

**37** Jesus answered, *"The man who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man; 38 the field is the world; the good seed is the people who belong to the Kingdom;*

Today's readings for your perusal are: Psalm 139: 1-12, 23-24, Romans 8: 12-25 and Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43.

### **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**

The Psalm is a Prayer for God to examine the heart of the believer and see their true devotion. Like Job, the Psalmist firmly claims his loyalty to the Lord. Nowhere (outside of Job in the Bible) do you find an expression of such profound awareness of how awesome it is to ask God to examine not only the Psalmist's life but also the Psalmist's soul.

This Psalm is not written by someone who is trying to hide from God, or to run away from God because he is a sinner, far from it, here is a person who knows very well that they cannot escape God and God's judgement and who finds nothing to regret in knowing such a truth. And this truth is something that many of us need to be aware of today. There is no point trying to hide anything from God because God knows everything there is about you and sees into our heart that is why the Psalmist in complete faith prays to Him: **1** *Lord, you have examined me and you know me. 2 You know everything I do; from far away you understand all my thoughts. 3 You see me, whether I am working or resting; you know all my actions. 4 Even before I speak, you already know what I will say. 5 You are all around me on every side; you protect me with your power. 6 Your knowledge of me is too deep; it is beyond my understanding.* God knows each one of us perfectly, he sees everything that we do or say. The Bible teaches us and reminds us clearly that we, none of us can hide from God and for many Christians this gives them peace knowing that God is always there for you and me. This is what the Psalmist is saying and to which we as men and women of faith agree. **7** *Where could I go to escape from you?* [The

answer is simple - nowhere! Because it does not matter where we are:] **10** *you would be there to lead me, you would be there to help me.*

For us and the Psalmist it doesn't matter what we do or where we go we know that our Lord is with us, looking after us and protecting and guiding us through life and that is indeed a comfort to one who believes. In fact, for all who are searching and seeking this Psalm offers words of comfort and care that will welcome them home. Read these words of the Psalm again later and take them to heart, for God indeed knows you as only a caring heavenly Father can, so speak to the Lord and say to him with all earnest:

**23** *Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. 24 Find out if there is any evil in me and guide me in the everlasting way.*

Paul asked this of God and here in his letter to the Roman church he considers how the new life in Christ should be lived. **12** *So then, my friends, we have an obligation, but it is not to live as our human nature wants us to. 13 For if you live according to your human nature, you are going to die; but if by the Spirit you put to death your sinful actions, you will live.* Paul's answer is that we are to live, not according to the flesh or our bodily desires, but according to the Spirit of God who raised Christ from the dead. Thus, we become children of God, **14** *Those who are led by God's Spirit are God's children. 15 For the Spirit that God has given you does not make you slaves and cause you to be afraid; instead, the Spirit makes you God's children, and by the Spirit's power we cry out to God, "Father! my Father!"* Paul teaches us here that the Holy Spirit is the "*Spirit of adoption.*" The word adoption means that we have been brought into God's family even though we were previously outsiders, unrelated to Him in any way. We were outsiders because we were sinners who served Satan, who is the master of this fallen world, in other words before we knew God, we followed the world's ways. But God in His great mercy redeemed us and purchased us with the

blood of His Son. Think of yourself as a child of God: loved, accepted, and empowered by His unconditional love for you, isn't it great to know that? That's why Paul said: **16** *God's Spirit joins himself to our spirits to declare that we are God's children.* Because God has adopted us into His family this means that we are able to cry out 'Abba, Father' as Christ did, with the promise that if we suffer with him, we shall be glorified with him. **17** *Since we are his children, we will possess the blessings he keeps for his people, and we will also possess with Christ what God has kept for him; for if we share Christ's suffering, we will also share his glory.* One thing that is true here is that Paul acknowledges that as Christians we will suffer. He does not hide this fact, and neither should we disregard it, for as Christians we are called upon to recognise that suffering, acknowledge it and glorify God still. We cannot escape suffering, life itself causes pain and suffering to occur, and especially when we as Christians stand in opposition to what the world wants. Paul suffered greatly during his lifetime – shipwrecks, beatings that left him near death, abandonment of friends, imprisonment and eventually execution. The Bible teaches us that all of us face various forms of suffering in our lives and this leaves us wondering how can we withstand the suffering? The answer is in asking God to help you as he has helped Paul, he gave Paul an attitude of confidence that earthly sufferings cannot come close to comparing to the glory that all believers will one day see and this brings us comfort knowing that through Christ we are redeemed.

**18** *I consider that what we suffer at this present time cannot be compared at all with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.. ....* **24** *For it was by hope that we were saved; but if we see what we hope for, then it is not really hope. For who of us hopes for something we see?* **25** *But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*

Yes, we hope for what we do not see, this can also be seen in the Psalmist's yearnings to know God better and to have God search

him so that he can gain God's promised freedom, a promise we cannot see yet yearn for, a promise made by the sacrifice of Christ our King and a sacrifice that makes our suffering load a lot lighter and we see this in the parable of the wheat and the weeds.

**24** *Jesus told them another parable: "The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man sowed good seed in his field. 25 One night, when everyone was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. The weeds referred here are thought to be a plant called 'Darnel', which is very similar looking to growing wheat and is hard to distinguish one from the other, 'darnel' is a poisonous weed, and this weed symbolises the suffering and the ways we can suffer in the world. In this parable Jesus explains that the field represents the world in which we live and we need to recognise that as professing Christians we live side by side with the people who deny Christ or who follow the evil one, again these are the weeds. The parable reminds us that we live in a mixed world and this parable refers to the judgment that is to come. Jesus reminds us that there will be no errors in judgement, appearances will not count but God's law and decision will clearly be seen. This means that we cannot put people into neat little boxes and pre-judge them, instead let us shine brightly in this dark world so that the people of the world can look towards us and through us come to know the risen Christ, after all it is only through Christ that the unbelievers or sinners can be saved. Jesus is telling us here that all men and women of faith are called to work in the harvest fields of this world, so let us plant good seed and allow the Lord to harvest it.*

**37** *Jesus answered, "The man who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man; 38 the field is the world; the good seed is the people who belong to the Kingdom; the weeds are the people who belong to the Evil One; 39 and the enemy who sowed the weeds is the Devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvest workers are angels. 40 Just as the weeds are gathered up and burned in the fire, so the*

*same thing will happen at the end of the age: **41** the Son of Man will send out his angels to gather up out of his Kingdom all those who cause people to sin and all others who do evil things, **42** and they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where they will cry and gnash their teeth. **43** Then God's people will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Listen, then, if you have ears!*

### PRAYER

**23** *Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. **24** Find out if there is any evil in me and guide me in the everlasting way.*

Father examine me today I pray, know me inside and out, test me Lord and discover my thoughts and then guide me with the Holy Spirit so that I can carry out your work and will here on earth. Guide me God and help me understand your Word so that I can learn from it and live my life according to your Will. Help me be a better person, a true servant of Christ. You taught us that if we put our trust in you and only you then you will make our paths straight.

Today Lord I want to walk with you in those straight path that lead to heaven. Help me on my way to pick up others and bring them to Christ and His peace as you have brought me. I know that there are many around me and in my own family, who are not believers in you or your Son Jesus. Help me to plan the seeds of faith in them so that through my witness and my prayers they will find you and be saved, I pray this in Jesus name.

I also pray today Lord for the people of this world who are struggling with the Covid 19 pandemic, help us all to do our bit and follow the medical guidance, but in you holy name I pray that this terrible virus will be defeated and a cure be found. I pray and ask that you bless the doctors and nurses and all who

are key workers in our societies, bless them and keep them I pray. Help those who are grieving today, bring them your comfort and surround them with your love and bring them your peace.

Help us all Lord to turn to you and to listen to your Wisdom including helping us to follow the guidance that is out there in our countries to wear face masks, to social distance and do what we have to do to bring an end to this virus' spread. The people are worried Lord and so we pray again in your Holy Name for peace and so we ask you to strengthen us by the prayer that you taught us to say:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever Amen.