

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

**Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost**

**Fifth Sunday of Luke**

**2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9 or Galatians 6:11-18 Luke 16:19-31**

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

**HEAR the Word of God—**

(This is one of the Sundays in the liturgical year when the Epistle reading varies. Please read both Epistle readings.)

**2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9**

*31The God and Father of the Lord Jesus (blessed be he forever!) knows that I do not lie. 32In Damascus, the governor under King Aretus guarded the city of Damascus in order to seize me, 33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.*

*12:1It is necessary to boast; nothing is to be gained by it, but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. 2I know a person in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows. 3And I know that such a person—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know; God knows—4was caught up into Paradise and heard things that are not to be told, that no mortal is permitted to repeat. 5On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on my own behalf I will not boast, except of my weaknesses. 6But if I wish to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will be speaking the truth. But I refrain from it, so that no one may think better of me than what is seen in me or heard from me, 7even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. Therefore, to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, to keep me from being too elated. 8Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, 9but he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.*

**Galatians 6:11-18**

*11See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand! 12It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised—only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh. 14 May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! 16 As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.*

*17From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body.*

*18May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.*

### **Luke 16:19-31**

Jesus said, *19“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. 23In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus by his side. 24He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.’ 25But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 26Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.’ 27He said, ‘Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house—28for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ 29Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ 30He said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”*

### **SHARE thoughts and insights—**

- Treating people...
  - What do you think of the way Lazarus was treated before he died?
  - What do you think of the way Lazarus is treated after he died?
  - What do you think of the way the rich man lived and how he treated Lazarus before Lazarus died?
  - What do you think of the way the rich man was treated after he died?
  
- What lessons does this Gospel passage about the rich man and Lazarus have to teach us?
- Boasting...
  - Have you ever boasted of your weaknesses, either publicly or privately, like Paul writes about in the Epistle reading from 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9?
    - Why does it seem somewhat strange to boast of one’s weaknesses?
    - Why do people most often prefer to hide their weaknesses and boast about their strengths?
  - What does Paul boast about in the Epistle reading from Galatians 6:11-18?
  - What do you usually like to boast about?
  
- What was the Lord’s answer to Paul when he asked three times that the thorn in his flesh would leave him? (See 2 Corinthians 12:9.)

- Weaknesses...
  - How and why is the Lord's power... *made perfect in weakness* (2 Corinthians 12:9)?
    - So, why does Paul boast about his weaknesses?
  - Reflect on these passages of Scripture that Paul wrote and the messages in them about weakness and power.

In Galatians 6:14 he wrote, *May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*

In 1 Corinthians 1:18, 24-25 he wrote, *For the message about the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God... [T]o those who are called,... Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.*

What are the messages about the real meaning of weakness and strength (power) revealed the cross of Christ? How can we and do we reveal the wisdom of this weakness and this strength in our lives?

### **GROW in faith—**

- Ignoring and / or neglecting...
  - The rich man ignored and / or neglected Lazarus. Who are you are ignoring or neglecting?
  - What might this Gospel passage be saying to you regarding how you treat others?
    - How might you respond to this awareness?
- Ponder 2 Corinthians 12:10, the verse immediately following this Epistle passage, in which Paul writes, *Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.*
- Commit to memory...
 

Jesus says to me, *"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"* (verse 9), and *...for the sake of Christ... whenever I am weak, then I am strong* (verse 10).

### **SERVE one another in love—**

Find a modern day Lazarus and care for him / her.

**PRAY—**

Lord Jesus, help us to grow in awareness that your *grace is sufficient for us*. This is a wonderful promise you gave to Paul and you give to each one of us who trusts in you. Lord, we believe. Help us when and where our faith falls short. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.