

"Who will bring any charge" – for the Christian, God has already pronounced a verdict of not guilty and no charge can be brought.

**34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.**

"Who... condemns?" – those who are in Christ Jesus are not under condemnation, Romans 8:1, because (1) Christ Jesus died and paid the full penalty for us, (2) He is resurrected and alive and (3) is active on our behalf, interceding for us by the Father's side. A Friend in the highest place!

**35-36 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.'**

**SUMMARY** Paul assures us that God knows us, and being outside time He knew from the beginning that we would choose to know Him, through trusting what Jesus had done for us. He is for us, working for His best in all our circumstances, and whatever charge or accusation may be brought against us, the verdict is settled. Jesus died, paying the full price for our sin was resurrected and now sits in the place of supreme authority representing us to the Father.

**APPLICATION** The devil is a slanderer who works by trying to get us to believe his lies: God doesn't really love us, what we have done puts us beyond redemption, Jesus' power wasn't enough for us, no one will hear us now. Sometimes the truth becomes more clear if we take each lie and consider its opposite. Jesus died for us, God knows us, and is for us in life's attacks, working for good – getting things back into His order. Jesus conquered sin and death – and we are on the side of victory – His victory!

**QUESTION** *How do we know that God is for us, working for good, when it feels like we are on the side of defeat, not victory?*

**PRAYER** Father, as I come to You again through Jesus, I thank You for calling me, pursuing me, challenging me and helping me to respond to Your love – and have the assurance of being a part of Your kingdom.

Thank You for Your Son, Jesus, being the demonstration of the kingdom, and teaching us what it means.

May I recognise the working of Your kingdom with its life and growth, joy and peace. May I see Your kingdom coming more and more, both in the church and in the wider community. And may I be a kingdom bringer together with You. Amen.

"Shall... persecution... famine... danger or sword?" – Paul has proved that crisis situations do not break the bond of God's love. So what in life can? Suffering is part of the territory, as Psalm 44:22 reminds us, but so is God being with us.

**37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.**

**38-39 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

"I am convinced" – if God is for us, Romans 8:31, and no created thing can separate us, then our assurance and security in Him, Paul asserts, is a certainty.

# The Living Word

www.thelivingword.uk PRINT EDITION

Bible readings for Sunday, July 26, 2020, with explanatory notes

Bible study on the Revised Common Lectionary passages for **July 26**  
Prepare by reading the Bible passages beforehand – read again to reflect on the pulpit teaching

Theme: **God's kingdom order is also His assurance**

1 Kings 3:5-12 – God assures Solomon He will help him be a good king

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 – Nothing is as valuable as God's realm

Romans 8:26-39 – Our assurance is being securely held by God's love

and also Psalm 119:129-136

## 1 Kings 3:5-12 – God grants Solomon's request for help to rule well

*His request for a wise and discerning heart will be granted*

**5 At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want Me to give you."**

"At Gibeon" – the tabernacle was there, the ark was in Jerusalem, 1 Chron. 16:39, 2 Samuel 6.

"In a dream" – God often communicated with people in dreams.

• **For further study**, read Genesis 37:5 -10; Daniel 4:4-18, Matthew 1:20, 2:13,19.

**6 Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to Your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to You and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.**

"Kindness" – Hebrew *hesed*, which means upholding a covenant promise, and more generally, God's gracious and loving treatment of His nation. Covenant faithfulness is an important emphasis of the OT, Psalm 118:1-2, Deut. 7:9, 12.

**7 "Now, Lord my God, you have made Your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties.**

"A little child" – Solomon, aged about 20, needs to rely on God, which pleases Him (v.10).

**8 "Your servant is here among the people You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number.**

"A great people" – from one family living in Egypt, Gen. 46:26-27, now about four million.

**9-10 "So give Your servant a discerning heart to govern Your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of Yours?" The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this.**

"A discerning heart" – rather than wealth or power or military skill, he asks for the ability to hear all perspectives before ruling – the definition of a 'good king', Isaiah 11:2-5.

**11-12 So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this, and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be."**

"I will give you a wise and discerning heart" – or "mind", ESV. Not common sense as in 1 Kings 2:6,9, but supernatural wisdom to apply what God reveals, like the spiritual gift of 1 Cor. 12:7-8.

**SUMMARY** The encounter Solomon has with God in a dream is unusual because it is a two-way conversation. God is pleased that Solomon is not asking for wealth, power, or destruction of enemies, but for the means to govern well and bless others.

**APPLICATION** What God gives him is an impartation of spiritual insight and wisdom of the kind that would associate with the life of the Spirit in the Early Church. James, in his letter, tells us we should ask God for wisdom but we must ask with faith to receive it, James 1:5-6.

**QUESTION** *What wisdom or other impartation do we need? Are we asking for it?*

### Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 – Nothing is as valuable as God's realm

*God's order assures transformation rather than revolution*

31-32 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

"A mustard seed" – then the smallest known seed, which could become a large bush.

33 He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about thirty kilograms of flour until it worked all through the dough."

"Yeast... worked all through the dough" – enough for 50 good sized loaves, but the amount of yeast needed is miniscule. Like the mustard seed, the point is how transforming kingdom life is.

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."

"Like treasure hidden in a field" – paired with the finding of the fine pearl, vv.45-46 below. These discoveries were of such value, any sacrifice was worth making to get them. In ancient times hiding treasure this way was not uncommon.

45-46 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it."

"Looking for fine pearls" – the first seeker stumbled upon a treasure trove but this one was looking for it, perhaps in the wrong place. The point is the same – it is to take hold of even if it costs you everything. Nothing can buy salvation, but receiving Jesus as Saviour and Lord costs us our old life, pride and independence.

47-48 "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake

and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.

"Collected the good... but threw the bad away" – the drag-net being pulled on to the shore, like the wheat and weeds, Matt. 13:24-30, 38-43, teaches that the world has good and evil co-existing.

49-50 "This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

"The angels will come and separate" – only at the end of the age will there be a separation of the unredeemed, but until then, the church has the responsibility to cast the gospel before all of society.

51 "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied.

"Have you understood" – Jesus' teaching had revealed to them things that had been hidden, vv.34-35, giving them a better storeroom to draw on, v.52, than the scribes and Pharisees.

52 He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

"New treasures as well as old" – the order is important: the disciples were receiving an understanding of the New Covenant in Jesus and fuller message of the kingdom, through which the treasures of the old covenant would have new meaning.

The Living Word online with click-through links, every Wednesday for the week following – [www.thelivingword.uk](http://www.thelivingword.uk)

See also other Living Word publications  
[www.glowweobley.com](http://www.glowweobley.com) – join others in the latest suggested prayers for our community  
[believethegoodnews.com](http://believethegoodnews.com) – fresh encouragement from God's word today

**SUMMARY** The parables Jesus told illustrate the way the realm of God grows and brings its life even from insignificant beginnings. It may be something we just become increasingly aware of, or perhaps we have been searching in the wrong place before we find it, but it is of such unique value we would give up everything else to get it. A different picture of the kingdom comes from the image of fishermen hauling in a drag-net and then sorting the fish caught in it. The gospel net is set to enfold all of them, clean and unclean, but at the end there will be a separation.

This was a far cry from Messiah as a David-like military hero leading an uprising as part of God's judgment to bring in the kingdom in the future. They were both seeing, and learning, that the kingdom rule of God was happening now – the new treasure that makes the old useful again.

**APPLICATION** We, too, can miss God's kingdom if we confuse it with an institution or an exclusive kind of grouping. All the Lord needs us to do is to open ourselves to this dynamic spiritual life and transformation will follow.

**QUESTION** *Where do we see the dynamic spiritual growth of the kingdom that Jesus portrayed?*

### Romans 8:26-39 – Our assurance is of being held by God's love

*If we are in relationship with God, we know that He is working for our good*

26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.

"The Spirit Himself" – the third Person within the Trinity of God can bring prayer through us when words do not come.

"Wordless groans" – akin to praying in the Spirit, Jude 1:20; Ephesians 6:18.

27 And He who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

"Intercedes... in... the will of God" – the Holy Spirit's requests are in agreement with God, Matthew 18:19, and He always prays according to the Father's will.

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

"In all things" – references "our present sufferings", Romans 8:18. The promise is that in everything, God is working His good to bring conformity with Christ, Romans 8:20, and His purpose.

"Those... who have been called" – the object of the

promise, 'those who love Him', are believers in Jesus.

29 For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

"Those God foreknew" – means simply "knew beforehand". Unlike us, God is able to know beforehand who will respond to His call, v.30

30 And those He predestined, He also called; those He called, He also justified; those He justified, He also glorified.

"He predestined... called... justified... glorified" – four events with one still in the future, showing that God exists beyond our barriers of time.

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave Him up for us all – how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?

"He... did not spare... but gave Him up" – by doing what is much greater, we are assured that God will be graciously generous to us, like Romans 5:9-10.

33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.