



COLLECT, READINGS AND REFLECTION
SUNDAY 26 JULY 2026 – Trinity 8

COLLECT

Almighty Lord and everlasting God,
we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern
both our hearts and bodies
in the ways of your laws
and the works of your commandments;
that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever,
we may be preserved in body and soul;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Psalm 119. 129-136

- 129 Your testimonies are wonderful; ♦
therefore my soul keeps them.
- 130 The opening of your word gives light; ♦
it gives understanding to the simple.
- 131 I open my mouth and draw in my breath, ♦
as I long for your commandments.
- 132 Turn to me and be gracious to me, ♦
as is your way with those who love your name.
- 133 Order my steps by your word, ♦
and let no wickedness have dominion over me.
- 134 Redeem me from earthly oppressors ♦
so that I may keep your commandments.
- 135 Show the light of your countenance upon your servant ♦
and teach me your statutes.
- 136 My eyes run down with streams of water, ♦
because the wicked do not keep your law.

A reading from the letter to the Romans, chapter 8, verses 26-39.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

'For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.'

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 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.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

At Morning Prayer, the Gospel is simply the second reading, people sit to hear it and is introduced in the same way as the first:

The second reading is from Matthew, chapter 13, verses 31-33, 44-52.

and then at the end:

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

For Eucharists/ Communion people stand to hear the Gospel. Everywhere except Fitz introduces it with an Acclamation (the blue bit), and then we all use the introduction and ending (the green bit):

Alleluia. **Alleluia.**

I am the light of the world, says the Lord. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Matthew, Chapter 13, verses 31-33, 44-52.

Glory to you, O Lord

And then at the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; 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.'

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

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

'Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.'

A Reflection from Hannah

This may not be your vernacular (!), but there is a scene in the first episode of the comedy *Red Dwarf* when Dave Lister wakes up from thousands of years asleep and... unsurprisingly... all of his peers are long since dead. The computer lets him know by saying:

'Everybody's dead Dave.'

But Dave can't quite believe this simple statement is true- he keeps asking supplementary questions:

'What, Captain Hollister?'

'Everybody's dead Dave.'

'What, Todhunter?'

'Everybody's dead Dave.'

And so it goes on. It's a bit like that in the pinnacle of the letter to the Romans, which we hear this week (and which happens to be my favourite bit of scripture). Many agree it's the absolute climax of the New Testament, and one of the most glorious passages of ancient writing- hope-filled and unequivocal. It states, clearly and without exception, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Praise be to God because Jesus has done it all- no matter what life brings, or how much of a mess we make- through Christ, the end of the story is to be caught up in the eternal love of God. And, just in case we are tempted to ask questions, put up obstacles, throw in suggestions, Paul spells it out:

'Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 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.'

Nothing... nothing... NOTHING!