

Sunday 26 July 2026
The Eighth Sunday after Trinity

Collect:

Lord God,
your Son left the riches of heaven
and became poor for our sake:
when we prosper save us from pride,
when we are needy save us from despair,
that we may trust in you alone;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Readings for this week:

1 Kings 3:5-12; Psalm 119:129-136; Romans 8:26-39; Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Solomon has just ascended to the throne of his father, David, in our reading from 1 Kings. Like his father before him, he has a close relationship with God, who has asked him to choose which blessing to have conferred upon him – wealth, long life, triumph over enemies or wisdom. Solomon, citing his own inexperience, chooses wisdom, so that he will be better able to look after the people whom he serves. It is a choice that will stand Solomon in good stead as he reigns for forty years and which includes his ability to discern the hand of God in the world, an appreciation of divine order and laws that our portion from Psalm 119 also praises.

Paul appreciates that God's laws were originally given to guide us in holy living, but he also acknowledges that we have built them up in such a way that they have become barriers, keeping us apart from a divine relationship. Instead, in this passage he offers something of the generosity of a God who knows our limitations and sends the Spirit to help us in, and through, our weaknesses. He assures us that nothing, no matter how terrible, can keep us from the love of God that transcends all the laws and restrictions we may be moved to place upon it.

In the Gospel, Matthew has brought together a selection of Jesus' sayings and shorter parables describing the Kingdom of heaven. It is such a huge subject, greater than we possibly comprehend, that Jesus uses a range of images to enable us to glimpse the overwhelming vitality of heaven. As the opening parables make clear, building God's kingdom in our own neighbourhood can begin with something very small – a gesture of kindness, a gift offered, a compliment made, a moment of intense listening – from which a great canopy of divine love can blossom and grow, offering shelter for all.

Strengthen for service, Lord,
the hands that have taken holy things;
may the ears which have heard your word
be deaf to clamour and dispute;
may the tongues which have sung your praise be free from deceit;
may the eyes which have seen the tokens of your love shine with the light of hope;
and may the bodies which have been fed with your body
be refreshed with the fullness of your life;
glory to you for ever. Amen.

Readings for next week:

Isaiah 55:1-5; Psalm 145:8-9, 15-22; Romans 9:1-5; Matthew 14:13-21
Ninth Sunday after Trinity/Lammas