

SEPTEMBER 22, 2019
FIFTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Serve God with justice for the poor.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Luke 16:1-13	Parable of the shrewd manager
Monday	Amos 8:4-7	Judgment on Israel
Tuesday	1 Timothy 2:1-7	Instructions concerning prayer
Wednesday	Deuteronomy 15:7-11	How to treat the poor
Thursday	James 2:14-17	Faith without works is dead
Friday	1 John 3:16-24	Love each other
Saturday	Psalms 113	The Lord helps people in need
Sunday	Luke 16:19-31	Poor Lazarus and the rich man

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. **Luke 16:13 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God of justice for the needy, help us to gladly submit to your reign and your demand for care that raises the poor from the dust. Amen. (Psalm 113:7)

Mealtime Prayer:

For this food and all that you give us, blessed be the name of the Lord from this time on and forevermore. Amen. (Psalm 113:2)

A Blessing to Give:

May the compassion and justice of God bless you and send you out with peace, love, and mercy.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK

*All Who Love and Serve
Your City*



CARING CONVERSATIONS

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

- What is something you have received that you did not earn? Explain.
- How do you feel when someone receives something you do not think they deserve?
- The Bible speaks about justice for the “widow and the orphan,” those without social support in biblical times. Who in our society receives little social support today?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 16:1-13.

In the Bible God requires a justice that shows partiality for the poor, the powerless, the disenfranchised. This understanding of justice is part of the character of God (Isaiah 30:18). As Amos 8 points out, people cheat and “trample on the needy” (v. 4). Such an injustice goes against God and God’s will. It not only hurts individuals, but it hurts the larger society because an unfair economic and social system keeps more people from thriving. The whole of society then suffers. Jesus uses the characteristics of the unjust standards of his day. It would have been assumed that the rich man in the parable charged high interest rates to his customers that the unjust steward simply reduced or erased. Jesus’ point is to commit to divine standards. Be a slave to—submit to—God’s law, God’s ways, God’s justice that will not cave in or back down. It’s not easy and we often fail at it, but with it comes true wisdom—shrewdness, in the language of the parable—and true justice, the kind that God expects, not to earn our salvation, but for the needs of our neighbors.

Pray: **Dear God, in the midst of the world’s standards that pursue self-interest, give me faith to trust you and care for others with your compassion and justice, through Christ our Lord, amen.**

SERVICE

In Biblical times, widows had very little social support. In modern times, there are more social support networks, but becoming a widow or widower can nonetheless be stressful and lead to loneliness. Do you know of someone who has lost a spouse? Invite that person to your home for a meal or take them out. Take time to listen and give the opportunity to share memories of their loved one. After your time together, keep this person in your prayers.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Paul writes that we should pray for everyone: “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone” (1 Timothy 2:1). Prayer is a faith practice we can do daily. Decorate a small box with stickers, drawings, or with paint/markers. Use index cards or sticky notes to write a prayer each day for someone you either know or have heard or read about. Place the prayers in the box. Take time to review the prayers you have written over time and think about ways the prayers may have been answered.



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