

Psalm and Readings Thursday 27th March 2025

Psalm 56

Be gracious to me, O God, for people trample on me;

all day long foes oppress me;
my enemies trample on me all day long,
for many fight against me.

O Most High, when I am afraid,
I put my trust in you.

In God, whose word I praise,
in God I trust; I am not afraid;
what can flesh do to me?

All day long they seek to injure my cause;
all their thoughts are against me for evil.
They stir up strife, they lurk,
they watch my steps.

As they hoped to have my life,
so repay them for their crime;
in wrath cast down the peoples, O God!

You have kept count of my tossings;
put my tears in your bottle.
Are they not in your record?

Then my enemies will retreat
on the day when I call.

This I know, that God is for me.
In God, whose word I praise,
in the Lord, whose word I praise,
in God I trust; I am not afraid.
What can a mere mortal do to me?

My vows to you I must perform, O God;
I will render thank-offerings to you.
For you have delivered my soul from death,
and my feet from falling,
so that I may walk before God
in the light of life.

Jeremiah 14

The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought:

Judah mourns and her gates languish;
they lie in gloom on the ground,
and the cry of Jerusalem goes up.
Her nobles send their servants for water;
they come to the cisterns,
they find no water,
they return with their vessels empty.

They are ashamed and dismayed
and cover their heads,
because the ground is cracked.

Because there has been no rain on the land
the farmers are dismayed; they cover their heads.
Even the doe in the field forsakes her newborn
fawn because there is no grass.
The wild asses stand on the bare heights,
they pant for air like jackals;
their eyes fail because there is no herbage.

Although our iniquities testify against us,
act, O Lord, for your name's sake;
our apostasies indeed are many,
and we have sinned against you.
O hope of Israel, its saviour in time of trouble,
why should you be like a stranger in the land,
like a traveller turning aside for the night?
Why should you be like someone confused,
like a mighty warrior who cannot give help?
Yet you, O Lord, are in the midst of us,
and we are called by your name;
do not forsake us!

Thus says the Lord concerning this people:
Truly they have loved to wander,
they have not restrained their feet;
therefore the Lord does not accept them,
now he will remember their iniquity
and punish their sins.

The Lord said to me: Do not pray for the welfare of this people. Although they fast, I do not hear their cry, and although they offer burnt-offering and grain-offering, I do not accept them; but by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence I consume them.

Then I said: 'Ah, Lord God! Here are the prophets saying to them, "You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you true peace in this place.'" And the Lord said to me: The prophets are prophesying lies in my name; I did not send them, nor did I command them or speak to them. They are prophesying to you a lying vision, worthless divination, and the deceit of their own minds. Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who prophesy in my name though I did not send them, and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not come on this land':

By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed. And the people to whom they prophesy shall be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem, victims of famine and sword. There shall be no one to bury them—themselves, their wives, their sons, and their daughters. For I will pour out their wickedness upon them.

You shall say to them this word:

Let my eyes run down with tears night and day,
and let them not cease,

for the virgin daughter—my people—is struck
down with a crushing blow,
with a very grievous wound.

If I go out into the field,
look—those killed by the sword!

And if I enter the city,
look—those sick with famine!

For both prophet and priest ply their trade
throughout the land, and have no knowledge.

Have you completely rejected Judah?

Does your heart loathe Zion?

Why have you struck us down
so that there is no healing for us?

We look for peace, but find no good;
for a time of healing, but there is terror instead.

We acknowledge our wickedness, O Lord,
the iniquity of our ancestors,
for we have sinned against you.

Do not spurn us, for your name's sake;
do not dishonour your glorious throne;
remember and do not break your covenant
with us.

Can any idols of the nations bring rain?

Or can the heavens give showers?

Is it not you, O Lord our God?

We set our hope on you,
for it is you who do all this.

John 8:31-47

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.' They answered him, 'We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, "You will be made free"?''

Jesus answered them, 'Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the

household; the son has a place there for ever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because there is no place in you for my word. I declare what I have seen in the Father's presence; as for you, you should do what you have heard from the Father.'

They answered him, 'Abraham is our father.' Jesus said to them, 'If you were Abraham's children, you would be doing what Abraham did, but now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. You are indeed doing what your father does.' They said to him, 'We are not illegitimate children; we have one father, God himself.' Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot accept my word. You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is from God hears the words of God. The reason you do not hear them is that you are not from God.'

A Prayer as we seek our new Associate Vicar

Heavenly Father, we thank and praise you for your love for all people, and for all you give us. During our vacancy, we pray particularly for the person we believe in faith that you have chosen to be our next Associate Vicar.

May that person respond gladly to your call, and work with us to grow your Kingdom in this Benefice.

While we wait, send us your Holy Spirit: help us to be patient, build us up in faith and love, and equip us to serve you well with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

These things we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen

The Collect of the Day

Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord.