

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

November 20-26, 2017

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: Matthew 25:31–46 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=375955755>).

Other readings are: Ezekiel 34:11–16, 20–24; Psalm 100; Ephesians 1:15–23

The theme is: Christ Is Among Us

We come to the end of Jesus' teachings as recorded in Matthew. We have seen how Jesus uses stories to teach about the realm of God, a realm that we participate in today although we will not see it fully realized until the end of this present age. Jesus told these stories shortly before the time of his arrest and subsequent crucifixion. You can hear the urgency in his message. This last parable is about the final judgment. Familiar images of Christ are brought together as we encounter the shepherd, ruler, and judge. Who will be embraced as part of the realm of God and who will not? This is the question Jesus addresses in this parable. Who is "in" and who is "out" would be a real concern in everyday life for Matthew's immediate audience. The insiders were those with wealth and power, while the outsiders lacked even basic necessities. The divide between the two groups was wide and impenetrable. Yet, as he often does, Jesus tells a story in which expectations are turned upside down. God is not impressed by power and status. God is on the side of the poor and vulnerable and expects us to be on their side as well. God is in intimate relationship with God's people. Yes, works do matter, but this is not a story about doing good deeds in order to meet God's requirements. It is a story about being in relationship to God and recognizing God's presence in those who are vulnerable. It is by living in relationship that we truly become the people of God, living within and proclaiming God's realm.

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.

How might this Scripture be used to support a charity model that assumes a world divided into "haves" and "have-nots"? How would the model be transformed if all people were free and justice realized?

Continue to reflect upon the worship theme of November 19:

Are your stewardship decisions marked by fear or risk-taking?

Prospect Presbyterian Church, Maplewood, NJ, www.prospectchurch.org

Rita Boyer, rita@prospectchurch.org