

Koinonia Year Two—October
Content from *Growing Faithful*
Scripture from the NRSV Bible

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
Third Sunday of Luke
2 Corinthians 6:1-10 or Galatians 1:11-19 Luke 7:11-16

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 check the designated reading for this year and follow below with that passage of Scripture.)

2 Corinthians 6:1-10

¹As we work together with him (God), we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. ²For he says, “At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you.” See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! ³We are putting no obstacle in anyone’s way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, ⁴but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, ⁵beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger, ⁶by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, ⁷truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; ⁸in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; ⁹as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see – we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; ¹⁰as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Galatians 1:11-19

¹¹For I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; ¹²for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

¹³You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. ¹⁴I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. ¹⁵But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased ¹⁶to reveal his Son to (in) me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus.

18Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him for fifteen days; 19but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother.

Luke 7:11-16

11Soon afterwards he (Jesus) went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. 12As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. 13When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." 14Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" 15The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. 16Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favorably on his people!"

SHARE thoughts and insights—

- How do you think you would have responded if you had been in the *large crowd* and had seen Jesus raise the man from the dead?
- Changed by Jesus...
 - Imagine yourself to be the man whom Jesus raised from the dead. Many years have passed. Tell your life story.
 - How has your life been changed thanks to Jesus?
- What do these words mean to you and for you... *See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!* (2 Corinthians 6:2b)?

If the Epistle reading is 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

- In the Epistle reading Paul writes, *we work together with God* (verse 1). How and in what ways do you *work together with God*?
- Paul writes that *we are putting no obstacles in anyone's way* (verse 3). How do we put obstacles in the way of others?
- As a servant of God, how do you commend yourself to others?
 - How do your ways compare with the ways we read about in the Epistle passage?
- In verses 9 and 10, Paul writes *(We are) as dying, and see—we are alive,... as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.*
 - How can these claims be true?
 - How can we die and yet be alive?
 - How can we be *sorrowful yet always rejoicing*?
 - How can we be *poor and yet make many rich*?

- How can we have *nothing*, and yet possess *everything*?
- How and why might we call this 'God logic'?
- How does this compare to how we typically see and live in the world?

If the Epistle reading is Galatians 1:11-19

- Paul writes boldly and frankly about himself in the passage. What do you think of Paul's character before and after his conversion?
- God reveals his Son to each person individually. Share with one another how you first knew / realized God to be revealing his Son to you - and in you.
- How is God constantly calling you *through his grace*?
- Paul wrote that right after God revealed his Son to / in him, he *did not confer with any human being*. This is Paul's experience, but do you think this would be wise for most people? Why is learning from others who are dedicated to Christ vitally important to our faith, and to keeping us centered in and focused on Christ?

GROW in faith—

If the Epistle reading is 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

- By, through, and in *genuine love*...
 - Paul writes that we commend ourselves *as servants of God* by, through, and in genuine love. (See verse 6.)
 - What does genuine love look like?
 - Where, when, and how have you seen genuine love?
 - Who revealed it to you?
 - How was it revealed to you?
 - Consider and reflect on how you might commend yourself as a servant of God by, through, and in *genuine love*.

If the Epistle reading is Galatians 1:11-19

- How did Paul grow in his faith? What can we learn from this? How are you growing in faith?

SERVE one another in love—

If the Epistle reading is 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

- Read the Epistle passage again and be open to the Holy Spirit inspiring you to serve others by practicing *great endurance, patience, kindness, and genuine love*, speaking truthfully, and doing all only in *the power of God* and only for his glory.

If the Epistle reading is Galatians 1:11-19

- How can you/we help others to realize God is calling them *through his grace*?
- How can you/we help others to grow in Christ—to grow in faith and in the knowledge of him?
- How can you/we help others to know that God is loving them?

PRAY—

LORD God, you tell us in Isaiah that your thoughts are not our thoughts, nor are our ways your ways. *For as the heavens are higher than the earth*, so are your ways higher than our ways and your thoughts higher than our thoughts. Draw us in your love to think your thoughts and to live your ways always in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

(See Isaiah 55:8-9.)