

What does faith look like? How does faith connect to power and wealth? What part do we play as we seek to trust in God? These are some of the questions that are evoked by the Lectionary readings for this week. They challenge our alliances, our use of our resources, our care for the most vulnerable in our world, and the extent to which we are willing to “gamble” all on God’s Reign.

May we discover a deep, practical, generous, and compassionate trust in God as we worship this week.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17: Naomi instructs Ruth to approach Boaz, which she does. Boaz takes Ruth to be his wife, and she bears a son called Obed – David’s grandfather.

OR **1 Kings 17:8-16**: God instructs Elijah to go and stay with a widow from Zarepath and her son. When he asks her for food, she says she only has a little oil and flour, which she and her son will eat before they die. Elijah assures her that, if she makes him a small loaf first, the oil and flour will not run out. She does what he asks, and their food does not run out.

Psalms 127: A psalm celebrating God’s protection and provision, and the gift of children.

Or **Psalms 146**: A psalm encouraging praise and trust in God’s care, justice, and rule, and warning against trust in human leadership.

Hebrews 9:24-28: Christ entered into heaven, offering himself once as the sacrifice for human sin. Then, he will appear a second time to save those who wait for him.

Mark 12:38-44: Jesus warns against the legal experts who seek honour, and who cheat poor widows and show off with long prayers. Then he comments on a poor widow who places a small offering in the collection box, saying that she has put in more than anyone else, because she has given out of her poverty.

[Click here to view the readings](#)

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Ruth%203:%201-5,%204:%2013-17%20%0Acw%20Psalm%20127%0AHebrews%209:%2024-28%0AMark%2012:%2038-44

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

O Lord, we beseech thee,
absolve thy people from their offences;
that through thy bountiful goodness
we may all be delivered from the bonds of those sins,
which by our frailty we have committed;
Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake,
our blessed Lord and Saviour.

Collect Two

Almighty Father,
whose will is to restore all things
in your beloved Son, the king of all:
Govern the hearts and minds of those in authority,
and bring the families of the nations,
divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin,
to be subject to his just and gentle rule;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

P Gracious Lord, Your love endures forever. You demonstrated that love by sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, into the world for us and our salvation. He showed forth that love by His innocent suffering and death. You confirmed His loving sacrifice by His physical Resurrection from the dead. You have revealed Your love for us in Your Holy Word. We thank You for the delivery of the gift of faith and of hearts that love You through the work of the Holy Spirit. Help us to love one another with the love You have given to us in anticipation of that great Day of the Lord.
Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Grant us a proper understanding of good works, O Lord, that they may indeed prove that faith is living. Provide us many opportunities to serve You by serving our neighbours in need. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

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- P Protect us from false teachings and false teachers that none may be deprived of eternal life in Your Son. Therefore, bless all pastors, teachers, professional church workers and leaders in Your Church, that they may be grounded in Your Word, pure of character, trustworthy, resolute in purpose, and united in the mind of Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C hear our prayer.**
- P Inspire Your people to serve with eager hearts and faithful hands, O Lord —to gladly support the spread of the Gospel in sharing it themselves and providing for those who do. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C hear our prayer.**
- P Bless, O Lord, all godly vocations. Break and hinder the work of those whose livelihood is founded in evil and contrary to Your Ten Commandments. We thank You for the abundant harvest of field and farmyard, office and factory, goods and services. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C hear our prayer.**
- P Gracious God, grant Your healing to those who are sick or facing surgery (*especially* _____). Give their physicians caring wisdom and skill to do their work effectively to Your glory and for the good of their patients. Comfort those who mourn the death of loved ones (*especially* _____). Calm their troubled hearts and give them peace to face the days ahead in the confidence that You will never forsake them. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C hear our prayer.**
- P Prepare us for Your return, O Lord, through the blessings of Your Holy Supper. Through the eating and drinking of Your most precious body and blood, nourish our troubled hearts that we may watch and await Your return with holy patience. Lord, in Your mercy,
- C hear our prayer.**
- P All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
- C Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

God of peace,
whose Son Jesus Christ proclaimed the kingdom
and restored the broken to wholeness of life:
Look with compassion on the anguish of the world,
and by your healing power
make whole both people and nations;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

The Scriptures for this week all examine the dynamics between those who are powerful from a human perspective and those who are poor and weak, but who trust in God. Ruth, who is poor and vulnerable finds protection and acceptance from the wealthy but good Boaz. While, in contrast, Elijah the powerful prophet, finds security and provision at the hands of a poor widow. Both Psalms celebrate God's protection and provision, while Psalm 146 warns against placing too much trust in human leadership. In Hebrews, Christ is shown as both priest and sacrifice, who offers himself in order to save his people, while, in Mark, the religious leaders, who should be sacrificing for the sake of others, are rather using their position for self-aggrandisement and corruption. The message is clear – human power is limited, often corrupt and ultimately fails those who trust in it. God's care, protection and justice is sure and eternal, and through the self-offering of Christ, all people can find security within the grace of God. The challenge is to ensure we place our trust in the right place, while also endeavouring to be faithful and righteous in whatever power or leadership we may exercise.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: Security and provision for material needs are a constant human concern. From a purely human perspective, these needs are addressed by accumulation of wealth, and by aligning oneself with powerful people. In the global economy, the powerful and wealthy control the means of both security and provision, using their resources to favour themselves & their allies, and ignoring or neglecting the weak and poor. Ultimately this strategy undermines the very security and comfort that is hoped for. Only when God's priorities of faith, sacrificial giving and solidarity with the least are implemented can we find the peace we so long for. What this means is that, as Church, we need to be very careful of aligning ourselves with any political party, government structure or position of power and wealth. To do so is to betray our trust in God, and to fail in our mission to proclaim and embody God's Reign. Rather, as we work for justice, we are called to place our trust in God and God's ways, and remain independent of such authorities, in order to be able to work with them, while still speaking in challenge or confrontation of

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them when necessary. It also means that, whatever authority or wealth we may have must be used for the sake of bringing justice to the least, and not for any kind of self-aggrandisement.

LOCAL APPLICATION: There are two specific applications of today's readings on a local level. The first is the challenge to be engaged in the work of justice and compassion in our own communities and churches, where rich and poor often live and worship side by side. We must be careful how we measure the "success" of our churches – not by wealth and power, but by commitment to God's Reign – and we must ensure that we embody in our neighbourhoods, the compassion and generosity of Christ. The second application has to do with where we place our faith, and how this impacts how we live. The Scriptures contrast our trust in human leadership and resources with trusting in God. Whatever we may do to ensure that we have life's necessities, we always need to remember that it is ultimately God in whom we must trust – as both Ruth and the poor widow did. However, as Ruth demonstrated, this trust does not mean that we do nothing, but we actively do what is necessary to provide and protect our lives, while trusting God's guidance and empowerment to sustain and enable us. In both cases, the trust that God seeks is very different from that of the religious leaders, who claim faith, but live by corruption and exploitation.

SERMON OUTLINE

[Ruth,](#) Frederick Buechner Sermon Illustrations.

<http://frederickbuechner.com/content/weekly-sermon-illustration-ruth>

ONLINE SERMON SOURCE

[What God Values in Stewardship,](#) the Rev. Dr. D. Scott Weimer, *Day 1*

Mark 12: 38 - 44. In every age, God's people struggle to find the words to speak about the stewardship of money. And though Jesus speaks directly and often about the dangers of allowing money to take the place of God in our lives, people of faith often find such words difficult and awkward. Surely, this awkwardness is compounded many times over in the midst of this economic downturn, in which we currently find ourselves.

http://day1.org/1555-what_god_values_in_stewardship

CHILDREN

[Worshiping with Children](#), Proper 27B, 2015. Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown,

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<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2012/10/year-b-proper-27-32nd-sunday-in.html>

["Sermon of the Week,"](#) / ["Mensajes para ninos,"](#) Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Colouring Pages, Puzzles. Sermons4Kids.com
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>

["Holding Hands,"](#) Frances Woodruff, *On the Chancel Step*
<https://onthechancelsteps.wordpress.com/2012/10/28/holding/>

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

[A Charge To Keep I Have](#)
[Rise Up, O Men Of God](#)
[O Master Let Me Walk With Thee](#)
[Nothing Between](#)
[The Servant King](#)
[God Of Justice](#)
[Everlasting God](#)
[You Have Shown Us](#)
[How Long?](#)

Please commend this resource to colleagues - they simply send an email to churchnewsireland@gmail.com with the message Passwords in the title