

# FALL WORSHIP SERIES

## WEEK 3: LUKE 18:9-14 "FAITH IS...BEING HUMBLE"

### SERIES VISUAL ARTS

#### *What does Pop Art have to do With the Gospel?*

As we were planning for this series, "Faith is..." we noticed how frequently Jesus challenged the traditions and conventions of his culture:

- who returns to say thanks? A Samaritan!
- who makes a stubborn judge give in? A widow who won't take no for an answer!
- who is forgiven, blessed, honored and changed by Jesus? Nobody you would expect.

Obviously Jesus was working with a different set of values. The throw-aways of his day were those he chose to dine with, to heal, to bless. He turned his world upside down.

The artists of the pop art movement presented a similar challenge to the institutions of fine art by featuring styles and imagery from common advertising, comic books, and mundane cultural objects in their work. They challenged conventional ideas of beauty and opened the doors of the exclusively elite art world to pop culture and the masses using humor and irony and familiar ("common") images. This brash approach to art was at great odds with the prevailing sensibility that, by its nature, art dealt with "profound" expressions or ideas. Furthermore, pop artists' idealization of mass-production, which theoretically would allow everyone access to their art, undermined the business model of the gallery and museum as curators of taste and brokers of quality.

### THIS WEEK'S ARTIST: ROSALYN DREXLER

Born in the Bronx, New York, in 1926, Drexler was a fixture of the Pop Art scene from the early 60's on. Drexler transformed otherwise prosaic images from popular journals and other printed matter by adding bright color and creating new contexts, thereby eliminating the visual trace of the underlying, mechanically reproduced images. As with Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein, Rosalyn Drexler's works challenged the concept of originality and the role of the painter in an age of mechanical reproduction. Drexler's work also had something important to say about social issues, such as violence against women, racism, and social alienation, often presented in the vernacular of American 1940s Film Noir. Drexler's imagery is complex and more difficult to immediately recall than that of her contemporaries but her paintings are iconic in incident as well as image.

In addition to her work as a visual artist, Drexler is also an accomplished novelist and playwright and even had a brief career as a wrestler. She is the recipient of three Obie Awards, as well as an Emmy Award. Continues to live in NYC.

Inspired by Drexler's work, today's featured art juxtaposes two figures in opposite corners of a large rectangle. The high contrast of black and white on red of the top figure emphasizes his power and importance. The lower figure, grayscale and enclosed in much smaller yellow box connotes his humility. (Yellow, like gold, also traditionally suggests the presence of the holy.) Their contemporary roles highlight the dynamic of the religious authority and the suspect outcast which is challenged by Jesus in his parable of the Pharisees and the Tax Collector at prayer.

## NEXT SUNDAY: "FAITH IS . . . BEING BLESSED"

When the athlete wins the game, he stares at the camera and says he is blessed! When the singer wins a Grammy, she tells us she has overcome a lot, but now feel so blessed! When the cast of a hit movie stand on stage, smiling, and a reporter asks about the blessing of working together, their answers tumble out.

We know about blessings ... and we know about woes. But the way Jesus describes them in the beatitudes can throw us for a loop. He seems to have things **upside down and turned around**.

***What are we to make of his words? Are they foolishness, or a promise of a different world with different values?***

# Faith is...

Two went to pray to God one day, One  
proud, one mor - ti - fied. God hears the hum - ble,  
Je - sus said, Through faith, God's grace is wide.

*Refrain*

Faith is our hope; Faith is our strength; Faith per -  
sists when shak - en. When we fall, faith  
lifts us up; Faith in Christ's sal - va - tion.

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 3/4 time signature. It consists of six staves of music. The first three staves correspond to the first three lines of lyrics. The fourth staff is labeled 'Refrain' and is followed by three more staves of music corresponding to the remaining lyrics. The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and dotted notes, with some phrases ending in a fermata.

TEXT: Amy Parker  
MUSIC: Sheldon W. Sorge, 2000  
Music © 2000 Sheldon W. Sorge

MY SOUL THIRSTS  
CM with refrain

## SHARING OUR STORY VIDEOS

How would you finish this sentence? "Faith is ..."

As part of this series we will be producing short videos to get your answers. They will be shared each week in worship and through social media to engage us all in telling our faith stories. If you'd like to make a video contact Amy Parker.