

Readings and Prayers for 15 August 2021: TRINITY 11 FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT (3): PATIENCE & SELF-CONTROL

Psalm 37:1-8

This Psalm recognises the difficulty of remaining patient in the face of wrongdoing.

- ¹ Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;
² for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.
³ Trust in the LORD and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
⁴ Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.
⁵ Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will do this:
⁶ he will make your righteous reward shine like
the dawn,
your vindication like the noonday sun.
⁷ Be still before the LORD
and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.
⁸ Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret – it leads only to evil.

James 3:1-5,13-17

In the first part of this passage James reflects on the dangers of a loose tongue before offering more general guidance for holy living.

- ¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. ² We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check. ³ When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴ Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵ Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

- ¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵ Such 'wisdom' does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶ For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

- ¹⁷ But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

Matthew 13:3-9,18-23

Even after 2000 years, the familiar parable of the Sower, and the interpretation Jesus gives to his disciples, continue to provide fertile material for reflection.

- ³ Jesus told the crowd many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.'

- ¹⁸ 'Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ when anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.'

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God of glory, the end of our searching, help us to lay aside all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom, and to give all that we have to gain the pearl beyond all price, through our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Post Communion

Lord of all mercy, we your faithful people have celebrated that one true sacrifice which takes away our sins and brings pardon and peace: by our communion keep us firm on the foundation of the gospel and preserve us from all sin; through Jesus Christ our Lord.