

JULY 30, 2023
NINTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST



Solomon's prayer for justice and understanding.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52	Parables of the kingdom
Monday	1 Kings 3:5-12	Solomon's prayer for wisdom
Tuesday	Romans 8:26-39	God's love in Christ Jesus
Wednesday	Isaiah 30:18-26	God's promise to Zion
Thursday	Amos 5:10-15	Choose good instead of evil
Friday	Luke 6:37-42	Judging others
Saturday	Psalms 119:129-136	The glories of God's law
Sunday	Matthew 14:13-21	Jesus feeds the five thousand

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

"Give your servant [Solomon] therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil." 1 Kings 3:9a (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Come Holy Spirit, come Lord Jesus, give us your truth that we may judge with your steadfast love and mercy for all. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, for this food we thank you, and for your wisdom, understanding, and mercy we pray to you. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the Lord's face shine on you and teach you God's ways. (Psalm 119:135)



JULY 30, 2023

HYMN OF THE WEEK

*God of Grace and
God of Glory*



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When you have a conflict with someone, are you able to see the situation from the other person's perspective? Explain.
- What makes it difficult to be a fair judge of other people's thoughts and actions?

DEVOTIONS

Read: 1 Kings 3:5-12.

Humans have proven throughout the ages that they can explain away any thoughts and actions. Our own sense of truth and justice can be hurtful and unfair. We know how we can try to fool ourselves and others. Solomon also knew this, so he prayed to God for "*understanding to discern what is right*" (1 Kings 3:11b). The Hebrew literally says, "to hear justice." That is, to let Solomon's mind perceive and hear real justice on behalf of others. This is a daring prayer that puts others before his—and our own—interests. Our imperfect sense of justice and truth needs the humility of Solomon to recognize that God's truth stands out from our own. A good example is when the disciples heard the many parables of Jesus. Perhaps the greater wisdom would have been to acknowledge that they really did not understand them (Matthew 13:51).

Discuss: When have you prayed for wisdom and understanding?

Pray: **God of justice and truth, give us a humble heart that we may see and judge people with mercy and understanding that dares to love others through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings for this week, how might you serve others humbly and with understanding from their viewpoint?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Jesus told parables to teach people. A parable is a story to explain a moral or spiritual lesson. Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 includes five different parables that Jesus told to the disciples. Each time, he begins by saying, "*The kingdom of heaven is like ...*". Choose to read one of the five parables and then think or talk about what Jesus is telling you about the kingdom of heaven.

Pray: **Dear God, thank you for Jesus who teaches us about the kingdom of heaven. Help us to take time to learn and to tell others about what Jesus has taught us. Amen.**

