

Readings + 18th Sunday after Pentecost, Lect. 26 A + Sept. 27, 2026

Prayer of the Day

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

First Reading Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

The word of the LORD came to me: ²What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, “The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge”? ³As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

²⁵Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

²⁶When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. ²⁷Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. ²⁸Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. ²⁹Yet the house of Israel says, “The way of the Lord is unfair.” O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

³⁰Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. ³¹Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³²For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

Psalmody Psalm 25:1-9 [10]

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

Let none who look to you be put to shame; rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

Show me your ways, O LORD, and teach me your paths.

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.

Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

You are gracious and upright, O LORD; therefore you teach sinners in your way.

You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithfulness to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.

Second Reading Philippians 2:1-13

Paul writes: ¹If then there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

⁶who, though existing in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped,

⁷but relinquished it all, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,
 ⁸ he humbled himself
 and became obedient to the point of death—
 even death on a cross.
⁹ Therefore God exalted him even more highly
 and gave him the name
 that is above every other name,
¹⁰ so that at the name given to Jesus
 every knee should bend,
 in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue should confess
 that Jesus Christ is Lord,
 to the glory of God the Father.
¹² Therefore, my beloved, just as you have
always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but
much more now in my absence, work on your
own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is
God who is at work in you, enabling you both to
will and to work for his good pleasure.

Holy Gospel Matthew 21:23-32

*Matthew, Mark, and Luke all have what's in
verses 23-27, all very similar. Only Matthew
retells the parable (vv. 28-32).*

²³ When Jesus entered the temple, the chief
priests and the elders of the people came to him
as he was teaching, and said, “By what authority
are you doing these things, and who gave you this
authority?” ²⁴ Jesus said to them, “I will also ask

you one question; if you tell me the answer, then
I will also tell you by what authority I do these
things. ²⁵ Did the baptism of John come from
heaven, or was it of human origin?” And they
argued with one another, “If we say, ‘From
heaven,’ he will say to us, ‘Why then did you not
believe him?’ ²⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’
we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as
a prophet.” ²⁷ So they answered Jesus, “We do
not know.” And Jesus said to them, “Neither will
I tell you by what authority I am doing these
things.

²⁸ “What do you think? A man had two sons;
he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in
the vineyard today.’ ²⁹ He answered, ‘I will not’;
but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ The
father went to the second and said the same; and
he answered, ‘I go, sir’; but he did not go.
³¹ Which of the two did the will of his father?”
They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “I tell
you the truth, the tax collectors and the
prostitutes are going into the dominion of God
ahead of you. ³² For John came to you in the way
of righteousness and you did not believe him, but
the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed
him; and even after you saw it, you did not
change your minds and believe him.”