

Readings for July 30th – William Wilberforce

35:23-28 *Judica, Domine*

23 Awake, arise, to my cause! *
to my defense, my God and my Lord!

24 Give me justice, O Lord my God,
according to your righteousness; *
do not let them triumph over me.

25 Do not let them say in their hearts,
"Aha! just what we want!" *
Do not let them say, "We have swallowed him up."

26 Let all who rejoice at my ruin be ashamed and disgraced; *
let those who boast against me be clothed with
dismay and shame.

27 Let those who favor my cause sing out with joy and be glad; *
let them say always, "Great is the Lord,
who desires the prosperity of his servant."

28 And my tongue shall be talking of your righteousness *
and of your praise all the day long.

2 Samuel 12:1-10

¹and the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him, and said to him, 'There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had very many flocks and herds; ³but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. He brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children; it used to eat of his meagre fare, and drink from his cup, and lie in his bosom, and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was loath to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb, and prepared that for the guest who had come to him.' ⁵Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man. He said to Nathan, 'As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die; ⁶he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.'

⁷ Nathan said to David, 'You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from the hand of Saul; ⁸I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added as much more. ⁹Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with

the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, for you have despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.

Matthew 20:1-16

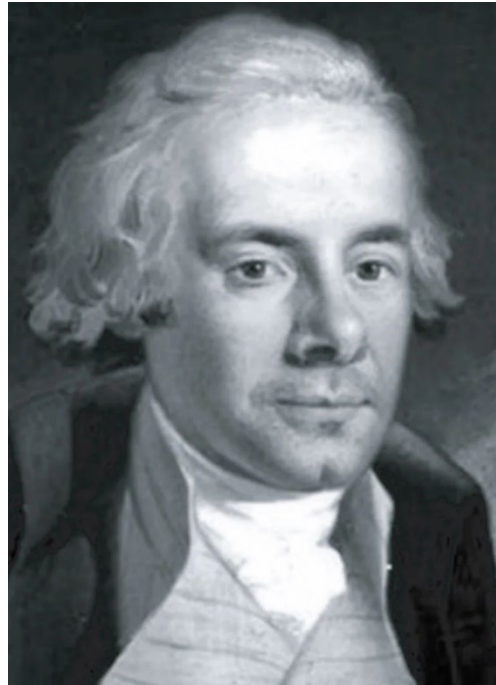
¹For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage,* he sent them into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the market-place; ⁴and he said to them, "You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right." So they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. ⁶And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, "Why are you standing here idle all day?" ⁷They said to him, "Because no one has hired us." He said to them, "You also go into the vineyard." ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, "Call the labourers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first." ⁹When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.* ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage.* ¹¹And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, "These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat." ¹³But he replied to one of them, "Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?*" ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?*" ¹⁶So the last will be first, and the first will be last.*"

Collect

Let your continual mercy, O Lord, kindle in your Church the never-failing gift of love; that, following the example of your servant William Wilberforce, we may have grace to defend the poor, and maintain the cause of those who have no helper; for the sake of him who gave his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE - SOCIAL REFORMER, 1833

William Wilberforce was born in 1759 and served in Parliament from 1780 to 1825. A turning point in his religious life was a tour of Europe. In the luggage of a travelling companion he saw a copy of [William Law's](#) book, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. He asked his friend, "What is this?" and received the answer, "One of the best books ever written." The two of them agreed to read it together on the journey, and Wilberforce embarked on a lifelong program of setting aside Sundays and an interval each morning on arising for prayer and religious reading. He considered his options, including the clergy, and was persuaded by Christian friends that his calling was to serve God through politics. He was a major supporter of programs for popular education, overseas missions, parliamentary reform, and religious liberty. He is best known,



however, for his untiring commitment to the abolition of slavery and the slave trade. He introduced his first anti-slavery motion in the House of Commons in 1788, in a three-and-a-half hour oration that concluded: "Sir, when we think of eternity and the future consequence of all human conduct, what is there in this life that shall make any man contradict the dictates of his conscience, the principles of justice and the law of God!"

The motion was defeated. Wilberforce brought it up again every year for eighteen years, until the slave trade was finally abolished on 25 March 1806. He continued the campaign against slavery itself, and the bill for the abolition of all slavery in British territories passed its crucial vote just four days before his death on 29 July 1833. A year later, on 31 July 1834, 800,000 slaves, chiefly in the British West Indies, were set free.