

6<sup>th</sup> August 2017

## Trinity 8

Proper 13 **Green**



### Collect

Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

### **Romans 9:1-5** English Standard Version (ESV)

#### God's Sovereign Choice

9<sup>1</sup> I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience bears me witness in the Holy Spirit—<sup>2</sup> that I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> my kinsmen according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. <sup>5</sup> To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

**Footnote:** a. Or *brothers and sisters*

**COMMENT:** Though Paul remained a faithful Jew throughout his life, he had a deep anxiety and compassion for his fellow Jews long after his conversion to the faith that Jesus of Nazareth was Israel's true Messiah. This comes to the fore in this brief passage at the beginning of a new section of the letter. Paul knew, moreover, that there still were Jews in the Roman community who had sincere reservations about this new approach to their traditional faith. While many of their

fellows Jews had embraced the Christian way, it was to the reticent in particular that Paul addressed these words.

### **Matthew 14:13-21** English Standard Version (ESV)

#### **Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand**

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup> When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. <sup>15</sup> Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” <sup>16</sup> But Jesus said, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” <sup>17</sup> They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” <sup>18</sup> And he said, “Bring them here to me.” <sup>19</sup> Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>20</sup> And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. <sup>21</sup> And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

**COMMENT:** As a miracle story – this is difficult to dismiss as it is bedded well into early Christian tradition and is repeated six times over in the four Gospels (which includes the variant of the four thousand – Mark 6:35-44, Mark 8:1-10, Matthew 14:13-21, Matthew 15:32-39, Luke 9:12-17, John 6:1-14). The preceding passage tells of the execution of John the Baptist. Withdrawing from that region in grief, Jesus felt God’s call to offer deep compassion to the multitudes that followed him. The feeding of the five thousand may have been both an expression of his feelings and also a sign to those gathered that he was continuing a Ministry, in which John had shared as our Lord’s forerunner, and that our Lord was the spiritual leader of a new approach to the traditional Jewish understanding of their relationship with God, which John had begun.

In all the Gospels, eating and drinking is frequently described in relation to spiritual need. At the traditional site, sacred to Christians to this day, a small chapel shields a beautiful mosaic of the loaves and fishes in the floor beneath a marble communion table. The mosaic is

reputed to date from the Byzantine era in the 4th century. Christian faith has hallowed the site with Eucharistic significance.

**Psalm 17** *Exaudi Domine*

**℟ Maintain my steps firm in your ways, Lord**

<sup>1</sup> *A Prayer of David*

Lord, hear a cause that is just,  
pay heed to my cry.

Turn your ear to my prayer:  
no deceit is on my lips. ℟

<sup>2</sup> From you may my judgment come forth.  
Your eyes discern the truth. ℟

<sup>3</sup> You search my heart, you visit me by night.  
You test me and you find in me no wrong.  
My words are not sinful <sup>4</sup> as are men's words. ℟

<sup>4</sup> My mouth does not transgress as others do;  
on account of the words of your lips,  
I closely watched the paths of the violent. ℟

I kept from violence because of your word,

<sup>5</sup> I kept my feet firmly in your paths;  
there was no faltering in my steps. ℟

<sup>6</sup> I am here and I call, you will hear me, O God.  
Turn your ear to me; hear my words.

<sup>7</sup> Display your great love, you whose right hand saves  
your friends from those who rebel against them. ℟

<sup>15</sup> As for me, in my justice I shall see your face  
and be filled, when I awake, with the sight of your glory. ℟

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.**

**COMMENT:** The form of the prayer is that of a traditional lament: an appeal to God for help, then the reason for the petition, and finally the anticipated vindication. This reading includes only the first and the last parts of the lament. For those who question whether their prayers are heard, vs. 15 offers some reassurance.

### **Post Communion**

Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that have taken holy things; may the ears which have heard your word be deaf to clamour and dispute; may the tongues which have sung your praise be free from deceit; may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love shine with the light of hope; and may the bodies which have been fed with your body be refreshed with the fullness of your life; glory to you for ever. **Amen**

### **Blessing**

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among *you*, and remain with *you* always. **Amen.**