

Sunday 21 June 2026
Third Sunday after Trinity

Collect:

God our saviour,
look on this wounded world
in pity and in power;
hold us fast to your promises of peace
won for us by your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Readings for this week:

Jeremiah 20:7-13; Psalm 69:8-11, 18-20; Romans 6:1b-11; Matthew 10:24-39

For our Old Testament reading we have Jeremiah's fifth lament, his complaints about his life and the trouble the word of God gets him into. At its heart is the tradition of individual lament found also in the psalms of complaint. In this case, Jeremiah's suffering is a direct result of his vocation, his proclamation of God's word that brings him derision and persecution. Consequently, he struggles to stick to his God-given task. His words to God are strong, accusatory, but they are also both honest and aware that he cannot escape his calling. Having let out his troubles, he finds relief, consolation and the strength to go on. Psalm 69 is one of those psalms of lament, composed for use in worship during personal crisis and it echoes Jeremiah's situation. Beginning with complaint it moves through acts of repentance to reliance on God's saving help.

Paul has previously outlined his theology of salvation by God's grace. Now he has to answer the suggestion that, if this were the case, then the more we sin the more grace we would receive. Paul's reply is that a consequence of our turning to Christ must include our moral renewal. Because we are following the way of Christ we will behave as Christ did – with integrity. This, Paul thinks, is a lesson we easily forget, and so he reminds us of our responsibility. Our relationship with Christ directs our attitudes and behaviour. Which is also a message that Jesus is giving his disciples in the Gospel as he prepares to send them on a mission. It is part of a major body of teaching in Matthew's Gospel which can be seen to be responding to the intense social, economic, political and religious pressures the young Church was under. As Jesus was vilified and misunderstood, so too will his disciples be, but that must not stop them from openly proclaiming his teachings. While they may stand before judges who will try to stop them, even by death, they will also stand before God, whose power runs deeper, and who, in an echo of Jeremiah and the psalm, will vindicate them. Of course, this will not be easy, it will involve serious sacrifices and conflict, but if they focus on sharing the love of God, which is deeper even than love we give to or receive from our dearest ones, then the true grace that Paul is so concerned with, will be found.

O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
show us your glory as far as we can grasp it,
and shield us from knowing more than we can bear
until we may look upon you without fear;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Readings for next week:

Zechariah 4:1-6a, 10b-14; Psalm 125; Acts 12:1-11; Matthew 16:13-19
Feast of Ss Peter and Paul