Sacredise Daily Worship

14 – 20 June 2026

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Everyone likes to feel special. Many people seek to have that need met through their faith. This is why people of faith so often think of themselves as chosen by God, children of God, God's special ones. In itself, there is nothing wrong with finding a place of acceptance and affirmation in our faith, and the Scriptures certainly do speak of God as choosing certain people and groups for specific tasks in God's purpose. The problem comes in when we use our sense of chosenness as an excuse to see and treat other people as less, or as not chosen.

Whenever God calls someone—and it would be hard to argue that there is anyone who is not called by God—it is never for their own aggrandisement or for their personal benefit. God's calling is always for the sake of others. That's why all of the readings in the Lectionary this week speak of both election and sacrifice. God always seeks to partner with women and men in order to bring justice and love into the world. Our calling is to live by the values, priorities, and purposes of God's reign so that the world may become more just, inclusive, welcoming, compassionate, connected, and generous.

May we respond to God's call this week and become a blessing to others as a result.

SUNDAY 14 JUNE 2026

Read: Matthew 9:35-10:8 [9-23]

Reflect: The Gospels do not hide the truth that the disciples expected that following Jesus would lead them into a place of privilege and power. They fought over which of them was the greatest, and some of them asked for places of honour that would elevate them above their peers. Clearly, they weren't listening to what Jesus had actually called them to.

When Jesus sent his followers out into the villages of Israel, he gave strict instructions that should have shown them what their calling was really about. They were not to receive payment for their ministry. They were not to take anything that would mean they did not have to rely on the generosity of others to do their work. And they were not to move around seeking the most comfortable host to stay with. They were to expect persecution and rejection. But, in remaining true to God's values of love and justice even in the face of cruelty they would reveal God's reign to their world.

Many followers of Christ continue to expect special treatment because of their faith. Many who claim the name of Christ still fail to listen to the actual call of Christ—to love and serve others, and to endure sacrifice and suffering for the sake of beauty, truth, and goodness. We are not called and chosen for our own sakes or for personal benefit. We are called for the sake of the world. How willing are you to respond to *this* call of Jesus today?

Do: The calling of Jesus always requires a response. This is not just a once-off decision, but a daily commitment to live by the values and priorities of God's reign. Our response to Jesus is not a way to gain personal benefits and privilege. It is a recognition that love and justice are the best values by which to live, and a determination to embody those values as best we can. How can you respond to the call of Jesus today?

Pray: Jesus, please give me the courage to respond to your call with humility, servanthood, and love.

MONDAY 15 JUNE 2026

Read: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-5

Reflect: In today's reading from Thessalonians Paul highlights two realities that every follower of Jesus must recognise. Firstly, he points out to his readers that he expected suffering and difficulty in his ministry and his life. Paul had no illusions that following Jesus would keep him from harm and give him a privileged place in society. He knew that Jesus had called him to take up his cross and follow—and that meant suffering. Secondly, Paul realised that witnessing his struggles could undermine the faith of the Thessalonian Christians. We are all tempted to turn our faith into a

refuge that should fix our lives and make us healthy, wealthy, and happy and the early believers were no different. So, he sent Timothy to reassure and encourage them so that they could learn to accept suffering and allow their faith to carry them through it.

There are many variations of Christianity that claim that Jesus will protect, heal, and provide for those who have enough faith. Many believers still think that struggle and suffering are the result of sin or unbelief. Yet the Bible never promises that we will be spared the struggle of being human and of living in a world where injustice and suffering are common. Suffering and struggle are a given. Faith is not a protection, but a source of strength and courage that empowers us to navigate whatever life throws at us.

There is one final thought that stands out in this passage. Notice how Paul was the one going through the struggles, but his primary concern is not for himself, but for those who might have been negatively affected by seeing him suffer. This other-centredness is a feature of true Christlikeness.

Do: It is always tempting, when we're going through difficult times, to turn our focus inward and become more self-centred and self-protective. But when we turn our care toward others, we often find the strength and courage to navigate our struggles with grace and love. Today, whatever you might be facing, try to serve someone else in some small way, and notice if—and how—that shifts your own anxiety and pain.

Pray: Even when I suffer, God, help me to be aware of others and to serve them in whatever small way I can.

TUESDAY 16 JUNE 2026

Read: 1 Samuel 3:1-9

Reflect: The well-known story of the boy Samuel hearing God's call in the night is often taken to be a model for how God calls people. In this story Samuel hears God's voice audibly. The voice calls his name in a very personal way, and the result of this call is that Samuel becomes a well-regarded prophet and judge, ultimately facilitating Israel's transition from a theocracy to a monarchy.

This is a lovely story, and it definitely helps us to see that women and men are called into service of God's saving purposes. It shows how Samuel's call was not for himself, but for God's people. However, we need to be careful not to view every call through the lens of Samuel's experience. Few of us hear audible voices, and most of us will be called to tasks and positions that are much simpler and more ordinary—but that does not mean that we are not called. For most of us God's call means simply that we are to live by the values and priorities of God's reign, along with others, so that together we can help to make the world a little more compassionate and connected.

How can you embrace and live out this calling in your life today?

Do: One of the best ways we can share compassion and connection with others is through simple acts of generosity. When we share our attention, our time, our support, our care, our resources, and our wisdom with others, we connect more deeply with them, and we become more compassionate and understanding toward them. What can you share today? Who needs you to offer them a small gift of generosity?

Pray: You have called me, O God, and I respond by offering whatever gifts of compassion and connection I can.

WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2026

Read: Luke 6:12-19

Reflect: When Jesus called his apostles, they were just ordinary people. Jesus did not seek out elite, gifted, or highly resourced individuals. Rather, he chose a diverse group of people from many of the different groups in his society. The disciples he called would not naturally have loved one another. There were entrepreneurs who would have hated the tax collector. There were zealots—freedom fighters—who would generally have been willing to assassinate the tax collector. There were those who had assimilated into Greco-Roman culture (which was frowned upon by Jews) and those who were legalistic in their Jewish identity. There were even brothers who had a bad case of sibling rivalry (James and John, the sons of thunder, as Jesus called them).

Jesus did not call this group together to accomplish great things—although they did end up changing the world in significant ways. The main reason Jesus called them was to demonstrate that it actually is possible for people who are so very different to learn to love one another. He brought together natural enemies and transformed them into brothers and sisters who loved and served one another selflessly. If only the disciples of today could learn to embrace this same calling and make loving one another the centre of our faith.

Who needs you to love them selflessly today in Jesus' name?

Do: While love is best expressed in practical actions that seek to bring wholeness and goodness into the lives of others, sometimes we have to start small. One of the first things we can do to learn to love those around us—especially those we wouldn't naturally love—is to pray for them. When we pray for someone, it is very hard to continue hating them or wanting them to be harmed. And often our prayers do lead us to do practical things to try and make their lives better. Make time today to pray for the people God has called you to love.

Pray: Teach me to love others as you have loved me, O God—including those I find hard to love.

THURSDAY 18 JUNE 2026

Read: Hebrews 2:5-9

Reflect: As we begin to shift our focus to Sunday, we step a little more deeply into what it means to be called by God, and we see that sacrifice and self-giving are at the heart of God's call. It seems strange to me that faith in Christ is so often framed as a way to greater comfort and 'blessing' when Jesus called us to take up our crosses and follow him—the crucified Saviour.

In today's reading from Hebrews, we see how this principle of self-giving operated in Jesus' own life. Firstly, he willingly became 'lower than the angels,' embracing humanity and living in humble circumstances as he proclaimed the message of God's reign. Then, secondly, he suffered death rather than protect his own life or bring harm to others. The writer to the Hebrews makes the point that even though Jesus was divine, he gave of himself completely for the sake of others and made love and sacrifice the foundations of his life and message.

In the light of this, we should not be surprised that God calls us to follow Jesus' example of self-giving. Responding to God's call is not about making our lives easier and more comfortable. It is not about becoming healthy, wealthy, and happy. It is about finding life by bringing life to others. And that means being willing to make sacrifices and to give ourselves for the sake of love. What is your response to *this* call of God?

Do: One of the key features of a self-giving Christ-following life is simplicity. To live simply is to reject our society's values of materialism and consumption. It is not to become so ascetic that we have no joy and that we do not have what we need to live fully and work to a high standard. But it is to avoid accumulating what we do not need, and it is to be aware that our lives have an impact on others. When we embrace simplicity, we automatically give of ourselves and our resources to others. How can you live a little more simply today?

Pray: As you lived humbly and simply, Jesus, may I also choose to build my life on these selfless values.

FRIDAY 19 JUNE 2026

Read: Acts 5:17-26

Reflect: Most of us would expect that the apostles, having been imprisoned for preaching the Gospel, would lay low when they were led out of prison by God's messenger (which is what the word 'angel' means). It seems strange that, rather than hide until the pressure was off, the apostles would go straight back to the temple and resume preaching in public. But they were not concerned about saving their own lives. They were concerned about being obedient to God's call, and to bringing life to as many people as they could. It's not surprising that people responded so strongly to their message.

It is unfortunate that many people outside of the Church now perceive it to be a selfish, self-protective, and judgemental organisation. It is sad that Christians are often seen to be hateful, condemnatory, self-righteous, and more concerned with getting their

own way and being comfortable than they are with addressing injustice and working for equality in the world.

It is not that we have to go out of our way to find suffering. It is not that we have to deliberately make our lives harder. Following Jesus is seen in small, but significant, actions and attitudes. When we stand in solidarity with those who are oppressed or marginalised, and when we vote for those who make the world more just and compassionate, we are obeying God's call. And when we are willing to give up some of our privilege for the sake of others, we bring grace and goodness to the people around us. What small changes can you make today to obey God's call to work for love and justice in our world?

Do: Justice does not enter the world primarily through grand gestures and world-changing actions. Justice generally comes about through small, consistent actions done by individuals on a daily basis. Today there are so many opportunities to engage in these small acts of justice. We can give financially to a cause we support. We can sign petitions for groups like Avaaz.com. We can volunteer in a charity, or we can join a small group of people who care for those in need or for a small part of our earth. What small act of justice can you do today?

Pray: May my small acts of kindness and compassion help to make the world a more just and gracious place, O God.

SATURDAY 20 JUNE 2026

Read: Luke 11:53-12:3

Reflect: Jesus faced opposition almost exclusively from religious people. Those who professed their faith most publicly and earnestly were the ones who most strongly resisted Jesus and his message. Sometimes we forget this. And sometimes we forget that Jesus did not come to start a religion. Which means that those of us who are now part of the religion that claims to follow Jesus must be very careful not to fall into the same trap.

Jesus' objection to the religious leaders was that there was a mismatch between their hearts and lives. What they claimed to believe did not find expression in their attitudes and actions. And what they did contradicted what they claimed to believe.

Unfortunately, this is exactly what is often said about those who call themselves followers of Jesus. So many parts of the church today have come out in support of injustice, division, sexual violence, homophobia, and racism that the Church is now seen by many to be completely unChristian. That is such a tragedy.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Regardless of what others are doing, we can be those who choose to live what we believe. We can be those who embrace love and justice in whatever small way we can. We can be those who are willing to face our own hypocrisies and deal with them in whatever way we must, so that our lives, our words, our attitudes, and our thoughts are all aligned with the values and priorities of Jesus. What do you need to do today for your faith to have a deeper integrity?

Do: The big problem with the religious leaders of Jesus' day was that they refused to face their hypocrisy, violence, and self-righteousness. A little bit of confession and repentance would have gone a long way. The same is true for many religious people in our world today. If we want to avoid 'the yeast of the Pharisees' we just need to be willing to confess where we fail to live what we believe and then repent, which is to do something practical to address our shortcomings. Make time for some confession and repentance work today.

Pray: When I fail to live what I believe please forgive me, God, and empower me to live my faith with a deeper integrity.

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