

A reading from the first book of Samuel.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Saul rose and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph,  
with three thousand chosen men of Israel,  
to seek David in the Wilderness of Ziph.

David and Abishai went to the army by night;  
there Saul lay sleeping within the encampment,  
with his spear stuck in the ground at his head;  
and Abner and the army lay around him.

Abishai said to David,

“God has given your enemy into your hand today;  
now therefore let me pin him to the ground  
with one stroke of the spear;

I will not strike him twice.”

But David said to Abishai,

“Do not destroy him;  
for who can raise his hand against the Lord’s anointed,  
and be guiltless?”

So David took the spear  
that was at Saul’s head and the water jar,  
and they went away.

No one saw it, or knew it, nor did anyone awake;  
for they were all asleep,  
because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them.

Then David went over to the other side,  
and stood on top of a hill far away,  
with a great distance between them.

David called aloud to Saul,

“Here is the spear, O king!

Let one of the young men come over and get it.

The Lord rewards everyone for his righteousness  
and his faithfulness;

for the Lord gave you into my hand today,

but I would not raise my hand  
against the Lord’s anointed.

Ziph = **ZIF**

Abishai = uh-**BISH**-ay-eye

Abner = **AB-nuhr**



PAUSE for **THREE** seconds then  
look up at the people and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

A reading from the first letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

It is written,  
“The first man, Adam, became a living being”;  
the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.  
But it is not the spiritual that is first,  
but the physical, and then the spiritual.  
The first man was from the earth, made of dust;  
the second man is from heaven.  
As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust;  
and as is the man of heaven,  
so are those who are of heaven.  
Just as we have borne the image of the one of dust,  
we will also bear the image of the one of heaven.

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Pause for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## GOSPEL READING – C 07

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

*Glory to you, O Lord.*

Jesus said to the crowd

“I say to you,

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,  
bless those who curse you,  
pray for those who abuse you.

If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also;  
and from anyone who takes away your coat  
do not withhold even your shirt.

Give to everyone who begs from you;  
and if anyone takes away your goods,  
do not ask for them again.

Do to others as you would have them do to you.

“If you love those who love you,  
what credit is that to you?

For even sinners love those who love them.

If you do good to those who do good to you,  
what credit is that to you?

For even sinners do the same.

If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive,  
what credit is that to you?

Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

But love your enemies,  
do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.

Your reward will be great,  
and you will be children of the Most High;  
for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked.

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged;  
do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.

Forgive, and you will be forgiven;  
give, and it will be given to you.

A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over,  
will be put into your lap;

for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## SCRIPTURE IN DEPTH

### Reading I: 1 Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23

First Samuel contains two versions of this episode, in which David spares King Saul after being hunted down by the king. The other version is in 1 Sam 24:1-22.

The two versions differ considerably in detail, but both reflect one of the most attractive features of David's character—his magnanimity.

Both versions, however, express something more, namely, the royal ideology according to which David is reluctant to put forth his hand against the Lord's anointed.

This reading matches the Gospel, an extract from the Great Sermon that inculcates Jesus' demand for forgiveness toward others, as God has forgiven us.

### Responsorial Psalm: 103:1-2, 3-4, 8, 10, 12-13

As would be expected, portions of this psalm are frequently used in the liturgy. The same selection of verses occurs on the seventh Sunday of the year in series A and on the eighth Sunday of the year in series B.

In our comments for the latter, it is pointed out that Psalm 103 is an individual's thanksgiving after some personal trial (perhaps sickness—see the second stanza). It emphasizes the kindness and mercy of Yhwh (note especially the refrain: "The Lord is kind and merciful").

Today the psalm seems to be intended as a response to verses 1 Samuel 26:22-23 in the First Reading, although 1 Sam 26 speaks of God's rewarding human righteousness and faithfulness. We will discover the same quality of grace and reward in today's Gospel reading.

### Reading II: 1 Corinthians 15:45-49

Let us first remind ourselves of what we have frequently observed before, namely, that Paul's letters are not abstract theologizings but responses to highly concrete situations in his churches.

Exegetes have long agreed that in this passage Paul is polemicizing against some other view. He asserts emphatically that the physical Adam was first, and the spiritual Adam second.

Commentators have contrasted this statement with Philo's exegesis of the two stories of the creation of man and woman in Gen 1 and 2. He took the human being created in

Genesis 1:26 to be the heavenly, archetypal human being, and the Adam of Genesis 2-3 to be empirical, fallen humanity, and built up a dualistic anthropology of a Platonic kind.

More recently Philo's exegesis has been regarded as one form of a widespread Gnostic anthropology. This is what Paul is polemicizing against—in the form in which it was held by the Corinthian Gnostics.

According to this view, the souls of the Gnostic elite consisted of divine sparks emanating from the heavenly Adam. These sparks had tragically become incarnated in the physical body of the earthly Adam.

In this view the Christian gospel becomes a means of recovering one's heavenly origin, one's authentic selfhood. This recovery, the Corinthians believe, has already taken place for them through the communication of the Christian gnosis, or divinely revealed knowledge, and through the sacraments.

Paul reverses the order of the two Adams.

The attainment of authentic existence is not the recovery of something innate but an eschatological possibility opened up by the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Although to some extent we begin even here on earth to participate in the new being through the sacraments (a point Paul makes elsewhere but not here), we do not completely do so until the end.

Hence Paul writes this passage to emphasize the eschatological reserve, the "not yet" that marks Christian existence. Only at the end "shall" we bear the image of the heavenly.

Here some manuscripts read "let us bear the image of the heavenly," but this would push Paul somewhat in the direction of his gnosticizing opponents, something that, in the exigencies of controversy, he is at pains to avoid.

### **Gospel: Luke 6:27-38**

The first two paragraphs of this reading correspond to the sixth and last antithesis in Matthew's presentation of the Great Sermon: "You have heard ... But I say to you" (Mt 5:43-44).

Such an antithesis is implicit in the Lucan form, since love of one's enemy was not current Jewish teaching. (Here "enemy" means "non-Israelite"; cf. the attitude of the Qumran community toward outsiders.)

Note the golden rule at the end of the first paragraph, a saying that Matthew places later in the sermon (Mt 7:12).

Of special interest is the saying that concludes the second paragraph: “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” Matthew places this saying in the same context, right after the saying about loving one’s enemy. But his version reads: “You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Matthew, of course, has a special interest in the idea of perfection, as his treatment of the rich young man indicates (Mt 19:16-22). Hence it is likely that Luke’s form represents the earlier reading.

This point is thoroughly biblical: a person’s behaviour toward others is to be the reflection of the treatment he or she receives from God. The biblical ethic is essentially one of response to God’s treatment of his people—this is true both in the Old Testament and in the New.

In the Old Testament the Decalogue is given in the context of response to God’s act of deliverance in bringing Israel out of Egypt.

The third paragraph, against judging others, which comes later in Matthew’s version (Mt 7:1-2), uses a series of “reverential periphrases,” that is, roundabout ways of speaking about God and his action. Thus, “you will not be judged ... condemned ... forgiven” means that God will not judge you, etc.

This paragraph seems to reverse the order of God’s action and human action. In the previous paragraph the emphasis was on imitating God’s treatment of us; here it is on God’s responding in kind to our behavior. This apparent contradiction seems to run through much of Jesus’ teaching, especially on forgiveness.

The point must be that while God in Christ has initiated forgiveness toward us, we must continue to show forgiveness to others if we are to remain in that forgiveness. We should avoid any suggestion of a quid-pro-quo relationship between ethics and rewards.

In closing this passage on judging, Luke has strengthened the exhortation to generosity and forbearance by the addition of verse 38a. Verse 38b is found also in Matthew.

Reginald H. Fuller