

19th February 2017
2nd Sunday before Lent
Sexagesima
Green



Collect

Almighty God, who alone can bring order to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity: give your people grace so to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, among the many changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Romans 8:18-25 English Standard Version (ESV)

Future Glory

8¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Comment: Romans 8:18-25 is an introduction to the last section of Romans 8, Conquerors through Christ (Romans 8:26-39). Romans 8:18-25 discusses the place suffering has in the lives of God's people. It is precisely for this reason Paul later moves on in Romans 8:26-39 and discusses God's great plan of salvation and His love for us. In Romans 8:18-25 we find that the Christian will likely face difficult life situations, and yet there is the ultimate plan of salvation alongside the distressful life experiences. Although we belong to the Lord, we still are affected by an imperfect creation, with all its flaws. As Christians we are caught in the frailty of our human bodies, which belong to this passing age. We look to the full redemption of a spiritual body. For this reason hope well characterizes our lives. We inherently know and long for the full realisation of all of God's promises.

Matthew 6:25-34 English Standard Version (ESV)

Do Not Be Anxious

6²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin,²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.³⁴ Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Footnotes: a. or a single cubit to his stature; a cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimetres.

Comment: With the exception of the Lord’s Prayer, is there a better known part of the Sermon on the Mount than this? The core of the whole passage is in the very first sentences. The rest is elaboration of the issue: in whom or what have we placed our trust? From the moment we are born, security (money & health) is every person’s main concern. Jesus spoke of the birds and the flowers as examples of perfect trust. We all need to seek and do God’s will. God loves us so much that God will provide for the resources we need to be God’s faithful servants in whatever we are called to be and do. Much is made of the money question. Jesus was not minimising the importance of adequate resources for daily living. He was making sure that those in his audience did not seek those things above all else and neglect the true source of security – God.

Psalm 136 *Confitemini* Grail Psalter

℟️ O give thanks to the Lord for his love endures for ever.

¹ Alleluia! O give thanks to the Lord for he is good,
for his love endures for ever.

² Give thanks to the God of gods
for his love endures for ever.

³ Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his love endures for ever; **℟️**

⁴ who alone has wrought marvellous works,
for his love endures for ever;
⁵ whose wisdom it was made the skies,
for his love endures for ever;
⁶ who fixed the earth firmly on the seas,
for his love endures for ever.

✠ O give thanks to the Lord for his love endures for ever.

⁷ It was he who made the great lights,
for his love endures for ever;
⁸ the sun to rule in the day,
for his love endures for ever;
⁹ the moon and the stars in the night,
for his love endures for ever. ✠

¹⁰ The first-born of the Egyptians he smote,
for his love endures for ever.

¹¹ He brought Israel out from their midst,
for his love endures for ever;
¹² arm outstretched, with power in his hand,
for his love endures for ever. ✠

¹³ He divided the Red Sea in two,
for his love endures for ever;
¹⁴ he made Israel pass through the midst,
for his love endures for ever;
¹⁵ he flung Pharaoh and his force in the sea,
for his love endures for ever. ✠

¹⁶ Through the desert his people he led,
for his love endures for ever.

¹⁷ Nations in their greatness he struck,
for his love endures for ever.

¹⁸ Kings in their splendour he slew,
for his love endures for ever. ✠

¹⁹ Sihon, king of the Amorites,
for his love endures for ever;

²⁰ and Og, the king of Bashan,
for his love endures for ever. ✠

²¹ He let Israel inherit their land,
for his love endures for ever.

²² On his servant their land he bestowed,
for his love endures for ever.

²³ He remembered us in our distress,
for his love endures for ever. ✠

²⁴ And he snatched us away from our foes,
for his love endures for ever.

²⁵ He gives food to all living things,
for his love endures for ever.

²⁶ To the God of heaven give thanks,
for his love endures for ever.

✠ O give thanks to the Lord for his love endures for ever.

**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: In this psalm, one group says something and another group answers. Perhaps it was the psalm they used in Ezra 3:11. There it says, “They answered each other, praising and thanking the LORD. They said, ‘He is good. His kind love will always continue to Israel’.” The Jews called this psalm “the great hallel”. Other hallels are Psalms 113-118 and 135. They are psalms that praise the LORD (alleluia = Praise the LORD), But this psalm is different from the other psalms. One group of people tell part of the story of what God has done. Then the other people repeat a chorus (some words that are the same each time). The chorus says, “Because his kind love will always continue”. “Kind love” is a very special Bible word. The Jews wrote the psalms in their own language, Hebrew. The Hebrew word we translated “kind love” is “hesed”. Really, there is no English word that can translate “hesed”. “Kind love” is the best we can do. It comes from the old English Bible that translated it “lovingkindness”.

Post Communion

Merciful Father, who gave Jesus Christ to be for us the bread of life, that those who come to him should never hunger: draw us to the Lord in faith and love, that we may eat and drink with him at his table in the kingdom, where he is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Blessing

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always. **Amen.**