

Sunday 5 July 2026
The Fifth Sunday after Trinity

Collect:

Almighty God,
send down upon your Church
the riches of your Spirit,
and kindle in all who minister the gospel
your countless gifts of grace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings for this week:

Zechariah 9:9-12; Psalm 145:8-15; Romans 7:15-25a; Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Today's Psalm and Old Testament reading work well together. The prophecy we hear from Zechariah heralds a coming king who will bring a new era of peace. This is an earthly monarch, while the Psalm deals with the nature and reign of God. However, Christian writers have seen in the image of a king humbly entering his kingdom on a donkey intimation of the rule of God in Christ, who also enters Jerusalem on a donkey. In its original context the Zechariah prophecy was holding out the hope of the rebuilding of the city following the return of the exiles from Babylon. The Psalm includes words addressed to God and words about God, but the result is the same, praise for the just reign of God.

Paul speaks very personally in this passage from his letter to the Roman Church. The heart of moral responsibility resides in us, in our innermost self, not with the law, or with God. The beginning of morality lies with remorse. But Paul also understands, intimately, that just wanting to do better is not always enough. The way Paul puts it, he may want to do a good thing but something inside him compels him otherwise. The real him wants to do right. What desires to do wrong is not the real Paul, it is sin. Left to himself without God's grace he would continue to be a prisoner, constrained by his human nature, at war with his mind, preventing him from doing right. Who can rescue him from this state? Faith in Jesus Christ, Christ who will be his ally in this internal battle.

Jesus understands our contradictory natures. We open our Gospel reading with him expressing frustration at the fickle attitudes of people who are neither satisfied with the austerity of John nor his own generosity. Jesus then evokes the concept of the concealed and revealed wisdom of God that we also find in Old Testament Wisdom Literature. By prioritising our own wisdom we miss the revelation God offers to those with humble and open minds. Jesus finishes with an inclusive offer of divine grace, a shared yoke of love and forgiveness.

Grant, O Lord, we beseech you,
that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered
by your governance,
that your Church may joyfully serve you in all godly quietness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings for next week:

Isaiah 55:1-13; Psalm 65: 8-13; Romans 8:1-11; Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
Trinity 6