

Sunday 26th July 2026

Bible Readings

Romans 8:26–39 NRSV

[26] 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. [27] 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. [28] We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. [29] 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. [30] And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. [31] What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? [32] 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? [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, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. [35] Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, 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 conquerors through him 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.

Matthew 13:31–33 and 44–52 NRSV

[31] He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his 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." [33] 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." [44] "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. [45] "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; [46] on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. [47] "Again, the kingdom 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 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."

Questions

- 1) How does the Holy Spirit help believers in their weakness?
- 2) What does it mean that the Spirit intercedes "according to the will of God"?
- 3) What does Romans 8:28 mean when it says that "all things work together for good"?
- 4) What is God's purpose for believers according to Romans 8:29?
- 5) What confidence does Paul give in Romans 8:31–34?
- 6) What can separate believers from the love of Christ?
- 7) What do the mustard seed and yeast teach about the kingdom of heaven?
- 8) What do the treasure and pearl reveal about the value of God's kingdom?
- 9) What is the meaning of the parable of the net?
- 10) How do Romans 8 and Matthew 13 speak to one another?

Extra:

Q11. How do these passages reveal the relationship between God's sovereignty and human response in the Kingdom of God?

Q12. What do Romans 8 and the parables of the Kingdom teach about the nature of Christian hope?

Q13. What do these passages teach about the Kingdom of God as both a present reality and a future fulfilment?

Nothing Can Separate Us from God's Love

Romans 8:26–39 & Matthew 13:31–33, 44–52

Key Theme

These passages remind us that God is always at work, even when we cannot see it. Paul assures us that the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness and that nothing can separate us from God's love. Jesus teaches that the Kingdom of Heaven often begins in small, hidden ways but is so valuable that it is worth giving everything to receive it. Together, these readings encourage us to trust God's unseen work, treasure his kingdom above all else, and live with hope and confidence in his unfailing love.

God Helps Us in Our Weakness

Sometimes we feel overwhelmed. We may struggle with illness, grief, uncertainty, or simply not know how to pray. Paul offers wonderful reassurance that we are never left to face these moments alone. He tells us that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us "with sighs too deep for words." Even when our prayers seem inadequate, or our faith feels weak, God understands the deepest longings of our hearts. The Spirit continues praying for us according to God's perfect will. This means that even the shortest or incomplete prayer matters; our relationship with God does not depend on the strength of our prayers but on the faithfulness of God's love.

God's Kingdom Often Grows Quietly

Jesus compares God's Kingdom to a tiny mustard seed and a little yeast mixed into dough. Both seem insignificant at first, yet both quietly transform everything around them. In our own lives, we sometimes expect God to work through dramatic events. Yet more often his work is gentle and gradual. A kind word, a faithful prayer, an act of forgiveness, or a simple invitation to worship may seem small, but God can use these ordinary moments to accomplish extraordinary things. Likewise, our own spiritual growth often happens slowly. As we continue to trust Christ, worship faithfully, read Scripture, and serve others, God is steadily shaping us into the likeness of his Son.

The Kingdom Is Worth Everything

The treasure hidden in a field and the pearl of great price teach us that knowing Christ is life's greatest treasure. The people in these parables gladly give up everything because they recognise the incomparable value of what they have found. Following Jesus sometimes asks us to reorder our priorities. It may require sacrifice, forgiveness, generosity, or courage. Yet Jesus assures us that nothing compares with belonging to God's Kingdom.

Paul reaches the same conclusion in Romans 8. Whatever hardships we experience, God's love remains constant. Nothing— not suffering, failure, fear, death, or any power in creation can separate us from the love revealed in Jesus Christ. This assurance gives us confidence to live boldly, knowing that our future is secure in God's hands.

Living This Week

As you go into the coming week, remember that God is still at work, even when you cannot see it. The Holy Spirit is praying with you and for you. God's Kingdom continues to grow through faithful acts of love and obedience. Above all, you are held securely in the love of Christ, a love that nothing can ever take away.

Questions for Personal Reflection

1. Where do you most need to trust the Holy Spirit's help at this stage of your life, especially when you feel weak or uncertain?
2. What "small seed" or quiet work of God can you recognise in your own life or in your church that has begun to bear fruit?

3. If God's Kingdom truly is life's greatest treasure, what might God be inviting you to place more fully into his hands this week?