

Readings + 9th Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 17 A + July 30, 2023

Prayer of the Day

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son you bring us into your reign of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

First Reading 1 Kings 3:5-12

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶ And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you; and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love, and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people, so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil; for who can govern this \ great people of yours?"

¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches, or for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you and no one like you shall arise after you.

Psalmody Psalm 119:129-136

Your decrees are wonderful; therefore I obey them with all my heart.

When your word is opened it gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.

I open my mouth and pant because I long for your commandments.

Turn to me and be gracious to me, as you always do to those who love your name.

Order my footsteps in your word; let no iniquity have dominion over me.

Rescue me from those who oppress me, and I will keep your commandments.

Let your face shine upon your servant and teach me your statutes.

My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your teaching.

Second Reading Romans 8:26-39

Paul writes: ²⁶ [T]he Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to God's purpose. ²⁹ For those whom God foreknew God also predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son of God, in order that the Son might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom God predestined God also called; and those whom God called God also justified; and those whom God justified God also glorified.

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² The One who did not withhold the very Son of God, who was given up for all of us, how will that God not give us along with the Son everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things

we are more than victorious through the One who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced 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.

Holy Gospel Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Matthew, Mark and Luke recount a version of the mustard seed parable.

³¹ Jesus put before the crowds another parable: “The reign of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man took and sowed in a field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

Only Matthew and Luke recount a version of the parable of the yeast.

³³ Jesus told them another parable: “The reign of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.

Only Matthew has the following parables of the hidden treasure, the pearl, and the dragnet,

along with the saying about taking the old and the new out of the treasury.

⁴⁴ “The reign of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵ Again, the reign of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, she went and sold all that she had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Again, the reign of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught [fish*] of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out 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 furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵² And Jesus said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the reign of heaven is like a householder who brings out of the household treasure what is new and what is old.”

** Jesus doesn't actually use the word fish in this parable.*