

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

October 1-7, 2018

Worship as encounter with the living God cannot be limited to one hour per week. "Weekday Worship" invites you to extend your worship beyond the sanctuary, to hear the story of the Bible as your story, lived out each day of each week. Feedback is appreciated and should be directed to Rita Boyer.

BIBLE READING

This week's reading is: Mark 10:2–16 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=403774011>)

Other readings are: Job 1:1, 2:1–10; Psalm 26; Hebrews 1:1–4; 2:5–12

The theme is: Tough Questions along the Way

This week's reading is a difficult one that has been interpreted in ways that divide people of faith. At first glance it appears to define marriage as between a man and a woman and to say that divorce for any reason is not permissible. It is a passage that has been used as a weapon to hurt people for whom a heterosexual lasting marriage is not in the picture, for whatever reason. When we pay attention to context, we see that the Pharisees have raised the question about divorce as a "test" (verse 2) for Jesus. It was a common tactic on their part to try to trick Jesus into saying something that would back him into a corner and expose him as a "lawbreaker." They weren't really interested in what Jesus had to teach about divorce! We also need to remember how marriage and divorce were practiced in this culture. Marriage was often polygamous. Women were property. Only men could ask for a divorce, and the grounds were immaterial. Divorced women had no means of providing for themselves or their children. Divorced women were adulterers; but since women had no rights, men were never guilty of adultery. To hear Jesus say that both men and women were guilty of adultery must have been shocking! Jesus shows concern for women and children and seeks justice for the vulnerable ones of society. Interpreting the text in this way helps to explain why the next story is one in which Jesus embraces a child, the most vulnerable of the culture in which Jesus lived. Jesus embraces those who are pushed down by society.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

"Questions to Consider" enable you to connect your story to the biblical story. Rather than easy questions to be answered at first glance, these questions or reflections can be returned to and meditated upon throughout the week.

Who are the vulnerable ones in our society? How does our congregation welcome or not welcome them? How do you extend welcome or seek to embrace those who are most vulnerable?

Continue to reflect upon the worship theme of September 30:

What gets in the way of your efforts to follow Jesus and live a life of faith?

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