

“Inside Out: Knowing Ourselves -Type 8 The Challenger”
Luke 10:38-42

Today we have reached Enneagram Type 8, the Challenger. These types are high energy and passion people. They are intense and commanding. When they walk into a room, people take notice. Their presence is large and can be intimidating to others. They are direct and often see things as black and white. They have little tolerance for the gray areas of life. They are often motivated by truth and justice. A great example of an Eight in our American history is Frederick Douglas. Here is a clip from one of his speeches read by Morgan Freeman. This was on the occasion of the 4th of July in Rochester, New York. He was asked to address the women of the antislavery society.

<https://youtu.be/wkH2Ck-gH0I>

(Second service) “What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer; a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are, to Him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy - a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States, at this very hour. Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the Old World, travel through South America, search out every abuse, and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me, that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival.”

Powerful words from an amazing human being! He changed the world. That is the gift and power of Eights on the Enneagram when they are redeemed. They can be amazing advocates for justice and reform in our world. They are confident and unafraid to challenge others for the sake of truth and justice. But just like all the other personality types, Eights have to be redeemed and transformed in order for them to live their full potential as human beings.

Enneagram Type 8		Enneagram Type 8
AT THEIR BEST	AT THEIR WORST	We use our personality to protect ourselves from our Core Fear and to also obtain our Core Desire.
Compassionate	Loud	⊗ Core Fear: Fear of being weak, powerless, vulnerable, underestimated, humiliated, harmed, manipulated, and at the mercy of injustice.
Inspiring	Vengeful	
Direct	Excessive	⊕ Core Desire: To protect themselves.
Resilient	Controlling	
Loyal	Rebellious	
Energetic	Insensitive	
Empowering	Domineering	
Protective	Self-Centered	
Self-Confident	Skeptical	

Eights' greatest gift is their passion and yet it is also their greatest challenge. In their childhoods, Eights received the message that the world is a hostile place and so they learned that being aggressive was the way to protect themselves. They felt that weakness or vulnerability was something they needed to avoid at all costs and so they put on the armor of toughness to protect themselves and others who may seem vulnerable to them.

The biblical character we are looking at today teaches us a great deal about Eights and their path for transformation. We are looking at Martha, one of the disciples and friends of Jesus. Jesus and some of his disciples had come to her home for dinner. Martha as the host wanted to provide a meal for all of them. It was the role of the women in those days to provide the meal. Martha got busy doing that, but the problem came when she realized that her sister Mary sat with Jesus instead of working in the kitchen with her. (Read Luke 10:38-42) This was an issue of justice for Martha. It was not fair for her to be doing all the work, while her sister sat there enjoying herself. Martha herself would have preferred being able to spend time with her friend Jesus, but duty was calling, and she needed to do the right thing. She decided that she needed to speak up for what was right. As an Eight, she was not going to put up with what she saw as an injustice. She decided to speak up for herself. And in Eight fashion, she was not going to do this quietly. She wanted Jesus in on the debate. She wanted him to side with her. So how did Jesus respond? How would you respond? Having known Martha for a while, Jesus knew exactly how to respond to Martha's challenge. He responded in a perfect way to an Eight. He spoke to her directly and truthfully. He challenged her assumptions about truth and justice. In a way that is what the Gospel of Luke did all along, challenging people's assumptions about society and who belonged where.

In that culture and at that time women simply did not sit at the table with men. Men always reclined at an ancient meal, as we see in many other stories in the Gospels. Respectable women were not present at a reclining banquet, and if they were, they were to sit and not recline. But here in our story we find Mary reclining with Jesus at the table (sitting at the

feet). When Martha was indignant about her sister reclining at the table with men, Jesus had to challenge her cultural assumptions about the roles of women and men. Jesus demonstrated to Martha and to the rest of his followers that all were called to be his followers, both men and women. Mary was functioning as a disciple by sitting at the feet of Jesus and listening to his teachings. This was what the male disciples did, but this was also what Mary did. Martha had to be challenged with a different kind of truth, the truth of the good news. Jesus affirmed Mary's desire to be a disciple and her focus on that.

Today's story gives us several pieces to think about in terms of the transformation of an Eight.

1. The Truth Is Bigger Than Us: Martha had to learn that her assumptions about what was right and wrong had to be changed and transformed. No one has the full truth of God and of the world. We need each other and we need to open our minds to new ideas that might challenge us, especially if they lead to greater inclusion, love, and justice in the world. The world is not always black and white. Dualistic thinking can only get us so far. Remember that you are not always right!
2. Vulnerability: We are often taught that being vulnerable equals being weak. But vulnerability takes a lot of courage and strength. It helps us move away from our need to control everything to being open to the gifts of life and love. The next time you find yourself trying to control a situation, you might want to challenge yourself to be vulnerable with others about your inner needs and feelings. Get in touch with your inner child and see what is hurting in that situation that you are trying to control. The next time you find yourself being fearful of being betrayed, remember what Jesus said about recovering our inner innocence and trust (screen) "unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" Matthew 18:3b
3. Divine Justice: Martha's demand for justice needed to be tempered by a greater vision of justice. She needed to let go of what she considered to be justice and fairness in order to accomplish God's greater vision of justice. It was not fair for her to do all the work while her sister sat there and enjoyed herself. But through Mary, Jesus gave a great example of inclusion for other women and Martha needed to see that because of the greater good that was being accomplished. The next time you find yourself saying, "But that is not fair," consider God's greater justice and mercy in the world. Try aligning your will with the divine will for the world.

We are going to take a biblical image from Ephesians 6:10-17 about putting on the armor of God for our protection. Eights feel that they have to be tough and loud to protect themselves. We all feel that way sometimes, when we want to protect ourselves from the harshness and hostility of others around us. But this image here gives us a different approach. It is about putting on a spiritual armor of protection. So our protection does not end up isolating us from others or from God, but it instead helps us to be courageous and open to life. Turn to two or three neighbors and share with them what comes to your mind

and heart about each piece of the full armor of God. What if we were to live life dressed in these?

The helmet of salvation/redemption:

The Belt of Truth:

Breastplate of justice:

The Sword of the Spirit:

The Shield of Faith:

Shoes to proclaim the Gospel of Peace

We will end with a Scottish circle prayer:

Casting a "Ring Of Protection" or "Caim"

Circle me Lord: Keep peace within, keep harm without

Circle Me Lord: Keep love within, keep hatred without

Circle me Lord: Keep hope within, keep doubt without

Circle me Lord: Keep peace within, keep evil out

Circle me Lord: Keep protection near, and danger afar

Circle me Lord: Keep light near, and darkness afar

Circle me Lord: Keep joy within, keep fear out

Circle me Lord: Keep light within, keep darkness out.

May you stand in the circle with us, today and always. Amen.