

OCTOBER 8, 2017
EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

taking†
faith
home

God desires to have a relationship with us.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 21:33-46	Parable of the vineyard tenants
Monday	Isaiah 5:1-7	A song of the vineyard
Tuesday	Philippians 3:4b-14	To know Christ
Wednesday	Hosea 2:10-16	God pursues Israel
Thursday	Colossians 2:16-23	Christ brings new life
Friday	Luke 13:6-9	Parable of the fig tree
Saturday	Psalms 80	Prayer for Israel's deliverance
Sunday	Matthew 22:1-14	Parable of the wedding feast

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

All I want is Christ and to know that I belong to him. I could not make myself acceptable to God by obeying the Law of Moses. God accepted me simply because of my faith in Christ. **Philippians 3:8b-9 (CEV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, you who care for us like a bridegroom for the bride, forgive us when we stray and lead us back to you. For the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank you for the food before us, the friends around us, the love between us, and your presence with us. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord smile on you, bless you to know Christ and to know the power of his resurrection.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK
I Love You, Lord

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CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Who do you know that you trust? Explain.
- What makes a relationship more valuable than fame or possessions?
- In Isaiah 5 the prophet speaks of a "love-song" for God who is "my beloved." What are words you use to describe your relationship to God?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Philippians 3:4b-14.

When Paul says, "I run toward the goal, so that I can win the prize. . ." (v.14), it is easy to turn that into a moralistic challenge to do better. But that would miss Paul's whole understanding of a relationship to Christ through faith that is itself a gift. Paul is describing a passionate pursuit of the love of Christ that has already claimed him. Imagine the love of a couple for one another or a parent for a new baby. These loving relationships give us images of wanting to know the other person more and to grow more deeply in love. The prize is the relationship we have with Christ that is only perfected in the resurrection.

Sing or pray the words of the hymn, *I Love You, Lord*.

SERVICE

Isaiah 5 begins as a love-song but moves to words of judgment because God's people did not offer justice but bloodshed (v. 7). A fundamental calling of God is to offer justice and mercy to others, especially to the poor sometimes described in the Bible as the orphan and the widow (James 1:27). Consider how to support justice and mercy in your community through your vote, your volunteering, your voice, and your resources.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

In Psalm 80, Isaiah 5, and Matthew 21, the image of a vineyard and vines are used to describe God's people planted by God to produce the fruit of faith and justice. Use a potted plant or draw a picture of a plant with vines. Make a sign that reads, "God's vineyard is full of faith, justice, love, and mercy." When you observe the plant or drawing, give thanks to God for the fruits of the kingdom.

