

Sunday 30th July 2017

Trinity 7

Proper 12 **Green**



Collect

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same; 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 8:26-39 English Standard Version (ESV)

Future Glory

8²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because^[a] the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,^[b] for those who are called according to his purpose.²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

God's Everlasting Love

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be^[c] against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.^[d] ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors

through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Footnotes: a. Or *that*. b. Some manuscripts *God works all things together for good, or God works in all things for the good*. c. Or *who is*. d. Or *Is it Christ Jesus who died... for us?*

COMMENT: Paul deals in very succinct, even lyrical, sentences with several subjects of utmost significance: prayer, the assurance of salvation, predestination, the sovereignty of divine love, the unbreakable spiritual bond between the believer and God. The whole reading should be approached not as systematic theology but as the experience of profound faith by one who knew whereof he spoke. This is a meditation on what it means to have a close, personal, faith relationship with God as one who is a child of God and joint heir with Jesus Christ. How do we pray when we don't really know how? That is the first question Paul answered. The Spirit helps us. Verse 31-39 have been used frequently to bring comfort to the bereaved at funeral services. These words are not to be reserved for times of mourning, but for every day and for all of life. Their soaring, lyrical phrases leave one breathless before the imaginative vision of what faith means for all who struggle with the countless storms with which life buffets us. The key to this assurance of our faith is God's sovereignty in life and death revealed for all time and eternity in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's Son. We are not alone. We live in God's world.... In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. Because God loves us, nothing will be able to separate us from God.

Matthew 13:31-52 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven

³¹ He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." ³³ He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Value

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Net

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸ When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

New and Old Treasures

⁵¹ “Have you understood all these things?” They said to him, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

COMMENT: More parables of the kingdom, obviously gathered from many occasions point out various characteristics of God’s reign in human affairs. Many scholars look at these isolated instances as presaging the time when all humanity would be governed by God’s love. “The Kingdom of Heaven” is not just about the after-life, but about a future experience of the whole universe governed by God’s love. **Mustard ...** the smallest seed ? the biggest tree ? Mustard seed is about 1 – 2 mm in diameter. It is botanically not the smallest seed, but in Jesus’ culture, mustard seed is the smallest among the plants familiar to them. In fact, it is often used to describe something small during the time. Mustard is an annual shrub, a small tree that is able to grow up to 8 feet in height (or much higher in the wild), which is the tallest among other herbs in a Jewish’s garden.

Psalm 105:1-11 *Confitemini Domino* Grail Psalter

℟ The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

¹ Alleluia!

Give thanks to the Lord, tell his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples. ℟

² O sing to him, sing his praise;
tell all his wonderful works!

³ Be proud of his holy name,
let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice. ℟

⁴ Consider the Lord and his strength;
constantly seek his face.

⁵ Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, the judgments he spoke.

℟ The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

⁶ O children of Abraham, his servant,
O sons of the Jacob he chose.

⁷ He, the Lord, is our God:
his judgments prevail in all the earth. **℟**

⁸ He remembers his covenant for ever,
his promise for a thousand generations,

⁹ the covenant he made with Abraham,
the oath he swore to Isaac. **℟**

¹⁰ He confirmed it for Jacob as a law,
for Israel as a covenant for ever.

¹¹ He said: "I am giving you a land,
Canaan, your appointed heritage."

⁴⁵ Alleluia! **℟**

**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: This psalm recites the national ideology and covenant doctrine as clearly as any passage in the OT. This opening segment and concluding doxology do no more than introduce the foundational theme that underlies all of the Hebrew Scriptures: Yahweh is not only Israel's god and covenant lord worthy of praise, but also the architect of its history.

Post Communion

Lord God, whose Son is the true vine and the source of life, ever giving himself that the world may live: may we so receive within ourselves the power of his death and passion that, in his saving cup, we may share his glory and be made perfect in his love; for he is alive and reigns, now and 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.**