receive.

Not:

Produce.

Not:

Create.

Not:

Become your own source.

Come
to the Source.

And Jesus says:

"Out of his heart
will flow rivers
of living water."

We linger.

The water
is received.

Then...

it flows.

The child
does not create
the river.

The child drinks.

The child receives.

And what is received
from the Son
begins to flow
through the child
toward others.

Perhaps now
the unforgiving servant
becomes clearer.

Mercy received
was meant
to become mercy flowing.

The Father's life
was never intended
to terminate
within the recipient.

His life
moves outward.

His mercy.

His compassion.

His forgiveness.

His love.

Come.

Drink.

Receive.

Flow.

Then...

a woman
is brought to Jesus.

Caught
in adultery.

Placed
in the midst.

Exposed.

Surrounded.

Reduced
to her failure.

The accusers
stand.

Jesus...

stoops.

We remain here.

They stand
above the broken.

The Son
stoops toward her.

Perhaps we are seeing
what living water
looks like.

The Father's heart
flowing through
the Son
toward one
who needs mercy.

The leaders have
the Law.

The Scriptures.

The Temple.

The Feast.

Gifts
given by the Father.

Yet it is possible
to hold
the Father's gifts...

and miss
the Father's heart.

Jesus stoops.

He is not hurried.

He is not defensive.

He is not reacting
from Himself.

He remains
with the Father.

Then:

"He who is
without sin among you,

let him throw
a stone first."

And suddenly...

the light
is no longer shining
only upon the woman.

Every heart
is exposed.

Jesus does not say
there is no sin.

He reveals
that everyone
needs mercy.

And perhaps
one of the deepest truths
of these five encounters
comes into view:

The heart
that has truly received mercy
cannot remain positioned
above another.

One by one...

the stones fall silent.

The accusers leave.

Until finally...

Jesus
and the woman.

"Has no one
condemned you?"

"No one, Lord."

"Neither do I
condemn you.

Go,
and sin no more."

Mercy does not pretend
the wound does not exist.

Mercy restores.

The same Father
who forgives
also heals.

The same love
that receives
also transforms.

And perhaps now
these five encounters
gather together.

Mercy
received.

Life
received.

Timing
received.

Truth
received.

Living water
received.

And then...

what has been received
flows outward.

Again we behold Jesus.

Receiving
from the Father.

Remaining
in the Father.

Revealing
the Father.

Perhaps this is
the life
into which we are being invited.

Not imitation
from a distance.

Participation
through the Son.

We cannot manufacture
the Father's mercy.

We cannot manufacture
His sight.

We cannot manufacture
His life.

We cannot manufacture
living water.

We come thirsty.

We drink.

We receive.

We remain.

And His life
begins to flow
through us.

Perhaps this is why
the Father's children
must continually remain
near the Source.

Because we can only give
what we continue
to receive.

As we continue walking...

perhaps we carry
this question:

What have I received
from the Father
that He now desires
to flow through me
toward another?

Remain with Jesus.

Come thirsty.

Drink deeply.

Receive mercy.

Receive life.

Remain in Him.

And allow
what comes from the Father
through the Son
by the Spirit...

to flow.

Toward the thirsty.

Toward the wandering.

Toward your brother.

Toward the broken.

Even toward the one
standing alone
in the midst.

The Son
who receives
from the Father.

The Son
who stoops.

The Son
through whom
the Father's heart
flows toward His children.

Encounter Movement 56

Jesus, the Light of the World

Scripture — John 8:12–30

Jesus spoke again, saying,

"I am the Light of the world.

He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness,

but have the light of life."

The Pharisees therefore said to Him,

"You bear witness of Yourself.

Your witness is not true."

Jesus answered and said,

"Even if I bear witness of Myself,

My witness is true,

for I know where I came from and where I am going;

but you do not know where I come from and where I am going."

"You judge according to the flesh;

I judge no one."

"But if I do judge, My judgment is true,

for I am not alone,

but I am with the Father who sent Me."

"It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.

I am One who bears witness of Myself,

and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

Then they said to Him,

"Where is Your Father?"

Jesus answered,

"You know neither Me nor My Father.

If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

These words Jesus spoke in the treasury as He taught in the Temple;
and no one laid hands on Him,
for His hour had not yet come.

Then Jesus said to them again,
"I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin.
Where I go, you cannot come."

So the Jews said,
"Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?"

And He said to them,
"You are from beneath; I am from above.
You are of this world; I am not of this world."

"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins;
for if you do not believe that I AM He,
you will die in your sins."

Then they said to Him,
"Who are You?"

And Jesus said to them,
"Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning."
"I have many things to say and to judge concerning you,
but He who sent Me is true;
and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

Then Jesus said to them,
"When you lift up the Son of Man,

then you will know that I AM He,
and that I do nothing of Myself;
but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things."

"And He who sent Me is with Me.

The Father has not left Me alone,
for I always do those things that please Him."

As He spoke these words,
many believed in Him.

The Harvest

Jesus declares:

"I am
the Light
of the world."

We paused.

Again,
Jesus does not say:

"I carry the light."

"I reveal information about the light."

"I point toward the light."

He says:

"I am."

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father does not merely send something from Himself. The Father reveals Himself through His Son.

Jesus says:

"He who follows Me
shall not walk
in darkness,

but have
the light
of life."

We lingered.

The invitation
is not first:

Understand everything.

The invitation
is:

Follow Me.

The child
does not create
the light.

The child
does not produce
the path.

The child
remains near
the One
who is Light.

Again we receive:

Life is found not through independence from the Father, but through remaining near the Son who reveals Him.

Jesus says:

"I know
where I came from
and where I am going."

We paused.

Again,
everything returns
to the Father.

His words.

His timing.

His judgment.

His works.

His very life.

The Son
never moves
from Himself.

He receives.

He remains.

He reveals.

Again we receive:

The Son reveals the Father because the Son's entire life flows from perfect communion with the Father.

Jesus says:

"You judge
according
to the flesh."

We lingered.

This continues
what we received
with the woman caught
in adultery.

The flesh sees:

Appearance.

Failure.

Position.

The outward person.

But the Spirit reveals:

The heart.

The need.

The Father's purpose.

Restoration.

Again we receive:

The flesh judges what it sees. The Father reveals what He desires to restore.

Jesus says:

"The Father
who sent Me

bears witness
of Me."

We smiled.

Again we behold
the perfect unity
between Father and Son.

The Father reveals
the Son.

The Son reveals
the Father.

Then they ask:

"Where is
Your Father?"

We paused.

What a profound question.

They ask for the Father
while standing before
the One who perfectly reveals Him.

Again we receive:

The greatest blindness is not the absence of revelation. It is standing before revelation while refusing to receive it.

Jesus says:

"If you had known Me,
you would have known
My Father also."

We lingered there.

This is the heart
of the encounter.

To know Jesus
is to know
the Father's heart
revealed.

The mercy
shown to the woman.

The Living Water
offered to the thirsty.

The patience
shown to the confused.

The correction
given to the proud.

All reveal
the Father.

Again we receive:

Everything we receive from the Son reveals the heart of the Father.

Jesus says:

"When you lift up
the Son of Man,

then you will know
that I AM."

We paused.

The cross
will become
the greatest revelation.

The world may see:

Weakness.

Defeat.

Suffering.

The Father reveals:

Love.

Glory.

Self-giving communion.

Again we receive:

The Father's glory is revealed through the self-giving love of His Son.

Jesus says:

"I do nothing
of Myself."

We smiled.

Again,
the posture.

The Son Himself
shows us
the life
we are invited into.

He does not live
independently.

He lives
in communion.

Again we receive:

True sonship is not becoming independent from the Father. True sonship is remaining completely dependent upon Him.

Jesus says:

"I always do
those things
that please Him."

We paused.

This is not obedience
born from fear.

This is love.

The Son delights
in the Father's heart.

The Son delights
in the Father's will.

Again we receive:

Love naturally moves toward pleasing the One it loves.

Then many believe.

We smiled.

The same Light.

The same words.

The same Savior.

Different hearts.

Again we receive:

The Light continues shining. The question is whether the heart remains willing to receive it.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that Jesus is the Light of the world, not merely the One who gives light.

The Father revealed that His children receive life by following the Son, not by creating their own path.

The Father revealed that the Son's entire life flows from perfect communion with Him.

The Father revealed that the flesh judges according to appearance, while the Spirit reveals the Father's heart.

The Father revealed that His gifts — the Law, the Scriptures, the Temple, and the Feasts — are meant to lead His children back to Him.

The Father revealed that to know the Son is to know the Father revealed through Him.

The Father revealed that the cross is the supreme unveiling of the Father's love through the Son.

The Father revealed that true sonship is not independence, but complete communion and dependence upon Him.

The Father revealed that love delights in the Father's will.

The Father revealed that the same Light shines upon every heart, yet each heart must choose whether it will receive.

What We Receive

We receive that Jesus is the Light of the world.

We receive that our life is found by remaining near Him.

We receive that we are not the source of light, but receivers of His light.

We receive that the Father's heart is perfectly revealed in the Son.

We receive that knowledge about God cannot replace communion with God.

We receive that the Father's gifts must always lead us back to the Father Himself.

We receive that the Spirit teaches us to see beyond outward appearance into the Father's heart.

We receive that the posture of the Son is our example:

Receiving.

Remaining.

Revealing.

We receive that the Father's love is revealed most fully through Christ's self-giving love.

We receive that the invitation remains:

Follow the Light.

Receive His life.

Walk in Him.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Jesus.

The Light has come.

The Father has revealed Himself.

The Son has shown us His heart.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we sought
to create our own light,

or have we remained
near the One
who is Light?

Have we held
the Father's gifts,

while forgetting
the Giver?

Have we judged
according to appearance,

or have we learned
to see
through the Father's heart?

The invitation remains:

Remain near the Light.

Receive from the Son.

Walk in His life.

And allow the Father's heart,
revealed through Christ,
to illuminate
your path.

Encounter Movement 57

The Truth Will Make You Free

Scripture — John 8:31–59

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

33 They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free’?”

34 Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

35 And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. 36 Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Abraham’s Seed and Satan’s

37 “I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.”

39 They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.”

Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. 40 But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You do the deeds of your father.”

Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”

42 Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

Before Abraham Was, I AM

48 Then the Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

49 Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. 50 And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges. 51 Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”

52 Then the Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.’ 53 Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?”

54 Jesus answered, “If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. 55 Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, ‘I do not know Him,’ I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

57 Then the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?”

58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

59 Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

The Harvest

Jesus says:

"If you abide
in My word,

you are
My disciples
indeed."

We paused.

Again,
Jesus does not begin
with achievement.

He begins
with abiding.

Not:

How much
can you accomplish?

How much
can you understand?

How much
can you possess?

But:

Will you remain?

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The posture of the disciple is not striving toward life. The posture of the disciple is abiding in the One who is Life.

Jesus says:

"And you shall know
the truth,

and the truth
shall make you free."

We lingered.

What is truth?

The religious leaders
were searching
for truth
through knowledge,
heritage,
and possession.

But Truth
was standing
before them.

They were looking
for something.

The Father
had given
Someone.

Again we receive:

The truth that sets free is not merely information received about God. It is communion with God through His Son.

Jesus says:

"If you abide
in My word..."

We paused.

The One who asks us
to abide
in the Word

is Himself
the Word
who reveals
the Father.

The invitation
is not merely:

Learn about Me.

It is:

Know Me.

Remain in Me.

Walk with Me.

Hear Me.

See Me.

Again we receive:

The Son does not merely speak truth. The Son is the Truth in whom we are invited to abide.

Then the people respond:

"We are Abraham's descendants,
and have never been

in bondage
to anyone."

We paused.

Their answer
reveals their posture.

They are trusting
in what they possess.

Their identity.

Their heritage.

Their connection
to Abraham.

Yet Jesus reveals
a deeper question.

Not:

Who are you descended from?

But:

Where are you receiving
your life from?

Again we receive:

The gifts of the Father can be held while the heart of the Father is missed.

Jesus says:

"Whoever commits sin
is a slave of sin."

We lingered.

They are thinking
of outward freedom.

Jesus reveals
the bondage
of the heart.

The deepest slavery
is not merely
being under something.

The deepest slavery
is receiving life
from something
that cannot give life.

Again we receive:

Freedom begins when the heart returns to the true Source of life.

Jesus says:

"And a slave
does not abide
in the house forever,

but a son
abides forever."

We paused.

This may be
the heart
of the encounter.

The slave
knows the house.

The son
knows the Father.

The slave
serves from obligation.

The son
remains from belonging.

The slave asks:

"What must I do
to stay?"

The son knows:

"I belong."

Again we receive:

The Father's desire is not merely servants within His house. The Father's desire is sons and daughters who abide in His presence.

Jesus says:

"Therefore
if the Son
makes you free,

you shall be
free indeed."

We smiled.

Freedom comes
through the Son.

Not through:

Striving.

Possession.

Heritage.

Human effort.

The Son does not merely
teach freedom.

The Son gives freedom.

Again we receive:

True freedom is not independence from the Father. True freedom is perfect communion with the Father through the Son.

We paused
with Jesus Himself.

The Son has shown us
what freedom looks like.

He says:

"I do nothing
of Myself."

"The Father
who sent Me
is with Me."

"I always do
those things
that please Him."

The Son is completely
dependent upon the Father.

Yet the Son is
completely free.

Again we receive:

The Son's freedom comes not from separation from the Father, but from perfect abiding in the Father.

Then Jesus says:

"Before Abraham was,
I AM."

We stopped.

We do not rush.

The One standing
before them
is not merely
another teacher.

Not merely
another servant.

Not merely
another descendant
of Abraham.

Abraham received
the promise.

The Son reveals
the Promise.

Abraham served
the Father.

The Son reveals
the Father.

Again we receive:

The One who stands before them is the One through whom the Father is making Himself known.

And now the thread gathers.

The Son abides
in the Father.

The disciple abides
in the Son.

The Spirit brings us
into the life
of the Son.

And the Father's life
flows through
those who remain.

Again we receive:

Receive.

Remain.

Abide.

Flow.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that true discipleship begins with abiding, not striving.

The Father revealed that the Son Himself is the Word in whom His children are invited to remain.

The Father revealed that Jesus is not merely a teacher of truth; He is the Truth who brings His children into communion with the Father.

The Father revealed that freedom is not independence from Him, but life received through the Son.

The Father revealed that earthly identity, heritage, and possession of His gifts cannot replace dependence upon Him.

The Father revealed that a slave relates to the house differently than a son, because a son remains from belonging.

The Father revealed that the Son Himself demonstrates perfect freedom through complete dependence upon Him.

The Father revealed that the Father's life flows through those who remain in the Son.

The Father revealed that Abraham pointed toward Christ, but Christ is the fulfillment of what Abraham received.

The Father revealed that the One who says "I AM" is the One through whom the Father makes Himself known.

What We Receive

We receive that Jesus is the Word we abide in.

We receive that Jesus is the Truth we come to know.

We receive that Jesus is the Life we receive.

We receive that freedom is found by remaining in Him.

We receive that striving ceases when receiving begins.

We receive that we are not the source of life, but recipients of the Father's life through the Son.

We receive that the mature child is not the one who becomes independent, but the one who remains dependent upon the Father.

We receive that the Son invites us into His own communion with the Father.

We receive that the Spirit continually leads us deeper into the life of Christ.

We receive that the invitation is not merely to know about Him, but to know Him.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Jesus.

The Son abides.

The Son receives.

The Son reveals.

The invitation
is not:

Create your own life.

Find your own way.

Become your own source.

The invitation is:

Remain.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we sought
freedom apart from You,

or have we discovered
freedom within You?

Have we held
the gifts of the Father,

while forgetting
the Giver?

Have we tried
to produce life,

rather than receiving
the Life
that flows from You?

The invitation remains:

Abide in the Son.

Remain in His Word.

Receive from the Father.

Walk by the Spirit.

And allow His life
to flow through you
to others.

Encounter Movement 58

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy (Seventy-Two)

Scripture — Luke 10:1–24

After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also,
and sent them two by two before His face
into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.

Then He said to them,

"The harvest truly is great,

but the laborers are few;

therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

"Go your way;
behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves."
"Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals;
and greet no one along the road."
"But whatever house you enter,
first say,
'Peace to this house.'"
"And if a son of peace is there,
your peace will rest on it."
"And remain in the same house,
eating and drinking such things as they give,
for the laborer is worthy of his wages."
"He who hears you hears Me,
he who rejects you rejects Me,
and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."
Then the seventy returned with joy,
saying,
"Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."
And He said to them,
"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."
"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions,
and over all the power of the enemy,
and nothing shall by any means hurt you."
"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this,

that the spirits are subject to you,
but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."
In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said,
"I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent
and revealed them to babes."
"Even so, Father,
for so it seemed good in Your sight."
"All things have been delivered to Me by My Father,
and no one knows who the Son is except the Father,
and who the Father is except the Son,
and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."
Then turning to His disciples He said privately,
"Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see."

The Harvest

The Lord appointed
seventy.

We paused.

They were appointed.

They were not
self-appointed.

They did not decide
their own mission.

They did not determine
their own authority.

They began
with His calling.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father's children do not originate the work of the Kingdom. They receive the invitation to participate in what He is already doing.

They receive
the invitation
to participate
in what He is already doing.

Jesus sent them
two by two.

We smiled.

Again,
the Father does not form
independent servants.

He forms
a family
that walks together.

Again we receive:

The Father's work
is carried
through communion,
not isolation.

Then Luke tells us:

They were sent
"before His face."

We lingered there.

Before His face.

They are not sent
instead of Him.

They are sent
ahead of Him.

They prepare
His way.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The steward
does not prepare
his own way.

The steward
prepares
the way
of the King.

Then Jesus says:

"The harvest truly
is great..."

We paused.

Jesus sees
a harvest.

The disciples
may see
a task.

But the Son
reveals
the Father's heart.

The Father desires
to gather
His children.

Again we receive:

The harvest belongs
to the Father.

The laborers
simply participate
with Him.

Jesus says:

"Pray
the Lord of the harvest..."

We lingered.

Before:

Go.

There is:

Pray.

Before:

Labor.

There is:

Communion.

Again we receive:

The work of the Father
begins with receiving
the heart of the Father.

Jesus says:

"I send you out
as lambs
among wolves."

We paused.

The Kingdom
moves differently
than the kingdoms
of this world.

He does not send
wolves among wolves.

He sends
lambs.

Again we receive:

The Father's Kingdom
does not overcome darkness
by becoming darkness.

It overcomes
by revealing
the nature
of the Lamb.

The seventy return
with joy.

They say:

"Lord,
even the demons
are subject
to us
in Your name."

We paused.

Their joy
is understandable.

They have witnessed
the power
of the Kingdom.

But Jesus redirects
their joy.

Not because
the works are unimportant.

But because
the works are not
the foundation.

Jesus says:

"Rejoice
because your names
are written
in heaven."

We lingered.

Identity
before activity.

Belonging
before accomplishment.

Again we receive:

The greatest joy
is not what flows
through us.

The greatest joy
is that we belong
to Him.

Then Jesus rejoices.

We paused.

The Son rejoices
with the Father.

The Father reveals
His heart
to those
who come
as children.

Again we receive:

The Kingdom
is received
by the heart
that remains
dependent
upon the Father.

Jesus says:

"Blessed are
the eyes
which see..."

We smiled.

Again,
our prayer remains:

Father,
give us eyes
to see
Your Son.

Again we receive:

The greatest blessing
is not merely
participating
in the work of God.

The greatest blessing
is beholding
the Son of God.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that His children are sent because they have first received from Him.

The Father revealed that His children do not create the work of the Kingdom; they participate in the work He is already doing through His Son.

The Father revealed that those sent before His face are called to prepare His ways, not establish their own.

The Father revealed that the harvest belongs to Him and that His children are invited to participate in His desire to gather.

The Father revealed that prayer precedes participation because communion precedes labor.

The Father revealed that His Kingdom advances through lambs who remain dependent upon Him.

The Father revealed that authority is entrusted through the Son and is never possessed independently.

The Father revealed that His life flows through those who remain connected to the Source.

The Father revealed that the gifts received from Him must always return our hearts to the Giver.

The Father revealed that identity comes before activity and belonging comes before accomplishment.

The Father revealed that the greatest joy of His children is not merely what He does through them, but that they belong to Him.

The Father revealed that blessed are those whose eyes are opened to behold Christ.

What We Receive

We receive that we are sent because we have first been received.

We receive that we do not go from ourselves, but from the Son.

We receive that the Father's work is not ours to create, but ours to participate in.

We receive that the steward prepares the way for the King.

We receive that we are not the source of life, but vessels through whom His life flows.

We receive that the authority of the Kingdom comes through abiding in the Son.

We receive that the Father's life flows through those who remain connected to Him.

We receive that belonging is greater than accomplishment.

We receive that the greatest joy is not what comes through our hands, but what has been given to our hearts.

We receive that blessed are the eyes that behold the Son.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain with Jesus.

The seventy were sent.

But they were first His.

They carried His words.

Because they first received His life.

They participated
in His works.

Because they remained
connected
to Him.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we tried
to accomplish
what only the Father
can do?

Have we remembered
that everything we carry
was first received?

Have we valued
the gift
more than
the Giver?

Have we forgotten
that the source
must always remain
the Source?

The invitation remains:

Remain in the Son.

Receive from the Father.

Walk by the Spirit.

And allow the life
you have received
to flow through you
toward others.

For the steward
does not create
the river.

The steward
remains connected
to the Source.

And from the Source
flows
living water.

Encounter Movement 59

The Good Samaritan

Scripture — Luke 10:25–37

A lawyer stood up to test Jesus, saying,

"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Jesus replied,

"What is written in the Law?

How do you read it?"

The lawyer answered,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,

and your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus said,

"You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

But, wanting to justify himself, he asked,

"And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus answered,

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho,

and fell among thieves,

who stripped him, wounded him, and left him half dead."

"Now by chance a certain priest came down that road.

And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side."

"Likewise a Levite,

when he arrived at the place, came and looked,

and passed by on the other side."

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was.

And when he saw him, he had compassion."

"So he went to him and bandaged his wounds,
pouring on oil and wine;
and he set him on his own animal,
brought him to an inn,
and took care of him."

"On the next day, when he departed,
he took out two denarii,
gave them to the innkeeper,
and said to him,
'Take care of him;
and whatever more you spend,
when I come again, I will repay you.'"

"So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among thieves?"

The lawyer answered,

"The one who showed mercy."

Then Jesus said to him,

"Go and do likewise."

The Harvest

A lawyer
comes
to Jesus.

We paused.

He knows
the Law.

He knows
the words.

Yet he comes
to test
the One
who gave
the Law.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father
is not merely
concerned
with what
His children know.

He desires
to reveal
how they see.

The lawyer asks:

"What shall I do
to inherit
eternal life?"

We lingered.

Again,
the question begins
with doing.

But Jesus
will lead him
toward becoming.

The life
of the Father
cannot be produced
through effort.

It must be received
through communion
with the Son.

Again we receive:

The Father does not merely give His children something to accomplish. He invites them into His own life.

Jesus asks:

"How do you read it?"

We paused.

The question
is deeper
than knowledge.

The lawyer knows
the commandment.

But does he know
the heart
behind the commandment?

Again we receive:

The Father's truth is not meant merely to fill the mind. It is meant to transform the heart.

The lawyer answers:

Love God.

Love your neighbor.

We smiled.

The answer
was correct.

The Law
was not the problem.

The Father
had always revealed
His heart.

But the heart
of man
needed to be transformed
to live
what the Law revealed.

Again we receive:

The Law points toward love. The Son reveals love fulfilled.

Then the lawyer asks:

"Who is my neighbor?"

We paused.

He wants
a boundary.

A definition.

A limit.

Who qualifies?

Who deserves?

Who is included?

Again we receive:

The heart seeking to justify itself will always attempt to limit the reach of love.

Jesus tells
a story.

A man
is wounded.

Stripped.

Broken.

Left half dead.

We lingered.

Jesus does not tell us
his name.

His background.

His status.

His worthiness.

None of these things matter.

He is simply
a person
in need.

Again we receive:

The Father's mercy does not begin by asking whether someone is worthy. Mercy flows because love is His nature.

A priest sees.

A Levite sees.

But they pass by.

We paused.

They saw.

The issue
was not sight.

The issue
was the heart.

Again we receive:

Sight without the Father's love can recognize need without becoming compassion.

Then comes:

"But a Samaritan..."

We smiled.

The unexpected one.

The one
the listeners
would not expect.

He sees.

He has compassion.

He moves toward.

Again we receive:

The Father's heart is revealed wherever His love is received and expressed.

The Samaritan binds.

Provides.

Carries.

Pays.

Promises:

"When I return..."

We paused.

He does not merely
help for a moment.

He commits
to restoration.

Again we behold
the Father's heart.

The Son does not merely rescue. He completes the work He begins.

Then Jesus changes
the question.

The lawyer asks:

"Who is my neighbor?"

Jesus asks:

"Who became a neighbor?"

We lingered.

The question
is no longer:

Who deserves my love?

The question becomes:

Has love become who I am?

Again we receive:

The Father's love does not merely teach His children whom to love. It transforms them into people who love.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that knowledge of His Law cannot replace communion with His heart.

The Father revealed that the Law was never the problem; the Law pointed toward the love fulfilled in His Son.

The Father revealed that the question beneath "What shall I do?" is "What am I becoming?"

The Father revealed that self-justification narrows love, while mercy expands the heart.

The Father revealed that true sight comes when His love becomes the lens through which His children see.

The Father revealed that the Samaritan reveals the movement of His love through the Son.

The Father revealed that His love moves toward the wounded, bears the cost, and restores what has been broken.

The Father revealed that restoration is received by those who cannot restore themselves.

The Father revealed that the Son does not merely teach love; He reveals the Father's love in motion.

The Father revealed that those who remain in the Son become conduits through whom His love flows.

What We Receive

We receive that the Father's love must become our life before it can flow through us.

We receive that knowledge without communion cannot produce the heart of the Father.

We receive that the greatest transformation is not merely doing loving things, but becoming people through whom love flows.

We receive that we are not the source of mercy; we receive mercy from the Father through the Son.

We receive that the wounded are not first measured by worthiness, but seen through the Father's compassion.

We receive that the Son bears the cost of restoration.

We receive that true freedom is found in remaining connected to the Source of love.

We receive that the Father's life flows through those who abide in Him.

We receive that the invitation is not merely to know what love does, but to become an expression of the Father's love.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain
with Jesus.

The lawyer asked:

"Who is my neighbor?"

The Son revealed
a deeper question:

"Are you becoming
a neighbor?"

The priest saw.

The Levite saw.

The Samaritan saw.

But only one
moved
with compassion.

Perhaps we ask:

Have we sought
to define
who deserves
our love?

Have we known
the words
of love
without receiving
the life
of love?

Have we tried
to produce
what can only flow
from the Father?

Have we remained
in the Son,
the Source
of all love?

The invitation remains:

Receive
the Father's mercy.

Remain
in the Son.

Allow His love
to become
your life.

And let the river
of His compassion
flow through you
toward others.

For the child
of the Father
does not create
the love.

The child
receives
the love.

And from the Source,
the love flows.

Encounter Movement 60

Martha and Mary

Scripture — Luke 10:38–42

As they went, Jesus entered a certain village.

A woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house.

She had a sister called Mary,
who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word.
But Martha was distracted with much serving.
She approached Jesus, saying,
"Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?"
"Tell her to help me."
Jesus answered,
"Martha, Martha..."
"You are worried and troubled about many things."
"But one thing is needed."
"Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

The Harvest

Jesus
enters
the house.

We smiled.

The King
has come.

Before
the serving.
Before
the sitting.

Jesus comes.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father's presence
always comes
before the Father's work.

Martha
welcomes Him.

We paused.

Her welcome
is genuine.

Her love
is genuine.

She desires
to honor Him.

Again we simply preserve
the observation.

The problem
is not
that Martha loves.

The question
is:

From where
is her love
flowing?

Mary
sits
at Jesus' feet.

We lingered there.

She chooses
the posture
of a disciple.

She does not first
offer something
to Jesus.

She receives
from Jesus.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The child
receives
before the child
serves.

Martha
serves.

We smiled.

Serving
is not
the problem.

Jesus Himself
served.

Love expresses itself
through service.

Again we receive
another beautiful thread.

The Father's work
is good.

But the Father's work
must always flow
from the Father's presence.

There is also
a time
to sit.

We paused.

Mary recognized
the season.

The Son
was present.

The Word
was speaking.

The invitation
was to receive.

Again we receive:

Wisdom does not merely know what is right. Wisdom recognizes what is needed in the moment.

Luke tells us:

Martha
was distracted.

We lingered.

Not because
she served.

But because
her heart
was pulled away.

The many things
began to replace
the One Thing.

Again we receive:

Even good things can quietly draw the heart away from communion with Christ.

Martha says:

"Lord,
do You not care?"

We paused.

This may be
one of the deepest moments.

Her burden
has begun
to interpret Jesus.

The One
who came because
He cares

is now being questioned:

"Do You care?"

Again we receive:

When the heart stops receiving from the Son, even the presence of the Son can be misunderstood.

Jesus says:

"Martha,
Martha..."

We smiled.

Not condemnation.

Affection.

Before He addresses
what is troubling her,

He calls
her name.

Twice.

Again we behold
the Father's heart.

The Shepherd
calls His sheep
by His voice.

Jesus does not
first give her
another task.

He gives her
His attention.

He restores
relationship
before addressing
activity.

Again we receive:

The Father's correction is not rejection. His voice calls His children back into communion with Him.

Jesus says:

"You are
worried
and troubled
about many things."

We paused.

He does not
condemn her service.

He reveals
the burden
beneath it.

Again we receive:

The Father is not merely concerned with what occupies our hands. He is concerned with what occupies our hearts.

Jesus says:

"One thing
is needed."

We lingered.

The One Thing
is not merely
a practice.

It is not simply
sitting quietly.

The One Thing
is the Person
of Jesus.

Mary chose Him.

Again we receive:

The greatest portion is not what comes from the Father's hand. The greatest portion is communion with the Son.

Mary
has chosen
the good part.

We smiled.

The portion
she received
could not be taken away.

The meal would end.

The work would finish.

But what is received
from Jesus
remains.

Again we behold
the Father's heart.

The Father's greatest gift
is Himself.

What We Received of the Father Through the Son

The Father revealed through Christ by the Holy Spirit that His presence comes before His work.

The Father revealed that His children are not sustained by what they do for Him, but by receiving from Him.

The Father revealed that serving is not the problem; serving apart from communion is where burden begins.

The Father revealed that the order of the Kingdom is not:
produce,
then receive,

but:

receive,
remain,
and flow.

The Father revealed that the child does not create the Father's life. The child receives His life, and that life flows through the child.

The Father revealed that even good things can become distractions when they draw the heart away from abiding in His Son.

The Father revealed that Martha's greatest need was not less love, less service, or less desire to honor Jesus. Her greatest need was to return to the Source.

The Father revealed that distraction can cause His children to question the very love they are surrounded by.

The Father revealed that Jesus restores His children by calling them back into relationship before addressing their activity.

The Father revealed that the voice of the Shepherd calls His children back when they have become distracted.

The Father revealed that the "one thing" necessary is not merely a practice, but the Person of Jesus Christ.

The Father revealed that what is received at the feet of Jesus cannot be taken away.

The Father revealed that true service flows from rest, and true stewardship flows from communion with Him.

What We Receive

We receive that Jesus Himself is the greatest gift the Father gives.

We receive that the first posture of the child is receiving.

We receive that we cannot produce the life of God; we can only receive and remain in His life.

We receive that abiding must come before activity.

We receive that service apart from communion can become burden, even when motivated by love.

We receive that the Father's work is not something we accomplish for Him, but something He invites us to participate in through His Son.

We receive that the same voice that calls us also restores us.

We receive that Jesus knows our names before He addresses our struggles.

We receive that correction from the Son flows from love, not rejection.

We receive that the good portion is not merely a moment of stillness, but a life of remaining near Jesus.

We receive that those who remain in the Son become vessels through whom His life flows.

Quiet Invitation

Before we leave this encounter...

we remain
with Jesus.

The house
was full.

The work
was waiting.

The meal
needed preparation.

But the Son
was present.

Mary listened.

Martha labored.

And Jesus called:

"Martha,
Martha..."

Perhaps we ask:

Have we tried
to serve You
before receiving
from You?

Have we allowed
many things
to replace
the One Thing?

Have we mistaken
activity
for abiding?

Have we remembered
that Your voice
is calling us
back to You?

The invitation remains:

Sit
at the feet
of Jesus.

Receive
His Word.

Remain
in His presence.

And then allow
His life
to flow through you.

For the child
of the Father
does not serve
to earn His love.

The child
serves
because His love
has already
been received.

Remain.

Receive.

Flow.

As We Continue Walking...

Encounters 56–60

As you walk...

perhaps remain here
for a moment.

Five more encounters.

Five more steps
beside Jesus.

And perhaps...

something we have been receiving
throughout this journey
is beginning
to gather.

Jesus says:

"I am
the light
of the world."

We pause.

Not merely:

I will show you
the light.

Not merely:

I will teach you
about the light.

But:

"I am
the light."

Again...

the gift
and the Giver
become one
before us.

The child
does not create
the light.

The child
receives
the Light.

And Jesus says:

"He who follows Me
shall not walk
in darkness,

but have
the light of life."

Follow Me.

Remain near Me.

Walk in Me.

Perhaps the Father
is teaching His children
again:

Life is not something
we produce
apart from the Son.

Life is received
in the Son.

Then Jesus speaks
of truth.

"If you abide
in My word...

you shall know
the truth,

and the truth
shall make you free."

We linger.

Abide.

Not visit.

Not merely hear.

Not merely know
words about Him.

Remain.

And perhaps freedom
is different
than we once imagined.

Freedom is not
independence
from the Father.

The Son Himself
reveals this.

Jesus receives
from the Father.

Jesus remains
in the Father.

Jesus speaks
what He has received
from the Father.

And the Son
is perfectly free.

Again we receive:

The mature child
does not become
less dependent
upon the Father.

The mature child
learns the freedom
of remaining
in Him.

Receive.

Remain.

Abide.

Flow.

Then Jesus appoints
seventy others.

And suddenly...

those who have received
are sent.

We pause.

They do not appoint
themselves.

They do not create
their mission.

They do not originate
their authority.

They are sent
by Him.

And Luke tells us
they are sent:

"before His face."

What beautiful words.

They are not sent
instead of Jesus.

They are sent
ahead of Jesus.

They do not prepare
their own way.

They prepare
His way.

And Jesus says:

"The harvest truly
is great..."

Again we pause.

The harvest
belongs to the Father.

The laborers
do not create it.

They are invited
to participate
in what the Father
is already doing.

And before Jesus says:

Go...

He says:

Pray.

Before labor...

communion.

Before participation...

receiving
the heart
of the Father.

Again we recognize
the order.

Receive.

Remain.

Then...

go.

And Jesus sends them
as lambs.

Not wolves
to overcome wolves.

Lambs.

The Father's Kingdom
does not overcome darkness
by becoming darkness.

His children reveal
the nature
of the Lamb.

Then the seventy return.

Joyful.

"Lord,
even the demons
are subject to us
in Your name."

They have seen
what flowed
through them.

They have participated
in the power
of the Kingdom.

And Jesus redirects
their joy:

"Rejoice
because your names
are written
in heaven."

We linger.

Identity
before activity.

Belonging
before accomplishment.

The greatest joy
is not what
flows through us.

The greatest joy
is that we belong
to Him.

Even participation
in the Father's work
must never become greater
than communion
with the Father.

Then...

a lawyer comes.

He knows
the Law.

He knows
the words.

And he asks:

"What shall I do
to inherit
eternal life?"

Again...

doing.

And Jesus begins
leading him
toward something deeper.

Love God.

Love your neighbor.

The lawyer knows
the answer.

But then he asks:

"And who
is my neighbor?"

We pause.

A boundary.

A definition.

A limit.

How far
must love reach?

Who qualifies?

Who is included?

Who deserves
to be called
my neighbor?

And Jesus tells
of a man.

No name.

No status.

No explanation.

Simply...

a person
in need.

Wounded.

Stripped.

Broken.

Left
half dead.

A priest sees him.

Passes by.

A Levite sees him.

Passes by.

Then...

a Samaritan.

He sees.

And he has
compassion.

We linger.

Perhaps now
we are seeing
what the river
looks like
when it flows.

Mercy received
becoming mercy given.

Compassion
moving toward
another.

The Samaritan does not begin:

Who is he?

Does he deserve this?

Is he one of us?

What obligation
do I have?

He sees
a person
in need.

And compassion
moves toward him.

He comes near.

He binds wounds.

He pours oil
and wine.

He carries.

He provides.

He cares.

Perhaps the lawyer
wanted Jesus
to define
the boundary of love.

Jesus reveals
a love
that crosses boundaries.

And then:

"Go
and do likewise."

Not manufacture
compassion.

Not imitate
an outward action
while remaining unchanged
within.

But allow
the life of the Father
that has been received
to become visible
toward another.

Receive.

Remain.

Go.

Love.

And then...

Jesus enters
a house.

We smile.

After sending.

After laboring.

After going.

After serving.

Jesus comes
into the house.

Martha welcomes Him.

Her love
is genuine.

Her desire
to serve Him
is genuine.

And Mary...

sits
at His feet.

She listens.

She receives.

We pause.

The child
receives
before the child
serves.

Not because service
is wrong.

Jesus Himself
serves.

Love expresses itself
through service.

But the Father's work
must always flow
from the Father's presence.

Martha becomes
distracted.

Not because
what she is doing
is evil.

The things occupying
her hands
are good.

But slowly...

the many things
begin to draw her heart
away from
the One Thing.

Until finally
her burden
begins to interpret
Jesus.

"Lord,
do You not care...?"

We linger.

The One who came
because He cares...

is now being questioned:

Do You care?

Perhaps this is
what can happen
when serving becomes separated
from receiving.

Even good work
can become burden.

Even loving activity
can become distraction.

Even the presence
of the Son
can be misunderstood
when the heart
stops receiving
from Him.

And Jesus says:

"Martha,
Martha..."

We hear
the tenderness.

Before correction...

her name.

Before addressing
her activity...

relationship.

He does not give her
another task.

He gives her
His attention.

"You are worried
and troubled
about many things.

But one thing
is needed."

One Thing.

We pause.

Not merely
a better practice.

Not simply
less activity.

Not merely
sitting instead
of serving.

The One Thing
is standing
in the room.

Jesus.

Mary has chosen
the good part.

She has chosen
to receive
from Him.

And what she receives
cannot be taken away.

The meal
will end.

The work
will finish.

The tasks
will pass.

But what is received
from Jesus...

remains.

Perhaps these five encounters
have brought us
back to where
we must always remain.

The Light.

The Truth.

The Son.

The Source.

Receive
the Light.

Remain
in the Son.

Go
from communion.

Allow His compassion
to flow toward another.

And never allow
even the Father's work
to replace
the Father's presence.

Perhaps Mary sitting
and the seventy going
were never opposites.

The seventy could go
because they had first
received.

The Samaritan could move
toward the wounded
because compassion
was flowing.

And Mary could sit
because she recognized:

The Son
is here.

The Word
is speaking.

Now
is the time
to receive.

Perhaps this is
the life
the Father has been revealing
through His Son.

Not communion
or participation.

Participation
from communion.

Not receiving
or giving.

As We Continue...

We have now
walked through
sixty encounters
with Jesus.

Twenty more
since Peter confessed:

**“You are the Christ,
the Son
of the living God.”**

And perhaps...
we see more clearly now
why that confession
was not
the end

of Peter's journey.

It was another beginning.

Peter had received

who Jesus is.

But now...

he had to learn

the way

of the Son.

And so did

the others.

And perhaps...

so do we.

We watched Jesus

turn toward

Jerusalem.

We heard Him speak

of suffering.

Rejection.

Death.

Resurrection.

We watched Peter

struggle

with a path

he did not understand.

And we heard Jesus

call him back

to the place

of following:

“Get behind Me.”

Follow Me.

Then...

on the mountain...

the Father spoke: This is My beloved Son...

Hear Him.”

We paused there.

Because perhaps

so much

of this volume

has grown

from those words.

Hear Him.

When the disciples

could not help

the suffering child...

hear Him.

When they argued

about greatness...

hear Him.

When they wondered
who belonged
and who did not...
hear Him.

When a sheep
wandered...
hear Him.

When a brother
sinned...
hear Him.

When Peter asked
how many times
he must forgive...
hear Him.

Again and again...
the Son
revealed
the Father's heart.

A Father
whose children
do not become greater
by becoming
less dependent.

A Father

whose heart
moves toward
the wandering one.

A Father

whose desire
is restoration.

A Father

whose mercy
is not merely
something received...

but something
that begins

to flow

through those
who have received it.

And perhaps...

another movement
quietly emerged.

The disciples

were not merely
learning

what Jesus does.

They were learning

how His life

might flow
through them.
They had received.
Now...
they would be sent.
But even there...
the order mattered.
They did not
appoint themselves.
They did not
create
their mission.
They did not
originate
their authority.
They were sent
by Him.
Before labor...
communion.
Before participation...
receiving.
Before going...
remaining.
Again...

the order:

Receive.

Remain.

Then...

go.

And when they returned

rejoicing

over what had happened

through them...

Jesus brought them

back again.

Not first

to accomplishment.

Not first

to power.

But to belonging.

Their deepest joy

was not

what flowed

through them.

Their deepest joy

was that

they belonged

to Him.

Perhaps...

the Father

has been teaching us

the same thing.

Identity

before activity.

Belonging

before accomplishment.

Communion

before service.

Receiving

before giving.

And then...

near the end

of this volume...

Jesus enters

a house.

Martha serves.

Mary sits.

Both love Him.

But Jesus says:

**“One thing
is needed.”**

We linger.

Because perhaps

after everything
we have seen...
everything
we have received...
everything
the disciples
have begun
to participate in...
Jesus brings us
back
to something
very simple.
Himself.
The good portion
is not merely
a better practice.
It is not
doing less
so that we may
feel more spiritual.
It is not
service
versus stillness.
The good portion

is the Son.

Jesus Himself

is the greatest gift

the Father gives.

And the child

receives.

The child

remains.

And from

that communion...

the Father's life

begins

to flow.

Perhaps that is

where we leave

this volume.

Not finished.

Not having

understood everything.

Not having

arrived.

But sitting

once again

at the feet

of Jesus.

Listening.

Receiving.

Remaining.

For the journey

has never been

about learning

how to produce

the life

of the Father.

It has been

about receiving

the Son

through whom

the Father's life

is revealed.

The Light

is not something

we create.

**He is
the Light.**

The truth

is not something

we possess

apart from Him.

We abide
in His word.

The work
is not ours
to originate.

We participate
in His.

The love
is not ours
to manufacture.

We receive
from the Source...
and the love
flows.

So as we close
these twenty encounters...
perhaps the invitation
has become
even simpler.

Hear Him.

Follow Him.

Receive from Him.

Remain in Him.

And then...

allow His life

to flow

through you.

Remain.

Receive.

Flow.

And continue

walking

with Jesus.
