

Psalm and Readings Wednesday 20th March 2024

Psalm 55

Give ear to my prayer, O God;
do not hide yourself from my supplication.
Attend to me, and answer me;
I am troubled in my complaint.
I am distraught by the noise of the enemy,
because of the clamour of the wicked.
For they bring trouble upon me,
and in anger they cherish enmity against me.

My heart is in anguish within me,
the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
Fear and trembling come upon me,
and horror overwhelms me.
And I say, 'O that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest;
truly, I would flee far away;
I would lodge in the wilderness;
I would hurry to find a shelter for myself
from the raging wind and tempest.'

Confuse, O Lord, confound their speech;
for I see violence and strife in the city.
Day and night they go around it
on its walls,
and iniquity and trouble are within it;
ruin is in its midst;
oppression and fraud
do not depart from its market-place.

It is not enemies who taunt me—
I could bear that;
it is not adversaries who deal insolently with me—
I could hide from them.
But it is you, my equal,
my companion, my familiar friend,
with whom I kept pleasant company;
we walked in the house of God with the throng.
Let death come upon them;
let them go down alive to Sheol;
for evil is in their homes and in their hearts.

But I call upon God,
and the Lord will save me.
Evening and morning and at noon
I utter my complaint and moan,
and he will hear my voice.
He will redeem me unharmed
from the battle that I wage,
for many are arrayed against me.

God, who is enthroned from of old,
will hear, and will humble them—
because they do not change,
and do not fear God.

My companion laid hands on a friend
and violated a covenant with me
with speech smoother than butter,
but with a heart set on war;
with words that were softer than oil,
but in fact were drawn swords.

Cast your burden on the Lord,
and he will sustain you;
he will never permit
the righteous to be moved.

But you, O God, will cast them down
into the lowest pit;
the bloodthirsty and treacherous
shall not live out half their days.
But I will trust in you.

Exodus 9:1-12

Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go to Pharaoh, and say to him, "Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. For if you refuse to let them go and still hold them, the hand of the Lord will strike with a deadly pestilence your livestock in the field: the horses, the donkeys, the camels, the herds, and the flocks. But the Lord will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt, so that nothing shall die of all that belongs to the Israelites.'" The Lord set a time, saying, 'Tomorrow the Lord will do this thing in the land.' And on the next day the Lord did so; all the livestock of the Egyptians died, but of the livestock of the Israelites not one died. Pharaoh inquired and found that not one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he would not let the people go.

Then the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, 'Take handfuls of soot from the kiln, and let Moses throw it in the air in the sight of Pharaoh. It shall become fine dust all over the land of Egypt, and shall cause festering boils on humans and animals

throughout the whole land of Egypt.' So they took soot from the kiln, and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses threw it in the air, and it caused festering boils on humans and animals. The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils, for the boils afflicted the magicians as well as all the Egyptians. But the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he would not listen to them, just as the Lord had spoken to Moses.

Hebrews 12:3-13

Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children—

'My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,

or lose heart when you are punished by him; for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves, and chastises every child whom he accepts.'

Endure trials for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline? If you do not have that discipline in which all children share, then you are illegitimate and not his children. Moreover, we had human parents to discipline us, and we respected them. Should we not be even more willing to be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share his holiness. Now, discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

The Collect of the Day

Almighty God,
who called your servant Cuthbert from following
the flock
to follow your Son and to be a shepherd of your
people:
in your mercy, grant that we, following his
example,
may bring those who are lost home to your fold;
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