

OCTOBER 7, 2018
TWENTIETH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Now Thank We All
Our God*



Welcome God's kingdom as you welcome a child.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 10:2-16	Jesus blesses the children
Monday	Genesis 2:18-24	God creates a partner for man
Tuesday	Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12	God has spoken by his Son
Wednesday	Matthew 18:1-6	Welcoming a little child
Thursday	Deuteronomy 11:13-21	Teaching the children
Friday	Ephesians 6:1-9	Instructions for the household
Saturday	Psalms 8	God honors humanity
Sunday	Mark 10:17-31	A rich man goes away sad

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs." **Mark 10:14 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Loving God, you have made us responsible for the care of creation. Help us to offer care with the mercy and grace you have shown to us. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

With this food you make us strong. To you our life and love belong. Thank you, God! Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord Jesus Christ take you into his arms and bless you; may he protect and care for you, now and always. (Mark 10:16)

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- How do people pay attention to you and make you feel important?
- How do you honor others you know or meet for the first time?
- Genesis 2, Psalm 8, and Mark 10:2-16 all address how God cares for and values human beings, including children. What does this say about God and our Lord Jesus Christ?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 10:2-16.

It seems charming that Jesus compares the kingdom of God to the life of a child. However, what Jesus means by that comparison has been a challenge. Is the focus on sentimental reflections on a child? Is it the innocence of a child? Is it their trusting nature and child-like faith? In part, it depends on how the original Greek is translated. Some believe what Jesus meant was that one is to welcome the kingdom as one welcomes a child, someone who is vulnerable and weak (In Jesus' day, a child had little value or legal protection). In other words, to welcome the kingdom of God was like welcoming someone who was not powerful by worldly standards. Like Jesus' message in Mark 9:35-38, to be first in God's eyes is to be last and a servant. The kingdom of God is about care for the little ones, not honor and glory. This fits with the discussion on divorce in Mark 10:2-12. Women were seen as property without social power to protect themselves from the whims of a husband's loyalty or disinterest. Jesus defends women and, thereby, the protection of marriage. The kingdom of God cares for the vulnerable. Reflect on who might be the vulnerable in your setting.

Pray: **Lord, we pray for those who need protection in our community and out in the world. Help us to offer care with the mercy and grace you have shown to us. Amen.**

SERVICE

In Mark 10:2-16 Jesus speaks on behalf of children and married women, people in his society who were vulnerable and not protected by social, religious, and legal norms. Identify people in your community who need help and the church programs and other service organizations that assist them. Find ways to volunteer with a program that helps those in need, make a financial contribution to support such programs, or visit someone you know who needs care and attention.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

In Mark 10:2-16 Jesus cares for children, women, and married life. Take time this week in your home or with friends to care for each other by looking at childhood photos and talking about childhood memories together. When children are present, play a game or go on an outing with them. Conclude by blessing each other with: **May the Lord Jesus Christ take you into his arms and bless you; may he protect and care for you, now and always.**