

OCTOBER 1, 2023
EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST

taking  faith home

Jesus' humble obedience brings hope for all people.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 21:23-32	Parable of the two sons
Monday	Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32	God's ways are fair
Tuesday	Philippians 2:1-13	Christ shows us humility
Wednesday	Hebrews 13:1-8	Service well-pleasing to God
Thursday	Exodus 18:13-27	Jethro's advice
Friday	John 13:12-20	Jesus washes the disciples' feet
Saturday	Psalms 25:1-9	Prayer for guidance and help
Sunday	Matthew 21:33-46	Parable of the vineyard tenants

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

[Jesus] humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name. Philippians 2:8-9 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God of the nations, you rule with steadfast love and mercy; help us to recognize our need for you and to worship you alone through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, may this food strengthen us in body and soul that we may desire your good pleasure and act in ways that serve others in love. Amen. (Philippians 2:13)

A Blessing to Give:

May the humility of our Lord Jesus Christ give you strength and courage.



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HYMN OF THE WEEK
Send Me, Jesus

taking  faith home

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 questioned someone's actions in government, school, or other organization?
- How does Jesus' leadership differ from other leaders?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Matthew 21:23-32.

The chief priests and elders are intended to be leaders of the Jewish people. Jesus challenges their authority and leadership by wanting them to make a commitment—pro or con—regarding John the Baptist. They are not able to do that because they do not truly represent the people who supported John. These leaders are actually servants of Rome, the occupation force in Judea. Their wealth and power are at the pleasure of Rome, not the people of Judea. The leaders have a difficult task to balance between worshiping God and an allegiance to Rome. It is reminiscent of Jesus saying that one cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). The authority Jesus serves is only God's kingdom. In words and actions, Jesus is the obedient Son who triumphs over all other authorities on earth. It is an obedience that will lead to Jesus' death at the hands of those loyal to Rome but will bring hope for all people burdened by powers of fear and death.

Discuss: How does Jesus' authority and obedience to serve only God's kingdom make a difference for all people?

Pray: **Almighty God, we thank you for Jesus' obedience to your power of grace and mercy so that sinners and tax collectors enter into your kingdom through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how can you help someone who feels weighed down by the burdens of life?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Philippians 2:3 says, *"Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves."* Name this "Humility Week" in your household. Secretly decide on one act of service you (and others) can perform that will show concern for the interests of others. If you live alone, find someone outside your home to do this with. At the end of the week, think or talk about your acts of "secret service" and what it felt like to show concern for others.

