

Psalm and Readings Thursday 6th May 2021

Psalm 57

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me,
for in you my soul takes refuge;
in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge,
until the destroying storms pass by.
I cry to God Most High,
to God who fulfils his purpose for me.
He will send from heaven and save me,
he will put to shame those who trample on me.
God will send forth his steadfast love and his
faithfulness.
I lie down among lions
that greedily devour human prey;
their teeth are spears and arrows,
their tongues sharp swords.
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.
Let your glory be over all the earth.
They set a net for my steps;
my soul was bowed down.
They dug a pit in my path,
but they have fallen into it themselves.
My heart is steadfast, O God,
my heart is steadfast.
I will sing and make melody.
Awake, my soul!
Awake, O harp and lyre!
I will awake the dawn.
I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the
peoples;
I will sing praises to you among the nations.
For your steadfast love is as high as the heavens;
your faithfulness extends to the clouds.
Be exalted, O God, above the heavens.
Let your glory be over all the earth.

Deuteronomy 19

When the Lord your God has cut off the nations
whose land the Lord your God is giving you, and
you have dispossessed them and settled in their
towns and in their houses, you shall set apart
three cities in the land that the Lord your God is
giving you to possess. You shall calculate the
distances and divide into three regions the land

that the Lord your God gives you as a possession,
so that any homicide can flee to one of them.
Now this is the case of a homicide who might flee
there and live, that is, someone who has killed
another person unintentionally when the two had
not been at enmity before: Suppose someone
goes into the forest with another to cut wood,
and when one of them swings the axe to cut
down a tree, the head slips from the handle and
strikes the other person who then dies; the killer
may flee to one of these cities and live. But if the
distance is too great, the avenger of blood in hot
anger might pursue and overtake and put the
killer to death, although a death sentence was
not deserved, since the two had not been at
enmity before. Therefore I command you: You
shall set apart three cities.

If the Lord your God enlarges your territory, as he
swore to your ancestors—and he will give you all
the land that he promised your ancestors to give
you, provided you diligently observe this entire
commandment that I command you today, by
loving the Lord your God and walking always in
his ways—then you shall add three more cities to
these three, so that the blood of an innocent
person may not be shed in the land that
the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance,
thereby bringing blood-guilt upon you.

But if someone at enmity with another lies in wait
and attacks and takes the life of that person, and
flees into one of these cities, then the elders of
the killer's city shall send to have the culprit taken
from there and handed over to the avenger of
blood to be put to death. Show no pity; you shall
purge the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, so
that it may go well with you.

You must not move your neighbour's boundary
marker, set up by former generations, on the
property that will be allotted to you in the land
that the Lord your God is giving you to possess.
A single witness shall not suffice to convict a
person of any crime or wrongdoing in connection
with any offence that may be committed. Only on
the evidence of two or three witnesses shall a
charge be sustained. If a malicious witness comes

forward to accuse someone of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days, and the judges shall make a thorough inquiry. If the witness is a false witness, having testified falsely against another, then you shall do to the false witness just as the false witness had meant to do to the other. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. The rest shall hear and be afraid, and a crime such as this shall never again be committed among you. Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

1 Peter 2:11-end

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. Conduct yourselves honourably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honourable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge. For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. Honour everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honour the emperor. Slaves, accept the authority of your masters with all deference, not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh. For it is to your credit if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, where is the credit in that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

'He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.'