

OCTOBER 8, 2023  
NINETEENTH SUNDAY  
AFTER PENTECOST



*God's love leads us to bear the fruits of the kingdom.*

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

Sunday	Matthew 21:33-46	Parable of the vineyard tenants
Monday	Isaiah 5:1-7	A song about a vineyard
Tuesday	Philippians 3:4b-14	To know Christ
Wednesday	Psalms 19	The wonders of God
Thursday	Haggai 2:10-19	A rebuke and a promise
Friday	John 15:1-17	Jesus the true vine
Saturday	Psalms 80:7-15	Prayer for Israel's deliverance
Sunday	Matthew 22:1-14	Parable of the wedding feast

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*"Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom."*

**Matthew 22:1-14 (NRSV)**

### PRAYERS AND BLESSING

#### A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty God, may your passion for justice and mercy lead us to display your compassion for others for the sake of your Son, our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, may the fruit of the earth that we enjoy in this meal give us strength to care for others through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### A Blessing to Give:

May you know Christ's love and the power of his resurrection to love others. (Philippians 3:10)



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### HYMN OF THE WEEK

*God of the Sparrow*



### 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:

- How can correcting someone's mistakes in thoughts and actions be an act of love?
- What does it mean to you to live out the fruits of the kingdom?

### DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Matthew 21:33-46.

Jesus continues his debate with religious leaders in the Jerusalem temple. He addresses chief priests, elders, Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes. These leaders represent the religious life and the institutions of Judaism, a community of faith with very diverse views. Their commonality is that they all misrepresent the kingdom of God. Instead of "bearing the fruits of the kingdom," they display a power and influence that does not work for God. For Jesus the fruits of the kingdom are identified in his first public message, the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12). That message speaks of humility, meekness, a desire for God's righteousness, mercy, purity, peacemaking, and more. It's a message in opposition to the religious leaders of his day, that is, the wicked tenants of the parable that steal, covet, and murder to possess what is not theirs. The good news is that Jesus' parable names the coming of the son, the Son of God who bears the very fruits announced by Jesus.

*Discuss:* What would upset Jesus in today's religious life?

*Pray:* **God of power and might, cleanse us of all that does not bear the fruits of your kingdom that our lives may be a witness to your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.**

### SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you serve others with compassion for those in need?

### RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

In Psalm 80, Isaiah 5, and Matthew 21, the image of a vineyard and vines are used to describe God's people planted by God to produce the fruit of faith and justice. Use a potted plant or draw a picture of a plant with vines. Make a sign to place in the plant or write on the paper: "God's vineyard is full of faith, justice, love, and mercy." Place the plant or drawing in a visible place and when you pass by it each time, give thanks to God for the fruits of the kingdom.



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