

## READINGS AND REFLECTION FOR THE 17<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

<https://www.usccb.org/bible/readings/070920.cfm>

### FIRST READING

A reading from the First Book of Kings 3:5. 7-12

*You have asked for a discerning judgement for yourself,  
here and now I do what you ask.*

The Lord appeared in a dream to Solomon during the night.  
God said, 'Ask what you would like me to give you'.

Now, Lord my God, you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am a very young man, unskilled in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of this people of yours that you have chosen, a people so many its number cannot be counted or reckoned. Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil, for who could govern this people of yours that is so great?



It pleased the Lord that Solomon should have asked for this. 'Since you have asked for this' the Lord said 'and not asked for long life for yourself nor riches nor the lives of your enemies, but have asked for a discerning judgement for yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as none before you has had and none will have after you.

The Word of the Lord.

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM**

PS 118

**RESPONSE**

***LORD HOW I LOVE YOUR LAW!***

1. My part, I have resolved, O Lord, is to obey your word.

The law from your mouth means more to me

than silver and gold.

***LORD HOW I LOVE YOUR LAW!***

2. Let your love be ready to console me by your promise to your servant.

Let your love come to me and I shall live

for your law is my delight.

***LORD HOW I LOVE YOUR LAW!***

3. That is why I love your commands more than finest gold.  
That is why I rule my life by your precepts:  
I hate false ways.                    **LORD HOW I LOVE YOUR LAW!**

4. Your will is wonderful indeed; therefore I obey it.  
The unfolding of your word gives light  
and teaches the simple.            **LORD HOW I LOVE YOUR LAW!**

### **SECOND READING**

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to Romans            8:28-30

*To become true images of his Son.*

We know that by turning everything to their good God co-operates with all those who love him, with all those that he has called, according to his purpose. They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers.

He called those he intended for this; those he called, he justified, and with those he justified, he shared his glory.

The Word of the Lord.

### **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

I call you friends, says the Lord,  
because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father.  
*Jn 15: 15*

## GOSPEL

A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew  
*He sells everything he owns and buys it.*

13:44-52

**T**he kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.



‘Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just to throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

‘Have you understood all this?’ They said, ‘Yes’. And he said to them, ‘Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old’.

The Gospel of the Lord.

*The Jerusalem Bible*, by Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd

The Gospel of the Lord.

## REFLECTION

In his Letter to the Romans, Paul writes about our journey growing in the image of God and the likeness of Christ. Paul believes that, no matter what happens in our lives, God can use it for good. God will always cooperate with love, no matter how feeble our efforts.

Paul uses the language and concepts of his day to help us understand how God's knowledge of and love for us is foundational. God's knowing of us enables our knowing of God. God's fundamental disposition applies to every person and is not dependant on time. God's 'knowing' of us carries with it all the intimacy of how 'knowing' is used in the Scriptures - a knowledge that comes only through communion in love.

At the same time, for our awareness and realisation of God's knowledge and love for us, Paul speaks of our need to respond in faith, hope and love. For Paul, this applies clearly to people who know themselves called to belong to Jesus Christ. We may not be the best judges about our own or others' choices – confusing the wheat with the weeds. However, what may be physical or moral disasters in our lives can be used for good if we keep on trying to be faithful. God's sustaining love is always surrounding us.

Jesus uses parables for us to glimpse the Kingdom and vision of God. To know and love God is the priceless and joy-filled treasure hidden in the field which can be 'purchased' only by someone who 'sells all he has'. The merchant cuts through the dross and through what is false to discern the beauty of the true pearl. Like fishers harvesting their catch, Jesus reveals that what we do now matters! In our choices day by day – as unclear as they may be – we will find life both now and for eternity in our entrusting ourselves to God.

A wonder for us all to reflect upon amid all the dross in our lives is the Gospel truth that we ourselves – in our diversity and imperfections - are treasure which Jesus continues to treasure. Faithful to God's knowledge and love for us, Jesus has demonstrated this through who he is, through all he has revealed and by how he lived his life and death for us and continues to be for us with the Father and the Spirit in glory. Like Solomon, let's pray and seek the gifts of wisdom and discernment as part of our own humble journeys in faith, hope and love.

from Patricia Stevenson RSJ and Michael Fallon MSC