

Psalm and Readings Thursday 21st March 2024

Psalm 40

I waited patiently for the Lord;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
He drew me up from the desolate pit,
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.
He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the Lord.

Happy are those who make
the Lord their trust,
who do not turn to the proud,
to those who go astray after false gods.
You have multiplied, O Lord my God,
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts
towards us; none can compare with you.
Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they would be more than can be counted.

Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt-offering and sin-offering
you have not required.
Then I said, 'Here I am;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me.
I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart.'

I have told the glad news of deliverance
in the great congregation;
see, I have not restrained my lips,
as you know, O Lord.
I have not hidden your saving help within my
heart,
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your
salvation;
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your
faithfulness from the great congregation.

Do not, O Lord, withhold your mercy from me;
let your steadfast love and your faithfulness
keep me safe for ever.
For evils have encompassed me without number;
my iniquities have overtaken me,
until I cannot see;
they are more than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails me.

Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me;
O Lord, make haste to help me.
Let all those be put to shame and confusion
who seek to snatch away my life;
let those be turned back and brought to
dishonour who desire my hurt.
Let those be appalled because of their shame
who say to me, 'Aha, Aha!'

But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who love your salvation
say continually, 'Great is the Lord!'
As for me, I am poor and needy,
but the Lord takes thought for me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
do not delay, O my God.

Exodus 9:13-end

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Rise up early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh, and say to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. For this time I will send all my plagues upon you yourself, and upon your officials, and upon your people, so that you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But this is why I have let you live: to show you my power, and to make my name resound through all the earth. You are still exalting yourself against my people, and will not let them go. Tomorrow at this time I will cause the heaviest hail to fall that has ever fallen in Egypt from the day it was founded until now. Send, therefore, and have your livestock and everything that you have in the open field brought to a secure place; every human or animal that is in the open field and is not brought under shelter will die when the hail comes down upon them.'" Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the Lord hurried their slaves and livestock off to a secure place. Those who did not regard the word of the Lord left their slaves and livestock in the open field.

The Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand towards heaven so that hail may fall on the whole

land of Egypt, on humans and animals and all the plants of the field in the land of Egypt.’ Then Moses stretched out his staff towards heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and fire came down on the earth. And the Lord rained hail on the land of Egypt; there was hail with fire flashing continually in the midst of it, such heavy hail as had never fallen in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. The hail struck down everything that was in the open field throughout all the land of Egypt, both human and animal; the hail also struck down all the plants of the field, and shattered every tree in the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were, there was no hail.

Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron, and said to them, ‘This time I have sinned; the Lord is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. Pray to the Lord! Enough of God’s thunder and hail! I will let you go; you need stay no longer.’ Moses said to him, ‘As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will stretch out my hands to the Lord; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, so that you may know that the earth is the Lord’s. But as for you and your officials, I know that you do not yet fear the Lord God.’ (Now the flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they are late in coming up.) So Moses left Pharaoh, went out of the city, and stretched out his hands to the Lord; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain no longer poured down on the earth. But when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased, he sinned once more and hardened his heart, he and his officials. So the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses.

Hebrews 12:14-end

Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springs up and causes trouble, and through it many become defiled. See to it that no one becomes like Esau, an immoral and godless person, who sold his birthright for a single meal. You know that later, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he

found no chance to repent, even though he sought the blessing with tears.

You have not come to something that can be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that not another word be spoken to them. (For they could not endure the order that was given, ‘If even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned to death.’ Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, ‘I tremble with fear.’) But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking; for if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less will we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven! At that time his voice shook the earth; but now he has promised, ‘Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heaven.’ This phrase ‘Yet once more’ indicates the removal of what is shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us give thanks, by which we offer to God an acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for indeed our God is a consuming fire.

The Collect of the Day

Father of all mercies,
who through the work of your servant Thomas Cranmer renewed the worship of your Church and through his death revealed your strength in human weakness:
by your grace strengthen us to worship you in spirit and in truth and so to come to the joys of your everlasting kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Advocate, who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen