

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost 10-4-20

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.

This is the LORD's doing;
it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the LORD has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!

Collect

Gracious God, You gave Your Son into the hands of sinful men who killed Him. Forgive us when we reject Your unfailing love, and grant us the fullness of Your salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

[Isaiah 5:1-7] Now I will sing a song for the one I love about his vineyard: My beloved has a vineyard on a rich and fertile hill. ² He plowed the land, cleared its stones, and planted it with choice vines. In the middle he built a watchtower and carved a winepress in the nearby rocks. Then he waited for a harvest of sweet grapes, but the grapes that grew were wild and sour. ³ "Now, you people of Jerusalem and Judah, you have heard the case; you be the judges. ⁴ What more could I have done to cultivate a rich harvest? Why did my vineyard

give me wild grapes when I expected sweet ones?
⁵ Now this is what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will tear down its fences and let it be destroyed. I will break down its walls and let the animals trample it. ⁶ I will make it a wild place. I will not prune the vines or hoe the ground. I will let it be overgrown with briars and thorns. I will command the clouds to drop no more rain on it." ⁷ This is the story of the LORD's people. They are the vineyard of the LORD Almighty. Israel and Judah are his pleasant garden. He expected them to yield a crop of justice, but instead he found bloodshed. He expected to find righteousness, but instead he heard cries of oppression.

Philippians 3:4-14 If others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more! ⁵ For I was circumcised when I was eight days old, having been born into a pure-blooded Jewish family that is a branch of the tribe of Benjamin. So I am a real Jew if there ever was one! What's more, I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. ⁶ And zealous? Yes, in fact, I harshly persecuted the church. And I obeyed the Jewish law so carefully that I was never accused of any fault. ⁷ I once thought all these things were so very important, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. ⁸ Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ ⁹ and become one with him. I no longer

count on my own goodness or my ability to obey God's law, but I trust Christ to save me. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. ¹⁰ As a result, I can really know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I can learn what it means to suffer with him, sharing in his death, ¹¹ so that, somehow, I can experience the resurrection from the dead! ¹² I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be. ¹³ No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be,¹ but I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I strain to reach the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven.

[Matthew 21:33-46] (*Jesus said*) "Now listen to this story. A certain landowner planted a vineyard, built a wall around it, dug a pit for pressing out the grape juice, and built a lookout tower. Then he leased the vineyard to tenant farmers and moved to another country. ³⁴ At the time of the grape harvest he sent his servants to collect his share of the crop. ³⁵ But the farmers grabbed his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. ³⁶ So the landowner sent a larger group of his servants to collect for him, but the results were the same. ³⁷ "Finally, the owner sent his son, thinking, 'Surely they will respect my son.' ³⁸ "But when the farmers saw his son coming,

they said to one another, 'Here comes the heir to this estate. Come on, let's kill him and get the estate for ourselves!' ³⁹ So they grabbed him, took him out of the vineyard, and murdered him. ⁴⁰ "When the owner of the vineyard returns," Jesus asked, "what do you think he will do to those farmers?" ⁴¹ The religious leaders replied, "He will put the wicked men to a horrible death and lease the vineyard to others who will give him his share of the crop after each harvest." ⁴² Then Jesus asked them, "Didn't you ever read this in the Scriptures? 'The stone rejected by the builders has now become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous to see.' ⁴³ What I mean is that the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a nation that will produce the proper fruit. ⁴⁴ Anyone who stumbles over that stone will be broken to pieces, and it will crush anyone on whom it falls. " ⁴⁵ When the leading priests and Pharisees heard Jesus, they realized he was pointing at them-- that they were the farmers in his story. ⁴⁶ They wanted to arrest him, but they were afraid to try because the crowds considered Jesus to be a prophet.