

Psalm and Readings Wednesday 6th December 2023

Psalm 5

Give ear to my words, O Lord;
give heed to my sighing.
Listen to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God, for to you I pray.
O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice;
in the morning I plead my case to you, and
watch.

For you are not a God who delights in
wickedness;
evil will not sojourn with you.
The boastful will not stand before your eyes;
you hate all evildoers.
You destroy those who speak lies;
the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful.

But I, through the abundance of your steadfast
love, will enter your house,
I will bow down towards your holy temple
in awe of you.
Lead me, O Lord, in your righteousness
because of my enemies;
make your way straight before me.

For there is no truth in their mouths;
their hearts are destruction;
their throats are open graves;
they flatter with their tongues.
Make them bear their guilt, O God;
let them fall by their own counsels;
because of their many transgressions cast them
out, for they have rebelled against you.

But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them ever sing for joy.
Spread your protection over them,
so that those who love your name may exult in
you.
For you bless the righteous, O Lord;
you cover them with favour as with a shield.

Isaiah 28:1-13

Ah, the proud garland of the drunkards of
Ephraim,
and the fading flower of its glorious beauty,
which is on the head of those bloated with rich
food, of those overcome with wine!

See, the Lord has one who is mighty and strong;
like a storm of hail, a destroying tempest,
like a storm of mighty, overflowing waters;
with his hand he will hurl them down to the
earth.
Trampled under foot will be
the proud garland of the drunkards of Ephraim.
And the fading flower of its glorious beauty,
which is on the head of those bloated with rich
food,
will be like a first-ripe fig before the summer;
whoever sees it, eats it up
as soon as it comes to hand.

On that day the Lord of hosts will be a garland of
glory, and a diadem of beauty, to the remnant of
his people;
and a spirit of justice to the one who sits in
judgement, and strength to those who turn back
the battle at the gate.

These also reel with wine
and stagger with strong drink;
the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink,
they are confused with wine,
they stagger with strong drink;
they err in vision,
they stumble in giving judgement.
All tables are covered with filthy vomit;
no place is clean.

'Whom will he teach knowledge,
and to whom will he explain the message?
Those who are weaned from milk,
those taken from the breast?
For it is precept upon precept, precept upon
precept, line upon line, line upon line,
here a little, there a little.'

Truly, with stammering lip and with alien tongue
he will speak to this people, to whom he has said,
'This is rest; give rest to the weary;
and this is repose'; yet they would not hear.
Therefore the word of the Lord will be to them,
'Precept upon precept, precept upon precept,
line upon line, line upon line,
here a little, there a little';
in order that they may go, and fall backwards,
and be broken, and snared, and taken.

Matthew 12:38-end

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, 'Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.' But he answered them, 'An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was for three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! The queen of the South will rise up at the judgement with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!

'When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting-place, but it finds none. Then it says, "I will return to my house from which I came." When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So will it be also with this evil generation.'

While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, 'Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.' But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' And pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'

The Collect of the Day

Almighty Father, lover of souls,
who chose your servant Nicholas
to be a bishop in the Church,
that he might give freely out of the treasures of
your grace:
make us mindful of the needs of others
and, as we have received, so teach us also to give;
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