

Psalm and Readings Friday 22nd March 2024

Psalm 22

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from helping me, from the
words of my groaning?

O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;
and by night, but find no rest.

Yet you are holy,
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
In you our ancestors trusted;
they trusted, and you delivered them.
To you they cried, and were saved;
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, and not human;
scorned by others, and despised by the people.
All who see me mock at me;
they make mouths at me, they shake their
heads;
'Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver—
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!'

Yet it was you who took me from the womb;
you kept me safe on my mother's breast.
On you I was cast from my birth,
and since my mother bore me you have been
my God.
Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

Many bulls encircle me,
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint;
my heart is like wax;
it is melted within my breast;
my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;
you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs are all around me;
a company of evildoers encircles me.
My hands and feet have shrivelled;
I can count all my bones.
They stare and gloat over me;
they divide my clothes among themselves,
and for my clothing they cast lots.

But you, O Lord, do not be far away!
O my help, come quickly to my aid!
Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!
Save me from the mouth of the lion!

From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued
me.

I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;
in the midst of the congregation I will praise
you: You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
For he did not despise or abhor
the affliction of the afflicted;
he did not hide his face from me,
but heard when I cried to him.

From you comes my praise in the great
congregation;
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.
The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
those who seek him shall praise the Lord.
May your hearts live for ever!

All the ends of the earth shall remember
and turn to the Lord;
and all the families of the nations
shall worship before him.
For dominion belongs to the Lord,
and he rules over the nations.

To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth
bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the
dust, and I shall live for him.
Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord,
and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet
unborn, saying that he has done it.

Exodus 10

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh; for I
have hardened his heart and the heart of his
officials, in order that I may show these signs of
mine among them, and that you may tell your
children and grandchildren how I have made fools
of the Egyptians and what signs I have done
among them—so that you may know that I am
the Lord.'

So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, and said to him, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, "How long will you refuse to humble yourself before me? Let my people go, so that they may worship me. For if you refuse to let my people go, tomorrow I will bring locusts into your country. They shall cover the surface of the land, so that no one will be able to see the land. They shall devour the last remnant left you after the hail, and they shall devour every tree of yours that grows in the field. They shall fill your houses, and the houses of all your officials and of all the Egyptians—something that neither your parents nor your grandparents have seen, from the day they came on earth to this day."' Then he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

Pharaoh's officials said to him, 'How long shall this fellow be a snare to us? Let the people go, so that they may worship the Lord their God; do you not yet understand that Egypt is ruined?' So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, 'Go, worship the Lord your God! But which ones are to go?' Moses said, 'We will go with our young and our old; we will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds, because we have the Lord's festival to celebrate.' He said to them, 'The Lord indeed will be with you, if ever I let your little ones go with you! Plainly you have some evil purpose in mind. No, never! Your men may go and worship the Lord, for that is what you are asking.' And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt, so that the locusts may come upon it and eat every plant in the land, all that the hail has left.' So Moses stretched out his staff over the land of Egypt, and the Lord brought an east wind upon the land all that day and all that night; when morning came, the east wind had brought the locusts. The locusts came upon all the land of Egypt and settled on the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been before, nor ever shall be again. They covered the surface of the whole land, so that the land was black; and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruit of the trees that the hail had left; nothing green was left, no tree, no plant in the field, in all the land of Egypt. Pharaoh hurriedly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, 'I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. Do forgive my sin just this

once, and pray to the Lord your God that at the least he remove this deadly thing from me.' So he went out from Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord. The Lord changed the wind into a very strong west wind, which lifted the locusts and drove them into the Red Sea; not a single locust was left in all the country of Egypt. But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the Israelites go.

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Stretch out your hand towards heaven so that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, a darkness that can be felt.' So Moses stretched out his hand towards heaven, and there was dense darkness in all the land of Egypt for three days. People could not see one another, and for three days they could not move from where they were; but all the Israelites had light where they lived. Then Pharaoh summoned Moses, and said, 'Go, worship the Lord. Only your flocks and your herds shall remain behind. Even your children may go with you.' But Moses said, 'You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt-offerings to sacrifice to the Lord our God. Our livestock also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must choose some of them for the worship of the Lord our God, and we will not know what to use to worship the Lord until we arrive there.' But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he was unwilling to let them go. Then Pharaoh said to him, 'Get away from me! Take care that you do not see my face again, for on the day you see my face you shall die.' Moses said, 'Just as you say! I will never see your face again.'

Hebrews 13:1-16

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. Let marriage be held in honour by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.' So we can say with confidence,

'The Lord is my helper;
I will not be afraid.
What can anyone do to me?'

Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever. Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings; for it is well for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by regulations about food, which have not benefited those who observe them. We have an altar from which those who officiate in the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

The Collect of the Day

Most merciful God,
who by the death and resurrection of your Son
Jesus Christ
delivered and saved the world:
grant that by faith in him who suffered on the
cross
we may triumph in the power of his victory;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen