

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost September 22, 2024

Introduction to themes for the day and for the season

A reminder that the Gospels were written to and for communities—as we receive them in that same spirit, we're pressed to consider our own protective instincts. Whom and what are we trying to protect? What are our motivations behind it?

Prayer of the Day

O God, our teacher and guide, you draw us to yourself and welcome us as beloved children. Help us to lay aside all envy and selfish ambition, that we may walk in your ways of wisdom and understanding as servants of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Gospel

Mark 9:30-37

30They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; 31for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." 32But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

33Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" 34But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. 35He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." 36Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 37"Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

Sermon

Dear church and related faith communities: If you want to protect something or someone, protect the vulnerable....signed, Jesus.

You might think it presumptuous to speak that way. Maybe. Then again Mark's Gospel shows us a Jesus challenging us at every turn. Protect us from eating the wrong foods or not following tradition! Protect Jesus from the crowds who want

healing! Protect Jesus from kids...among the most marginalized in society from asking to be seen and blessed. Protect Jesus from people who heal in his name. Protect Jesus from his enemies.

Jesus doesn't ever ask others to protect him. He asks them to follow him. Imagine then reaching out to the vulnerable and ignored, including them and blessing them. May our witness as community mean that there is no longer truth in words from the bumper sticker that reads, "Lord, protect us from your followers". Amen