

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

September 17-23, 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 9:30–37 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=402730702>)

Other readings are: Proverbs 31:10–31; Psalm 1; James 3:13—4:3, 7–8a

The theme is: First in Caring

Last week we heard Jesus predict his own suffering to his disbelieving disciples. This week we hear Jesus for a second time predict his death to disciples who are unable or unwilling to understand that the Messiah for whom they had been waiting would suffer and die rather than lead a military overthrow of the oppressive Roman Empire. Even as Jesus tries to prepare his disciples for the suffering ahead, he catches them in an argument about which of them is the greatest! Stating that the greatest must be the "servant of all" (verse 35), Jesus takes a child in his arms and equates welcoming a child with welcoming God. In Jesus' context, this was a radical statement! Unlike our own culture in which children are treasured, Children in Palestinian and Roman cultures were loved but viewed as a liability because of their weakness. Children were the most vulnerable of society and often the first victims of starvation, disease, or violence. Jesus teaches that those who would be great are those who embrace and welcome the most vulnerable of society. This is one of Jesus' "upside down" teachings and may have been particularly encouraging to Mark's audience, a Christian minority that suffered under the harsh rule of the Roman Empire. At the same time, it is a disturbing teaching for those who equate greatness with power, privilege, and military might. Jesus challenges us to find greatness in welcoming the most vulnerable.

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 we are being called to welcome?

What do we need to do in order to "choose welcome?"

Continue to reflect upon the worship theme of September 16:

We comprehend Jesus' suffering a little better than the disciples did, but how do we understand Jesus' teaching that his followers, too, will suffer? How do you identify with Jesus' suffering and servanthood?

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