

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

Fifteenth Sunday After Pentecost
Fifteenth Sunday of Matthew
2 Corinthians 4:6-15 Matthew 22:35-46

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

HEAR the Word of God—

2 Corinthians 4:6-15

⁶For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

⁷But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. ⁸We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. ¹¹For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. ¹²So death is at work in us, but life in you.

¹³But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture—“I believed, and so I spoke”—we also believe, and so we speak, ¹⁴because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

Matthew 22:35-46

³⁵...one of them, a lawyer, asked him (Jesus) a question to test him. ³⁶“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” ³⁷He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

⁴¹Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴²“What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?” They said to him, “The son of David.” ⁴³He said to them, “How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying, ⁴⁴‘The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I put your enemies under your feet”’? ⁴⁵If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?” ⁴⁶No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

SHARE thoughts and insights—

- In this Gospel passage, a lawyer asked Jesus a question to test him.
 - What was the question?
 - What was Jesus's answer?
- Think of a time when you may have asked someone a question to test their faith and / or beliefs.
 - What was your question and what answer did you receive?
 - When have you ever been asked a question to test your faith and / or beliefs?
 - What was the question, and what was your answer?
- Jesus asks the Pharisees several questions in this Gospel passage.
 - What were the questions, and how did the Pharisees answer them?
 - How did Jesus respond to their answers?
- Which is more important—to know the question or to know the answer? Why?
- Looking more closely at Jesus's response to the lawyer, say in your own words the two greatest commandments.
- Love...
 - How can you—and do you—love God
 - *with all your heart?*
 - *with all your soul?*
 - *with all your mind?*
 - How can you—and do you—love your neighbor as yourself?
 - How is it both easy and difficult to love?
- Paul writes in this Epistle reading, *For it is God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ* (verse 6).
 - Share what this passage means to you and for you.
 - How is this verse another way of describing the grace of God?
- What does Paul mean when he writes that *we have this treasure in clay pots* (verse 7)?
 - Why is this important in our life of faith?
- Why does Paul write that *while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh* (verse 11)?
- Share with one another why and how it is true that *Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God* (verse 15).

GROW in faith—

- To love someone “to bits and pieces,” is an expression meaning to love someone completely, totally, 100%.
 - Do you love God “to bits and pieces”?
 - Or, do you love God in bits and pieces?
 - Do you love your neighbor “to bits and pieces”?
 - Or, do you love your neighbor in bits and pieces?
 - How can you grow in love?

SERVE one another in love—

...[L]ove your neighbor as yourself, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God (Matthew 22:39; 2 Corinthians 4:15b).

PRAY—

Loving God, thank you for shining in *our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ* our Lord to help and encourage us to love you *with all our heart(s), with all our soul(s), and with all our mind(s);* and to love our *neighbors as ourselves. Yes, everything is for our sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to your glory.* In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.