

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost, September 12.

The Collect and Psalms will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer. The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from the Lexham English Bible.

The Collect: O God, whose blessed Son came into the world that he might destroy the works of the devil and make us children of God and heirs of eternal life: Grant that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves as he is pure; that, when he comes again with power and great glory, we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Track 1 Old Testament: Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

24 And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem; he summoned the elders of Israel, their heads, their judges, and their officials, and they presented themselves before God. 2 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says Yahweh the God of Israel: 'Long ago your ancestors—Terah the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor—lived beyond the river, and they served other gods. 3 I took your ancestor Abraham from beyond the river and led him through all the land of Canaan, and I increased his offspring;

14 "So now, revere Yahweh and serve him in sincerity and faithfulness; remove the gods that your ancestors served beyond the river and in Egypt, and serve Yahweh. 15 But if it is bad in your eyes to serve Yahweh, choose for yourselves today whom you want to serve, whether it is the gods that your ancestors served beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve Yahweh." 16 And the people answered and said, "Far be it from us that we would forsake Yahweh to serve other gods, 17 for Yahweh our God brought us and our ancestors from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery, and did these great signs before our eyes. He protected us along the entire way that we went, and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. 18 And Yahweh drove out all the people before us, the Amorites who live in the land. We will serve Yahweh, for he is our God."

19 But Joshua said to the people, "You cannot serve Yahweh, for he is a holy and jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. 20 If you forsake Yahweh and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster to you; he will destroy you after he has done good to you." 21 And the people said to Joshua, "No, we will serve Yahweh." 22 And Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves to serve Yahweh." And they said, "We are witnesses." 23 He said, "Remove the foreign gods that are in your midst, and incline your hearts to Yahweh the God of Israel." 24 And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve Yahweh our God, and we will listen to his voice." 25 So Joshua made a covenant with the people on that day, and he established for them a statute and a judgment at Shechem.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People

Track 1 Psalm: Psalm 78:1-7

1 Hear my teaching, O my people; *
 incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
2 I will open my mouth in a parable; *
 I will declare the mysteries of ancient times.
3 That which we have heard and known,
 and what our forefathers have told us, *
 we will not hide from their children.
4 We will recount to generations to come
 the praiseworthy deeds and the power of the Lord, *
 and the wonderful works he has done.
5 He gave his decrees to Jacob
 and established a law for Israel, *
 which he commanded them to teach their children;
6 That the generations to come might know,
 and the children yet unborn; *
 that they in their turn might tell it to their children;
7 So that they might put their trust in God, *
 and not forget the deeds of God,
 but keep his commandments;

Track 2 First Lesson: Wisdom of Solomon 6:12-16 or Amos 5:18-24

Wisdom of Solomon: will be read from the New Revised Standard Bible

12 Wisdom is radiant and unfading,

and she is easily discerned by those who love her,

and is found by those who seek her.

13 She hastens to make herself known to those who desire her.

14 One who rises early to seek her will have no difficulty,

for she will be found sitting at the gate.

15 To fix one's thought on her is perfect understanding,

and one who is vigilant on her account will soon be free from care,

16 because she goes about seeking those worthy of her,

and she graciously appears to them in their paths,

and meets them in every thought.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Amos 5: 18 – 24

18 Alas, those who desire the day of Yahweh, why is this for you the day of Yahweh? It will be darkness and not light! 19 It will be as if a man fled from a lion and a bear met him; or he went into the house and leaned his hand against the wall and a snake bit him. 20 Is not the day of Yahweh darkness and not light, and pitch dark with no brightness in it? 21 "I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your assemblies. 22 Yes, even if you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them, and I will not look at the fellowship offerings of your fattened animals. 23 Remove from me the noise of your songs, and I do not want to hear the melody of your harps! 24 But let justice roll on like the water, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Track 2 Psalm: Wisdom of Solomon 6:17-20 or Psalm 70

17 The beginning of wisdom is the most sincere desire for instruction,

and concern for instruction is love of her,

18 and love of her is the keeping of her laws,
and giving heed to her laws is assurance of immortality,
19 and immortality brings one near to God;
20 so the desire for wisdom leads to a kingdom.

Psalm 70

1 Be pleased, O God, to deliver me; *
 O Lord, make haste to help me.
2 Let those who seek my life be ashamed
 and altogether dismayed; *
 let those who take pleasure in my misfortune
 draw back and be disgraced.
3 Let those who say to me “Aha!” and gloat over me turn back, *
 because they are ashamed.
4 Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; *
 let those who love your salvation say for ever,
 “Great is the Lord!”
5 But as for me, I am poor and needy; *
 come to me speedily, O God.
6 You are my helper and my deliverer; *
 O Lord, do not tarry.

Epistle Epistle: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

13 Now we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, concerning those who have fallen asleep, so that you will not grieve as also the rest, who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, thus also God will bring those who have fallen asleep through Jesus together with him. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who remain until the Lord’s coming, will not possibly precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who remain, will be snatched away at the same time

together with them in the clouds for a meeting with the Lord in the air, and thus we will be together with the Lord always. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's People

Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13

25 “Then the kingdom of heaven may be compared to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Now five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish ones took their lamps, they did not take olive oil with them. 4 But the wise ones took olive oil in flasks with their lamps. 5 And when the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. 6 But in the middle of the night there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ 7 Then all those virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish ones said to the wise ones, ‘Give us some of your olive oil, because our lamps are going out!’ 9 But the wise ones answered saying, “Certainly there will never be enough for us and for you! Go instead to those who sell olive oil and buy some for yourselves.’ 10 But while they had gone away to buy it the bridegroom arrived, and those who were ready went inside with him to the wedding celebration, and the door was shut. 11 And later the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open the door for us!’ 12 But he answered and said, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you!’ 13 Therefore be on the alert, because you do not know the day or the hour!

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On November 12 we celebrate the life of Charles Simeon Priest. Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses.

The historian Thomas Macaulay said about Charles Simeon, “If you knew what his authority and influence were, and how they extended from Cambridge to the most remote corners of England, you would allow that his real sway in the Church was far greater than that of any primate.”

Simeon’s conversion, in 1779, while still a student, occurred as he was preparing himself to receive Holy Communion, an act required of undergraduates at the University. His first Communion had been a deeply depressing and discouraging experience because of his use of the popular devotional tract, *The Whole Duty of Man*, which emphasized law and

obedience as the means of receiving the Sacrament worthily. When he was again preparing for Communion before Easter, he was given a copy of Bishop Thomas Wilson's Instructions for the Lord's Supper. Here was a quite different approach, which recognized that the law could not make one righteous and that only the sacrifice of Christ, perceived by faith, could enable one to communicate worthily. This time, the experience of Holy Communion was one of peace and exhilaration, a new beginning of a Christian life whose influence is difficult to exaggerate.

In 1782, the year of his graduation from King's College, Cambridge, he was placed in charge of Trinity Church in that city, while still a deacon. He remained Rector there for 54 years, despite intense early opposition from the churchwardens and congregation over his evangelical preaching.

Simeon's influence and authority developed slowly, but he eventually became the recognized leader of the evangelical movement in the Church of England. He helped to found the Church Missionary Society and was active in recruiting and supporting missionaries, including Henry Martyn. As a preacher, he ranks high in the history of Anglicanism. His sermons were unfailingly biblical, simple, and passionate.

The influence of Simeon and his friends was thus described by the historian William Edward Hartpole Lecky: "They gradually changed the whole spirit of the English Church. They infused into it a new fire and passion of devotion, kindled a spirit of fervent philanthropy, raised the standard of clerical duty, and completely altered the whole tone and tendency of the preaching of its ministers."

Simeon died on November 13, 1836, in Cambridge, and was buried at King's College.

Let us pray: O loving God, we know that all things are ordered by your unerring wisdom and unbounded love: Grant us in all things to see your hand; that, following the example and teaching of your servant Charles Simeon, we may walk with Christ in all simplicity and serve you with a quiet and contented mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**