

SEPTEMBER 23, 2018
EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Discipleship means a life of service.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 9:30-37	The servant of all is greatest
Monday	Jeremiah 11:18-20	Plot to kill Jeremiah
Tuesday	James 3:13–4:8a	Wisdom from above
Wednesday	2 Kings 5:1-14	A girl saves her master
Thursday	Luke 14:7-14	Humility and hospitality
Friday	Isaiah 42:1-9	A servant song
Saturday	Psalms 54	A cry to God for help
Sunday	Mark 9:38-50	Avoiding sin

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

He [Jesus] sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” **Mark 9:35 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord Jesus, thank you for freeing us from being so focused on our own wants and leading us to the joy of serving others in your name. Amen.

Mealttime Prayer:

You nourish us with food, O God, for body and for soul. May love and kindness be our thanks and service be our goal. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord give you a pure heart; may God make you peaceable, gentle, and willing to care for others with mercy. (James 3:17)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK



*Will You Let Me
Be Your Servant*

CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home or small group:

- Talk about a time when you wanted to be first in something.
- What does it mean to you when Jesus says, “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all” (Mark 9:35)?
- In what ways do you serve others in Jesus’ name? How has serving others made a difference in your life?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Mark 9:30-37.

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me” (v. 36). A child in Jesus’ day had no legal status; a child was an example of someone truly vulnerable. To welcome is to care for and value that person. By human standards there is no reward for the care of a child. By the standards of Jesus, it connects us to the divine. Jesus speaks of his betrayal, death, and resurrection. The disciples wanted to speak about who was first. Jesus’ words lead to service of the vulnerable; the disciples’ focus leads to personal glory. In welcoming a child, that is, by serving the needs of the vulnerable, one welcomes Jesus. Tell about a time that you sensed God’s presence as you served another person.

Pray: Lord Jesus, thank you for freeing us from being so focused on our own wants and leading us to the joy of serving others in your name. Amen.

SERVICE



In James 3:13–4:8a the text is concerned about how Christians live in community. The health of our life together is the health of the witness of the church. Think of a situation where you are tempted to “engage in disputes and conflicts” because of selfish desires (James 4:1-2). Pray for the “wisdom from above” to be “peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy” (James 3:17).

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Psalms 54 is a psalm of lament, a prayer that tells of one’s fears, frustrations, and anger for one’s sufferings. Sometimes those resentments are expressed not only to God but at God. The lament psalm makes it clear that suffering is not God’s will; it is evil. Christians can use a prayer of lament to faithfully express their distress and need for God’s help. Name the things that grieve you and bring them to God in prayer. At the end of each grievance, pray: **“Save me, O God, by your power. Hear my prayer, O God; listen to my cry.”**



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