

Weekly Study Guide

The week of September 13, 2015

Daily Readings

Monday	Matthew 18:1-5	Tuesday	Matthew 18:6-9	Wednesday	Matthew 18:10-14
Thursday	Matthew 19:13-15	Friday	Matthew 25:31-46	Saturday	Deuteronomy 7:6-11

Wish to view the message again? Go to vimeo.com/flcwb.

Will you be out of town soon? Watch online at livestream.com/flcwb.

Wish to ask Pastor Steve a question about today's message? Contact him at 651.429.5349 x214 or sturnbull@flcwb.org.

Next Week in Worship

Next week's message: *A Man of Compassion*

Next week's readings: Luke 14:1-4

The revolutionary force of Jesus is one of the world's—and Christianity's—best kept secrets. Our world today honors acts of compassion, even if we too rarely practice them, but it wasn't always this way. It was Jesus who started a movement that made caring for the sick, hurting, and vulnerable into a noble and even normal idea. Join us next week to learn more.

first lutheran church

4000 linden street • white bear lake, mn • 55110 • 651.429.5349 • flcwb.org

Group Discussion

Connect

Some of your groups are regathering after the summer season. Share some personal highlights from the past season that you may not have had a chance to share.

Learn & Respond

In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, God spoke to his ancient people Israel through his prophet Moses. Read God's words to Israel in Deuteronomy 7:7-8.

- What was God's message to Israel? For what reasons might someone need this message?
- Now Jesus has called all people, not just Israel, to be God's chosen, beloved people. Do you ever need to hear that your value doesn't come from your qualifications, or lack thereof? Why does that matter?

On one occasion Jesus' disciples asked him who had honor, value, and importance in God's eyes. "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" they asked. Read the story in Matthew 18:1-5.

- Children were never held up as honorable examples in ancient Jewish teaching (probably because of their lack of education), and they were as good as disposable in some parts of the Roman empire. Which people are treated as less valuable or almost entirely without value in the world today?
- Can you imagine who Jesus might choose as a shocking example today and how that might challenge us?
- Do you ever get caught up in this way of thinking: Does the world ever tell you that you are not important? Or do you overlook other people who aren't important enough to matter?

Jesus told a famous parable about the kind of people God expects us to be. Read this parable in Matthew 25:31-46. It is helpful to remember that Jesus wasn't trying to answer questions about how people get to heaven when they die. Jesus used this kind of imagery to call his people to a new way of life, though that calling is no less challenging.

- Jesus described our service to people who were defined by their needs - the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, the strangers. They had nothing to offer. Why are they worth serving if they have nothing to give? (Read v. 40 to see how Jesus dignifies "the least of these.")
- In Sunday's message, we heard some examples about visiting those who are in prison. Some people find this very challenging. Do you think it's possible for people to commit crimes that cause their own value as human beings to decrease?
- Have you ever felt that way about yourself, that there's something in your past that has tainted you forever?

Jesus invites each of us to know our own precious value in the eyes of God and to see the precious value of every other life. There are no "ordinary people." You have never met an unimportant person. How do you think God wants you to hear and respond to this teaching?

Pray

What concerns do you have as you or your family enters into a new fall season? Share these with one another and pray for each other.