

SEPTEMBER 24, 2023
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Responding to God's generosity with gratitude.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 20:1-16	Parable of the vineyard workers
Monday	Jonah 3:10–4:11	Jonah goes to Nineveh
Tuesday	Philippians 1:21-30	What life means to Paul
Wednesday	Psalms 136	God's love never fails
Thursday	Matthew 5:3-12	The Beatitudes
Friday	Acts 20:32-38	Paul says goodbye
Saturday	Psalms 145:1-8	The Lord is kind and merciful
Sunday	Matthew 21:23-32	Parable of the two sons

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

"Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?" So the last will be first, and the first will be last. Matthew 20:15-16 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Dear God, you are more generous than we can imagine or deserve. Thank you for your love and mercy that has no end through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Mealtimes Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for this gift of food and all that you give, for you are gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Amen. (Psalm 145:8)

A Blessing to Give:

May you be reminded of God's love and generosity each day.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*To God Our Thanks
We Give*



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When is a time you feel you were treated unfairly?
- How would you describe God's generosity? Give an example.

DEVOTIONS

Read: Matthew 20:1-16.

Fairness is in the eyes of the beholder. Most of us have experienced a time when we felt we were treated unfairly. It gets all the more frustrating when the sense of fairness is decided by God's grace. Who or what we see that should be last, may end up being first and a privileged recipient of God's generosity. There are times when the apparent unfairness of this parable can sound like good news when we are hurting, needing any help we can get, and can only take what is offered. This parable points to what God offers us—grace upon grace—something that is so much more than we deserve. As a result, our lives are able to respond with overwhelming gratitude. If gratitude is not our response to Jesus' parable, it may lead us to the observation that our sense of being first has missed the point; we may need to review the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-13) for God's sense of fairness and living rightly before God.

Discuss: When have you experienced God's generosity? How did you respond?

Pray: **God of justice and mercy, help us to see as you see and to live with compassion for all and with gratitude for what we receive through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how can you show an act of undeserved kindness to someone this week?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Psalm 145:4 tells us: *"One generation shall extol your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts."* Think or talk about people from older or younger generations who have shown and taught you about God's love and generosity through Jesus. Consider drawing a picture, writing a note, or calling them to say thank you. As a reminder of God's generosity, prayerfully recite: **"The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."** (Psalm 145:8)



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org