

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

June 19-25, 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 10:24–39 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=363332863>).

Other readings are Genesis 21:8–21; Psalm 86:1–10, 16–17; Romans 6:1b–11

The theme is: God and Sparrows

This week's difficult reading may cause us to feel conflicted. On the one hand, we are assured that we are intimately known and valued by our Creator, who knows the number of hairs on our heads (verse 30). Yet, we are not assured of God's unconditional love. Instead, we are told that Christ will deny those who deny him (verse 33). Perhaps even more troubling is the message that Christ came to bring a sword (verse 34) and to tear families apart! If we are to grapple with these troubling words, we must consider their historical context. Matthew was writing to a predominantly Jewish audience for whom family obligations and religious laws and practices were strong forces that shaped one's identity. To follow Jesus in this culture was to separate oneself from the family and the religion that clung so tightly to tradition and rejected the way of Christ. Followers of Jesus often had no choice but to sever family ties. Scholars suggest that the "sword" referred to here may be metaphorical. The Roman Empire, swords on display, occupied the land. Rather than meeting force with force, Christ's followers are urged to cut through tradition and culture to embrace Christ's reign and work for justice. Christ's demands are risky, but God will care for the faithful even as God cares for a sparrow that falls. We need not fear the fall or try to escape it, but trust in God to carry us through it.

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.

What is the cost of your faith? What demands do God's love and justice place on you? What good news do you hear?

Continue to reflect upon the worship theme of June 18:

We are called to bring good news to others. What story, words, or actions can you share with the people in your life?