



**TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – SEPTEMBER 7, 2025**

Wisdom 9:13-18b    Philemon 9-10, 12-17    Luke 14:25-33

Prop: Jigsaw Puzzle

How many here have done a jigsaw puzzle? I have here a 200- piece puzzle with extra large pieces, which is great for a guy my age.

The more pieces we have the more difficult the puzzle.

When we do a puzzle, it seems there are two main things we do (at least I do): 1) I like to find all the straight pieces and put the frame of the picture together. It gives me part of the picture and guidance for my quest to put this puzzle together. 2) Then I look at the picture of the puzzle on the box and look at it often. I try to find the pieces that match a certain color, object or person in the puzzle.

Despite all those efforts it still takes time to put the puzzle together. One needs a lot of patience as the picture slowly comes in focus, piece by piece.

The readings today fit into the puzzle of being a Christian disciple.

The Book of Wisdom points out the truth that God's ways are above our ways. We are limited in our knowledge, so trusting God seeing the bigger picture on our behalf is part of our journey of faith. We spoke of that type of humility last weekend.

Seeing the bigger picture sure applies to Jesus telling us in the gospel to hate – or love less - our parents. I don't hate my parents. I was blessed to have Larry and Berdie as parents. I know my parents would say to love God first, knowing if I do I will love them, my family and all people better.

That's the dilemma Paul puts before Philemon as he returns a slave who ran away, Onesimus. Paul really is asking Philemon to love God first, which would then put Onesimus as a brother to Philemon, rather than just a slave.

Quite the jigsaw puzzle, our life as a Christian disciple, isn't it? Doesn't always come in focus, no matter how we look at the picture.

When things do not seem really clear we need to look at the big picture and see the boarder in the puzzle of our lives. As a Christian those four boarders (for me anyway) are: Christmas; Jesus coming to us in human form, 2) the Last Supper, where he took bread and wine and said this is his body and blood; the gift of the Eucharist, 3) Good Friday, where he loved us that much to give his life for us; and 4) Easter, Jesus rose from the dead and we will too.

Our life is a lot like a jigsaw puzzle. Lots of different pieces – different colors and shapes – but all in the boarder of Jesus Christ.

We just need to make sure we continue to look at the picture as we live our lives with and for the Lord.

Bringing Home the Word Prayer