

**Koinonia Year One—September
Content from *Growing Faithful*
Scripture from the NRSV Bible**

Thirteenth Sunday After Pentecost

Thirteenth Sunday of Matthew

1 Corinthians 16:13-24 Matthew 21:33-42

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

HEAR the Word of God—

1 Corinthians 16:13-24

13Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. 14Let all that you do be done in love.

15Now, brothers and sisters, you know that members of the household of Stephanus were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints; 16I urge you to put yourselves at the service of such people, and of everyone who works and toils with them. 17I rejoice at the coming of Stephanus and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have made up for your absence; 18for they refreshed my spirit as well as yours. So give recognition to such persons.

19The churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and Prisca, together with the church in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord. 20All the brothers and sisters send greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

*21, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. 22Let anyone be accursed who has no love for the Lord. Our Lord, come!** *23The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. 24My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

*In Greek, *Our Lord, come!* is *Marana tha*. These Aramaic words can also be read *Maran atha*, meaning *Our Lord has come*.

Matthew 21:33-42

Jesus said, 33“Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. 34When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to collect his produce. 35But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. 36Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. 37Finally he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ 38But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, ‘This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.’ 39So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. 40Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?” 41They said to him, “He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.”

42Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the scriptures: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this was the Lord’s doing, and it is amazing in our eyes?’”

SHARE thoughts and insights—

- Imagine yourself to be the landowner in this parable.
 - How would you have felt if the tenants had treated the people you sent to them as the tenants treated those the landowner in this parable sent to them?
 - How would you respond to Jesus if he had addressed this question to you: *"Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"* (verse 40).
 - How would you have treated the tenants?
- Jesus told parables to teach people spiritual truths. Those not ready to hear the deeper meaning of his teaching heard the parables as stories. Those with ears to hear and hearts ready to listen were taught great spiritual truths.
 - What do you hear in this parable?
 - What do you think Jesus is saying in this parable?
- The people in this parable...
 - Who does the landowner in this parable represent?
 - Who does the heir represent?
 - Who do the tenants represent?
- - What have you or could you learn from this Gospel passage?
- Jesus said, *"My Father is glorified in this, that you bear much fruit and be(come) my disciples"* (John 15:8).
 - What is Jesus saying here?
 - How do you think this verse is linked to the Gospel passage we have been discussing?
- Paul writes in the Epistle reading, *Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love* (verses 13-14).

How can you and do you as a Christian:

- *keep alert?*
- *stand firm in your faith?*
- *be courageous?*
- *be strong?*
- *let all that you do be done in love?*

- In verse 19 Paul writes about greeting people warmly in the Lord.
 - How do you greet others?
 - Do you see Christ's presence in others?

GROW in faith—

- For reflection and consideration...
 - What kind of tenant are you being in the Lord's vineyard?
 - How are you being fruitful for the Lord?
 - How could you be more fruitful for the Lord in your daily life?
 - What awareness and insights do these considerations bring to you?
 - How do you perceive God is calling you now?

SERVE one another in love—

- We learn in this Epistle reading that *members of the household of Stephanus... have devoted themselves to the service of the saints* (verse 15).
 - What or to whom do you devote yourselves to the service of?
 - To what or to whom do you put yourselves at the service of (verse 16)?
 - Is God being glorified through your devotion and service?

Let all that you do be done in love (verse 14).

"All that really matters is the quality of love in our actions." (A Monk of the Eastern Church, *The Year of Grace of the Lord*)

PRAY—

For all the people you know, meet with, think of, and learn about, pray from your heart with your whole being:

Our Lord, come!

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

My love be with all of you in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

(1Corinthians 16:21-23)