

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

September 24-30, 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 9:38–50 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=403249270>).

Other readings are: Esther 7:1–6, 9–10; 9:20–22; Psalm 124; James 5:13–20.

The theme is: Getting Out of the Way

In Mark we see the geographical boundaries of Jesus' ministry being expanded. Those who were once on the outside are now included in Jesus' ministry. This week's reading gives us a look at some of the growing pains that have come with this expansion. More specifically, questions about who is "in" and who is "out" are surfacing. The disciples have witnessed Jesus casting out demons and have tried, sometimes unsuccessfully, to do the same. So, what are they to make of the fact that others who are unknown to them are casting out demons in Jesus' name? Jesus turns the focus away from the "outsider" who is ministering in his name back to the disciples themselves. He challenges them to redefine community to include any who are not opposing Jesus' ministry, even saying it would be better to die than to get in the way of someone's faith. How are we to understand the gruesome words about cutting off body parts? The metaphor of a social or political group being compared to a human body was common in Jesus' time. Perhaps Jesus is saying that those who do not welcome the "outsider" as part of the community should themselves be cut off from the group. As he often does, Jesus turns the question of who is "in" and who is "out" on its ear! Finally we are admonished to "Have salt . . . and be at peace with one another" (vs. 50). Persevere. Boldly live lives that make a difference, letting nothing get in the way of the welcome and peace that Christ offers to all!

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 are the situations in your life in which you are being called to include the "outsider?"

Continue to reflect upon the worship theme of September 23:

Do you ever aspire to greatness or wish that for someone else? How does Jesus' definition of greatness – servanthood – fit into your own ideas about greatness?