

Psalm and Readings Thursday 23rd May 2024

Psalm 143

Hear my prayer, O Lord;
give ear to my supplications in your
faithfulness;
answer me in your righteousness.
Do not enter into judgement with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.

For the enemy has pursued me,
crushing my life to the ground,
making me sit in darkness like those long dead.
Therefore my spirit faints within me;
my heart within me is appalled.

I remember the days of old,
I think about all your deeds,
I meditate on the works of your hands.
I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.

Answer me quickly, O Lord;
my spirit fails.
Do not hide your face from me,
or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.
Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning,
for in you I put my trust.
Teach me the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.

Save me, O Lord, from my enemies;
I have fled to you for refuge.
Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God.
Let your good spirit lead me
on a level path.

For your name's sake, O Lord, preserve my life.
In your righteousness bring me out of trouble.
In your steadfast love cut off my enemies,
and destroy all my adversaries,
for I am your servant.

Joshua 4:1 – 5:1

When the entire nation had finished crossing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua: 'Select twelve men from the people, one from each tribe, and command them, "Take twelve stones from here out of the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood, carry them over with you, and lay them down in the place where you camp tonight.'" Then Joshua summoned the twelve men from the Israelites, whom he had appointed, one from each tribe. Joshua said to them, 'Pass on before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan, and each of you take up a stone on his shoulder, one for each of the tribes of the Israelites, so that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in time to come, "What do those stones mean to you?" then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off in front of the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the Israelites a memorial for ever.'

The Israelites did as Joshua commanded. They took up twelve stones out of the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the Lord told Joshua, carried them over with them to the place where they camped, and laid them down there. (Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood; and they are there to this day.)

The priests who bore the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan, until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to tell the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua. The people crossed over in haste. As soon as all the people had finished crossing over, the ark of the Lord, and the priests, crossed over in front of the people. The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the Israelites, as Moses had ordered them. About forty thousand armed for war crossed over before the Lord to the plains of Jericho for battle.

On that day the Lord exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him, as they had stood in awe of Moses, all the days of his life.

The Lord said to Joshua, 'Command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant to come up out of the Jordan.' Joshua therefore commanded the priests, 'Come up out of the Jordan.' When the priests bearing the ark of the covenant of the Lord came up from the middle of the Jordan, and the soles of the priests' feet touched dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before.

The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they camped in Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. Those twelve stones, which they had taken out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal, saying to the Israelites, 'When your children ask their parents in time to come, "What do these stones mean?" then you shall let your children know, "Israel crossed over the Jordan here on dry ground.'" For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you crossed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we crossed over, so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, and so that you may fear the Lord your God for ever.'

When all the kings of the Amorites beyond the Jordan to the west, and all the kings of the Canaanites by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan for the Israelites until they had crossed over, their hearts failed, and there was no longer any spirit in them, because of the Israelites.

Luke 9:51-end

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; but they did not receive him, because his face was set towards Jerusalem. When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, 'Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?' But he turned and rebuked them. Then they went on to another village.

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' To another he said, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.' Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.' Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.'

A prayer for this time of transition

Faithful and loving God
we hold our Benefice before you in this time of uncertainty.
Be with us in our waiting, in our expectation and in our preparation as we seek our new Incumbent.
Be with our new incumbent as he or she also waits, expects and prepares.
Bring us together in love for you and for this Benefice,
and be our light for the way ahead.
In Jesus' name,
Amen

The Collect of the Day

O Lord, from whom all good things come:
grant to us your humble servants,
that by your holy inspiration
we may think those things that are good,
and by your merciful guiding may perform the same;
through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen