

Scripture for the 14th Sunday after Pentecost, September 6, 2020

Introduction to the Epistle Lesson: Romans 13:8-14

In the 12th chapter of Paul's letter to the church in Rome, he describes what the "new life in Christ" looks like. He reinforces this statement with a description of the "marks of the true Christian," love being the first and foremost mark. In the first part of chapter 13, Paul writes about the role of the authorities: God and the civil authorities. Then in verses 8-14, Paul expands the plea for loving "one another." Listen to a reading from Romans:

Reading from Romans 13:8-14 Love for One Another

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet"; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. ¹¹ Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹² the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³ let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴ Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Introduction to the Gospel Lesson: Matthew 18:15-20

In the 18th chapter of the gospel of Matthew, the disciples ask Jesus a rather self-serving question about "who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." He surprises the disciples by saying that a child is the greatest in the kingdom. Then he admonishes them to never be a stumbling block to any "little ones." Matthew follows this with a story of the parable of the lost sheep. Following the parable is our text for today, titled, "Reproving Another Who Sins." Listen to Jesus speak about unity.

A Reading from Matthew 18:15-20 Reproving Another Who Sins

¹⁵ “If another member of the church^[a] sins against you,^[b] go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.^[c] ¹⁶ But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”