



SUNDAY'S
COMING
PREMIUM

The
Christian
Century

June 11

10th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A

Jesus' manner of mercy

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

Our reading from Matthew poses multiple missional questions. Jesus goes to the house of Matthew modeling a way of being in the world. He illuminates the true intention of the law the Pharisees seek to uphold. It is in this modeling—Jesus at the house of Matthew, along with others present who are perceived as outsiders—that we learn not only about the message of Jesus but about his manner or method as well.

Jesus, in Matthew's Gospel, is a teacher in the line of Moses. In good rabbinic fashion, he begins to engage the dynamic discourse around mercy and sacrifice. He quotes Hosea's oracle: God "desires mercy, not sacrifice" (6:6).

In Matthew, the pervasive use of Old Testament prophetic texts illuminates the Jewishness of Jesus and the connection between his life and Israel's vocation. But Jesus begins to model a missional manner that differentiates him from the particular Pharisees he is engaging.

Amid imperial occupation, the Pharisees tried not to assimilate. They observed Torah diligence and strict adherence to the law as a way to preserve the life of their community. Matthew's Gospel presents a hyperbolic picture of Jesus' relationship with the Pharisees. When he exegetes this passage in Hosea—mercy over sacrifice—he exemplifies his role as rabbi but also places himself in perceived opposition to the law.

Some Pharisees ask the disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” This is just one of many oppositional episodes in Jesus’ interactions with Pharisees in Matthew. In a Gospel that emphasizes Jesus’ Jewishness, what is this oppositional relationship about?

I think it’s about Jesus’ emphasis on being sent into the world—on being set apart not for what Bonhoeffer calls “religious refuge” but to embrace the particular for the sake of the universal.

Matthew’s Gospel is clear: Jesus knows the law and holds it sacred. He’s also eager to get to its heart: the particular for the sake of the universal. The law of mercy shaping one’s relational dynamic with neighbors, aliens, and those on the margins of community. The law at its heart as a way of being in relationship with both God and the world.

How do we, as disciples, pay attention to Jesus’ manner along with his message? How do we move toward an embodied way of being that extends mercy to the world?

– *Ron Ruthruff*

Ron Ruthruff’s In the Lectionary column

Sitting and talking with a boy from Ethiopia, I received a radical dinner invitation.

[Read more](#)

From the CC library

Hosea 5:15–6:6

[Matthew Myer Boulton](#): God says no to supposedly right worship, and yes to genuinely right living.

Matthew 9:9–13, 18–26

[Heidi Haverkamp](#): What would possess me to copy a chapter of the Bible by hand?

Genesis 12:1–9

[Prince Raney Rivers](#): Our lives are not so much about *choosing* as they are about being *called*.

[Lisa M. Wolfe](#): What we know about Sarai is what she lacks. This week's reading lacks her.

[Maggi Dawn](#): The call of God can be as simple as a reminder of something we started and never finished.

[Wilma Ann Bailey](#): Abram is not promised that life will be better in Canaan.

Psalm 33:1–12

[Tripp Hudgins](#): In whom shall I place my trust? In myself?

Romans 4:13–25

[Fred Craddock](#): In the church we often hear of Christ and the Holy Spirit, but we only sometimes hear of God.

[Doug Harink](#): In the people of God, who live by the cross, God inaugurates a new creation.

Articles about Abraham

[Ulrich Rosenhagen](#): Can “Abrahamic” replace “Judeo-Christian”? And without sacrificing the integrity of three different traditions?

[Barbara Brown Taylor](#): Among the many other awakenings of 9/11 was the realization that Abraham had eight sons, not one, and that his firstborn was a boy named Ishmael.

[Pim Valkenberg](#): When I become doubtful about the future of relationships between Muslims, Jews, and Christians, I often go back to the story of where it all began.

[Debbie Blue](#): Hagar's story has often been read as if it explains some inevitable animosity among the Abrahamic faiths. We should try reading it differently.

[Ellen Davis](#): It is trust, not obedience, that binds Abraham to God.

[Karen González](#): Abraham broke the law, crossing borders and trafficking his wife. Why do we forgive him so much more easily than migrants today?

Know someone who would like this resource?

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Articles for Ordinary Time

[Jan Richardson](#): As we move into the long season that bids us celebrate the commonplace and seek the God who dwells within the ordinary, what sort of blessing might you need?

[Gilbert Meilaender](#): For the Reformers vocation came to be associated with the responsibilities of ordinary life, rather than with a divine summons to do something extraordinary.

[Laura Kelly Fanucci](#): There is welcome relief in slipping back into the ordinary.

[Steve Thorngate](#): It is one thing to visit the Holy Land and love it. It's quite another to learn to love your own, comparatively ordinary place.

[Marilynne Robinson](#): When I think about the ordinary, I think about the strange miracle of one's self-ness.

[Barbara Cawthorne Crafton](#): Let your simple bread become me, says Jesus. Don't let a single ordinary thing in your life remain untouched by your new life in me.

[Betty Smartt Carter](#): In art, a metaphor can be like a little Eucharist: it's a bit of eternity within something earthly, even ordinary.

[Patrick Willson](#): Is it acceptable to call the attention of the high and holy one to the ordinary and even profane necessities of our bodies?



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