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"The sons are free." ~Matthew 17:26

"Reason teaches us that if there is no love in your obedience to God, nothing you do will be spontaneous and free. If there is no love everything must be forced. So without love, there is no freedom and no real confidence in Him. He that does not love God will not trust him: he never will cast himself into the hands of God, or into the arms of his mercy."

~Jonathan Edwards, Charity & Its Fruits

- 1) Read Matthew 17:14-27. Is there anything from the sermon or passage that you found confusing, surprising or encouraging?
- 2) Why couldn't the disciples heal the epileptic boy, when they had succeeded in the past? What are they enslaved to? How does faith like a mustard seed give you the ability to move mountains? What obstacles are you facing right now where you are tempted to think you can do this without faith? Why would you want to?
- 3) What first come to your mind when you think of freedom? What kind of freedom is Jesus giving through faith? What does He set you free from? Why is it so hard to convince our neighbors that Jesus is freeing?
- 4) Why should Christians pay their taxes, if they are free? In what ways do you see Christians using their political freedom well? In what ways do we unnecessarily offend our neighbors with our political freedom? How can you honor the leaders God has put in place (1 Peter 2:13) *and* call out immorality with the courage of John the Baptist?
- 5) Read 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. According to Paul's teaching and Jesus' model here, how should Christians use their freedom? How do you know what is offensive and scandalous? How do you become like one 'outside of the law' in our context in Ballston Spa?
- 6) Pray for one another's faith to face their struggles and sorrows. Pray also that God would give us wisdom to use our Christian freedom well.

"Most loving Father, whose will it is for us to give thanks for all things, to fear nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our care on you who care for us: Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested to us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. (BCP 216)