

**Sunday 7 September 2025,  
Twelfth Sunday after Trinity**

**Collect:**

God of constant mercy,  
who sent your Son to save us:  
remind us of your goodness,  
increase your grace within us,  
that our thankfulness may grow,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for this week:**

*Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 1; Philemon 1-21, 15-16; Luke 14:25-33*

The main themes of Deuteronomy are summed up neatly by the six verses we read today: obedience to the law; establishment of the covenant; conditions for faithful living in the promised land; the responsibilities of the people. Failure to follow these rules will result, indeed does result in the break-up of the kingdom after the death of Solomon. The law is one of the main tools in place to enable the Hebrew people to remain focussed on the Lord. By contrasting the ways of the wicked and the righteous, Psalm 1 reinforces the point that life in God's presence is the only true way to travel.

The single chapter letter of Paul to Philemon is also concerned with obedience. Paul, Philemon and his slave Onesimus are all Christians. But Onesimus has run from his master to Paul. Paul is sending him back, mindful that they are all members of one family of faith. Family relationships are often tricky to navigate, so Paul carefully praises Philemon's faithful generosity while challenging him to deal well with Onesimus, despite the trouble he has caused. Once again, obedience to God's will should guide Philemon, Onesimus and Paul.

In the Gospel Jesus' use of the word 'hate' about family relationships can seem rather shocking. Even taken in a Semitic manner as 'detachment' it feels disturbing. But while Jesus isn't asking us to hate family or life he is driving home that commitment to God is total. The Old Testament prophets are continually upbraiding the chosen people for their selective commitment, when it has been made clear to them, from the early days of the scriptures in Deuteronomy that saying 'yes' to God means a wholehearted commitment, one which guides every moment of life and moulds us into building blocks of the divine Kingdom.

God of all mercy,  
by your grace you have set aside our sins  
and given us your healing:  
grant that we who are made whole in Christ  
may bring that healing to this broken world,  
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Readings for next week:**

*Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 14; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10*  
*Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity*