

Prayer & Scripture Readings – Sunday, September 13, 2026

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God,

As we hear your Word today, open our hearts and minds.

Give us ears to hear what you are saying to us.

Give us wisdom to understand your Word.

Give us courage to receive the truth, even when it challenges us.

Where your Word comforts us, help us receive its comfort.

Where it corrects us, give us humility.

Where it calls us to change, give us courage.

And where it calls us to forgive, give us grace.

May your Word not simply enter our ears but transform our hearts and shape our lives.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

First Reading: Genesis 50:15–21

Joseph Reassures His Brothers

¹⁵ When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?” ¹⁶ So they sent word to Joseph, saying, “Your father left these instructions before he died: ¹⁷ ‘This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.’ Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father.” When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

¹⁸ His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. “We are your slaves,” they said.

¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. ²¹ So then, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your children.” And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

Second Reading: Psalm 103

Of David.

¹ Praise the Lord, my soul;

all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

² Praise the Lord, my soul,

and forget not all his benefits—

³ who forgives all your sins

and heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit

and crowns you with love and compassion,

⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things

so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

⁶ The Lord works righteousness

and justice for all the oppressed.

⁷ He made known his ways to Moses,

his deeds to the people of Israel:

⁸ The Lord is compassionate and gracious,

slow to anger, abounding in love.

⁹ He will not always accuse,

nor will he harbor his anger forever;

¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve

or repay us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,

so great is his love for those who fear him;

¹² as far as the east is from the west,

so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

¹³ As a father has compassion on his children,

so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

Third Reading: Matthew 18:21–35

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”

²² Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.^[a]

²³ “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold^[b] was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶ “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ ²⁷ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸ “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.^[c] He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

²⁹ “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

³⁰ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had

happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God