

SEPTEMBER 19, 2021
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Jesus' followers are to care for the powerless.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Mark 9:30-37	The servant of all is the greatest
Monday	Jeremiah 11:18-20	Plot to kill Jeremiah
Tuesday	James 3:13-4:8a	Wisdom from above
Wednesday	Galatians 5:13-15	Christ gives freedom
Thursday	Isaiah 42:1-9	A servant song
Friday	1 Peter 4:7-11	Serve others
Saturday	Psalms 54	A cry to God for help
Sunday	Mark 9:38-50	Avoiding sin

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

[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:

God of heaven and earth, may we follow the way of Jesus and learn what it means to trust in you through Christ our Savior. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, just as you feed us with this gift of food today, we thank you for caring for us with your goodness and mercy. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May your life be blessed by the love of God through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Will You Let Me Be
Your Servant*



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- How would you describe your friends, the people with whom you associate regularly?
- Society encourages us to "climb the social ladder." What does that mean to you?
- How would you describe the life Jesus wants you to follow?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Mark 9:30-37.

Chapters 8-10 in Mark include three predictions of Jesus' death. Each prediction is connected with his disciple's misunderstandings and then some kind of teaching about discipleship. The focus of Jesus' words is more than a general endorsement of humility. It moves us in the direction of personal association with the vulnerable and the powerless, those considered "last" in society. In Jesus' day and in the Roman Empire, a child was without power or importance. To lift up and value a child was contrary to social norms of Jesus' day. When Jesus describes his own life's work, he makes a claim on us. We are to follow his way, the way of suffering and being the last. It is an active rejection of domination and the powers of this world. What is evident in these predictions is that Jesus' followers don't get it. His understanding of what it means to be "first" in life is so different from what we hear and see in daily life. It takes time to understand what it means to follow Jesus. It may take a lifetime. In the meantime, we are to care for the people who feel unimportant and powerless and be able to celebrate with them that life is redeemed and blessed. Who would you identify in your community as those who are considered powerless and "last of all"?

Pray: **Almighty God, through Jesus, you come to us with a power like no other. Help us to follow Jesus into a new way of life that loves you and all others. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me." (Mark 9:37) Many places in the world and in our own communities have children in need. Think or talk about children who are in need of food, clothing, and shelter. Keep them in your prayers. Is there a way you can help and support children in need or an organization that works with them?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The International Day of Peace is observed each year on September 21st. It was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1981. The Bible reading for Tuesday this week is from James 3. "And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace." (v. 18) Think or talk about what it takes to make peace. Then write a list of situations or places that are in need of peace. Light a candle as you pray for each one on your list. Then pray:

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, please bring your peace to _____ . Amen.



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