

Sunday 2nd August 2026

Bible Readings

Romans 9:1-5 NRSV

[1] I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit— [2] I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. [3] For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. [4] They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; [5] to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.

Matthew 14:13-21 NRSV

[13] Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. [14] When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. [15] When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." [16] Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." [17] They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." [18] And he said, "Bring them here to me." [19] Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. [20] And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. [21] And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Questions

1. Why does Paul begin Romans 9 by expressing "great sorrow and unceasing anguish"?
2. What does Paul mean when he says he could wish himself "accursed and cut off from Christ" for the sake of his people (Romans 9:3)?
3. What blessings had God given to Israel according to Romans 9:4–5?
4. Why is it significant that Paul says Christ came from Israel "according to the flesh"?
5. Why does Jesus withdraw after hearing about John the Baptist's death (Matthew 14:13)?

6. What does the feeding of the five thousand reveal about Jesus' character?
7. Why do the disciples want to send the crowds away?
8. What is the significance of the five loaves and two fish?
9. Why are there twelve baskets of leftovers?
10. What is the theological link between Romans 9:1–5 and Matthew 14:13–21?

Extra:

- Q11. What do these passages teach about God's covenant faithfulness to Israel and its fulfilment in Christ?
- Q12. How does the feeding of the five thousand reveal Jesus' identity in relation to the Old Testament?
- Q13. How do Paul's sorrow in Romans 9 and Jesus' compassion in Matthew 14 shape a theology of Christian mission?

God's Compassion and His Faithful Provision

Romans 9:1–5 & Matthew 14:13–21

Key Theme

These two passages reveal the heart of God. In Romans 9, Paul expresses deep sorrow for his own people because they have not recognised Jesus as the promised Messiah. In Matthew 14, Jesus shows deep compassion for a hungry crowd by healing the sick and feeding more than five thousand people. Together, these passages remind us that God's love is not simply an idea—it is expressed through compassion, faithfulness, and generous provision.

A Heart That Cares for Others

Paul begins by speaking honestly about his grief. Although he is the apostle to the Gentiles, he never stops loving his own people. His sorrow reflects God's own desire that everyone should come to know him. Paul reminds us that genuine Christian faith should never make us indifferent to others. Instead, it should deepen our concern for those who are searching, struggling, or have not yet discovered God's love. His example challenges us to pray for others, to be patient with them, and to share our faith with humility and love.

Jesus Responds with Compassion

Matthew tells us that after hearing of John the Baptist's death, Jesus withdrew to a quiet place. He himself was grieving. Yet when the crowds followed him, he did not turn them

away. Instead, **"He had compassion on them."** Jesus healed the sick, taught the people, and then fed them.

This tells us something important about God. Compassion is not simply feeling sorry for someone. Compassion moves us to action. Jesus saw people as individuals with real needs. He cared for both their spiritual hunger and their physical hunger. As followers of Christ, we are called to show that same compassion in our homes, churches, workplaces, and communities.

God Uses What We Offer

The disciples looked at the five loaves and two fish and saw only scarcity. Jesus looked at the same meal and saw an opportunity for God's abundance. When the little that was available was placed into Jesus' hands, it became more than enough. Everyone was fed, and twelve baskets were left over.

This miracle reminds us that God often works through ordinary people and ordinary gifts. Our time..., our kindness..., our prayers..., our generosity... and our encouragement... may seem small, but when offered to Christ, God can use them in ways we could never imagine.

Trusting God's Faithfulness

Paul reminds us that God has remained faithful throughout Israel's history. Matthew shows that same faithful God present in Jesus Christ, providing for his people with generosity and love. Whether we are experiencing times of abundance or times of uncertainty, these passages encourage us to trust that God knows our needs before we do.

His provision may not always come in the way we expect, but his love never fails. As we place our lives into Christ's hands, we discover that God's grace is always greater than our limitations.

Questions for Reflection

1. Who has God placed on your heart to pray for or encourage, just as Paul cared deeply for his own people?
2. Where have you experienced God's provision in your own life, especially when your own resources seemed insufficient?
3. What "five loaves and two fish"—your gifts, time, abilities, or resources—might God be inviting you to place into his hands for the benefit of others?