

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

Twenty-seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Tenth Sunday of Luke

Galatians 3:23-4:5 or Ephesians 6:10-17 Luke 13:10-17

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

Come, Lord Jesus!

(Matthew 28:19b, Revelation 22:20b)

HEAR the Word of God—

(This is one of the Sundays in the liturgical year when the Epistle reading varies. Please check the designated reading for this year and follow below with that passage of Scripture.)

Galatians 3:23-4:5

23Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. 24Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. 25But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, 26for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. 27As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. 29And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

4:1My point is this: heirs, as long as they are minors, are no better than slaves, though they are the owners of all the property; 2but they remain under guardians and trustees until the date set by the father. 3So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits of the world. 4But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.

Ephesians 6:10-17

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. 11 Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. 13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. 15 As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. 16 With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Luke 13:10-17

10Now he (Jesus) was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. 11And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. 12When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." 13When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up and began praising God. 14But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day." 15But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? 16And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?" 17When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

SHARE thoughts and insights—

- Imagine yourself...
 - Imagine you are the crippled woman in the Gospel passage before Jesus heals you.
 - ~ What would your life be like?
 - ~ What do you think your attitude would be if you were bent over for eighteen years?
 - Now imagine yourself after Jesus has healed you and you are standing straight.
 - ~ How would you then live?
 - ~ Would you have an attitude of gratitude?

- Think of someone you know who may be *bent over* by a burden. What is the burden this person is carrying that is causing him or her to be *bent over*?

- Burdens...
 - When have you been bent over by a burden?
 - What do you do when you are bent over with a heavy burden?
 - To whom do you go for help when you are helpless?

- Jesus your healer...
 - How do you come to Jesus when you need healing?
 - How is Jesus your healer?

- *Justified*...
 - What does it mean to be *justified*?
 - How are we *justified*? (See Galatians 3:24.)

- Faith...
 - Why is faith important?
 - Imagine your life without faith... what would your life be like?

If the Epistle reading is Galatians 3:23-4:5

- In this Epistle passage we read that we *are all children of God through faith* (verse 26).
 - What does it mean to be a child of God?
- How would our lives be different if we were really aware that *all of us are one in Christ Jesus* (verse 28)?
 - Would there be hatred?
 - Would there be wars?
 - What would our world be like?
- When do we especially celebrate *...when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman...* (Galatians 4:4a)?

If the Epistle reading is Ephesians 6:10-17

- What are the *wiles of the devil* (verse 11) and against whom and what are we to *stand firm* (verse 13)?
- What do we need—and how are we—to *stand firm*?
- What is the *whole armor of God* (verses 11 and 13)?

GROW in faith—

If the Epistle reading is Galatians 3:23-4:5

- Ponder with wonder and gratitude...
(I)n Christ Jesus we are all children of God through faith... for all of us are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26 and 28d).
 This is indeed amazing grace!

If the Epistle reading is Ephesians 6:10-17

- What do you/we need to follow Paul's admonition that you/we *be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power* (verse 10)?

SERVE one another in love—

- This week help someone who is *bent over* in some way. *Help to carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will obey the law of Christ* (Galatians 6:2 GNB).

PRAY—

Lord Jesus, you prayed to your Father who is also our Father that we would all be one as you and the Father are one. Help us to live with a constant and ever-growing awareness of our oneness with you and in you. May we seek to live in the unity of the great and awesome love you reveal to us, in us, and through us by being born a human like us. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. *Come, Lord Jesus!*