

WEEKDAY WORSHIP

August 20-26, 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: Ephesians 6:10–20 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?q=392355912>).

Other readings are: 1 Kings 8:(1, 6, 10–11), 22–30, 41–43; Psalm 84; John 6:56–69.

The theme is: Love Is Our Defense.

We conclude our time with the letter to the Ephesians with this familiar passage about the challenges of living out our faith and the protection and assistance that God provides to help us do that. This letter has given us practical advice about living more Christ-like lives and being one with others in the faith community. We need to be kind, use our gifts for the common good, and encourage those who are different from us as they use their particular gifts. Who would disagree? Yet, doing what these words say each and every day is not easy. This passage suggests that, in part, it is not easy because there are forces at work against us. Those who first received this letter personified these forces as "Satan," the adversary. They believed that powerful spirits were at work on earth and in heaven. The author of this letter invokes military imagery, using a suit of armor as a metaphor for the protection and assistance that God provides for us. The image would have been familiar to those receiving the letter, as they lived in Roman occupied territory and were often subjected to violence at the hand of those who wore the armor of the Roman army. What a contrast! Their source of strength and protection - the peace and justice they longed for - would come not from military power, as demonstrated in the *Pax Romana* - but from the Spirit of God, to whom they are urged to pray.

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.

Given that Jesus modeled non-violent resistance, is this image of military armor helpful to you or not? What do we do with such biblical images? What threatens and opposes our faith today?

Continue to reflect upon the worship theme of August 19:

Prayerfully give thanks. You may want to write your thanks in a journal.

Prospect Presbyterian Church, Maplewood, NJ, www.prospectchurch.org

Rita Boyer, rita@prospectchurch.org