

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

July 23-29, 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: John 6:1–21 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=390298466>).

Other readings are: 2 Samuel 11:1–15; Psalm 14; Ephesians 3:14–21.

The theme is: Into the Land of Faith.

The Gospel of John contains many miracle stories; but by calling the miracles "signs," John is telling us that the miracles themselves are not the main point. Instead, they are included in the gospel because of what they point to – the identity of Jesus. This week's reading contains two miracles that help to demonstrate who Jesus was and what he revealed about God's kingdom. The first is the feeding of the five thousand (which was actually more than five thousand when taking into account the women and children who were undoubtedly there but not counted). It is a lesson in the abundance of God's grace. Even though the people are not complaining of hunger, Jesus wants to feed them. Food and the money with which to purchase it are scarce until Jesus prays and hands over food from a boy's shared lunch. Miraculously, not only is everyone fed until satisfied, but leftovers are plenty! Later in this chapter (6:35) we hear Jesus call himself "the bread of life" and understand through this story that Jesus' sustenance never runs out. In the second miracle, Jesus walks on water just as strong winds make the waters rough. Both of these miracles call to mind stories from the Hebrew Scripture, linking Jesus to Moses. Making the link even more apparent, John places these miracles as happening near the time of Passover, reminding us that under Moses' leadership, God provided manna in the wilderness and rescue through the waters of the Red Sea. It is no wonder that the people want to make Jesus king! The miracles are impressive, but those who focus on the special effects miss seeing who Jesus really is. Jesus is not interested in earthly titles but brings God's presence and abundant grace where there is scarcity and fear. He is for us and with us.

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.

Where are you in these two stories? Sharing your lunch? Being fed? Afraid in the boat? In quiet meditation, imagine God meeting your need, calming your fear.

Continue to reflect upon the worship theme of July 22:

Pray for unity in broken places.

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