

## Psalm and Readings Friday 25th October 2024

### Psalm 17

Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry;  
give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit.  
From you let my vindication come;  
let your eyes see the right.

If you try my heart, if you visit me by night,  
if you test me, you will find no wickedness in  
me;

my mouth does not transgress.  
As for what others do, by the word of your lips  
I have avoided the ways of the violent.  
My steps have held fast to your paths;  
my feet have not slipped.

I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God;  
incline your ear to me, hear my words.  
Wondrously show your steadfast love,  
O saviour of those who seek refuge  
from their adversaries at your right hand.

Guard me as the apple of the eye;  
hide me in the shadow of your wings,  
from the wicked who despoil me,  
my deadly enemies who surround me.  
They close their hearts to pity;  
with their mouths they speak arrogantly.  
They track me down; now they surround me;  
they set their eyes to cast me to the ground.  
They are like a lion eager to tear,  
like a young lion lurking in ambush.

Rise up, O Lord, confront them, overthrow them!  
By your sword deliver my life from the wicked,  
from mortals—by your hand, O Lord—  
from mortals whose portion in life is in this  
world.  
May their bellies be filled with what you have  
stored up for them;  
may their children have more than enough;  
may they leave something over to their little  
ones.

As for me, I shall behold your face in  
righteousness;  
when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding  
your likeness.

### Judith 8:9-end

When Judith heard the harsh words spoken by  
the people against the ruler, because they were  
faint for lack of water, and when she heard all  
that Uzziah said to them, and how he promised  
them under oath to surrender the town to the  
Assyrians after five days, she sent her maid, who  
was in charge of all she possessed, to summon  
Uzziah and Chabris and Charmis, the elders of her  
town. They came to her, and she said to them:

‘Listen to me, rulers of the people of Bethulia!  
What you have said to the people today is not  
right; you have even sworn and pronounced this  
oath between God and you, promising to  
surrender the town to our enemies unless the  
Lord turns and helps us within so many days. Who  
are you to put God to the test today, and to set  
yourselves up in the place of God in human  
affairs? You are putting the Lord Almighty to the  
test, but you will never learn anything! You  
cannot plumb the depths of the human heart or  
understand the workings of the human mind;  
how do you expect to search out God, who made  
all these things, and find out his mind or  
comprehend his thought? No, my brothers, do  
not anger the Lord our God. For if he does not  
choose to help us within these five days, he has  
power to protect us within any time he pleases,  
or even to destroy us in the presence of our  
enemies. Do not try to bind the purposes of the  
Lord our God; for God is not like a human being,  
to be threatened, or like a mere mortal, to be  
won over by pleading. Therefore, while we wait  
for his deliverance, let us call upon him to help us,  
and he will hear our voice if it pleases him.

‘For never in our generation, nor in these present  
days, has there been any tribe or family or people  
or town of ours that worships gods made with  
hands, as was done in days gone by. That was  
why our ancestors were handed over to the  
sword and to pillage, and so they suffered a great  
catastrophe before our enemies. But we know no  
other god but him, and so we hope that he will  
not disdain us or any of our nation. For if we are  
captured, all Judea will be captured and our  
sanctuary will be plundered; and he will make us  
pay for its desecration with our blood. The  
slaughter of our kindred and the captivity of the

land and the desolation of our inheritance—all this he will bring on our heads among the Gentiles, wherever we serve as slaves; and we shall be an offence and a disgrace in the eyes of those who acquire us. For our slavery will not bring us into favour, but the Lord our God will turn it to dishonour.

‘Therefore, my brothers, let us set an example to our kindred, for their lives depend upon us, and the sanctuary—both the temple and the altar—rests upon us. In spite of everything let us give thanks to the Lord our God, who is putting us to the test as he did our ancestors. Remember what he did with Abraham, and how he tested Isaac, and what happened to Jacob in Syrian Mesopotamia, while he was tending the sheep of Laban, his mother’s brother. For he has not tried us with fire, as he did them, to search their hearts, nor has he taken vengeance on us; but the Lord scourges those who are close to him in order to admonish them.’

Then Uzziah said to her, ‘All that you have said was spoken out of a true heart, and there is no one who can deny your words. Today is not the first time your wisdom has been shown, but from the beginning of your life all the people have recognized your understanding, for your heart’s disposition is right. But the people were so thirsty that they compelled us to do for them what we have promised, and made us take an oath that we cannot break. Now since you are a God-fearing woman, pray for us, so that the Lord may send us rain to fill our cisterns. Then we will no longer feel faint from thirst.’

Then Judith said to them, ‘Listen to me. I am about to do something that will go down through all generations of our descendants. Stand at the town gate tonight so that I may go out with my maid; and within the days after which you have promised to surrender the town to our enemies, the Lord will deliver Israel by my hand. Only, do not try to find out what I am doing; for I will not tell you until I have finished what I am about to do.’

Uzziah and the rulers said to her, ‘Go in peace, and may the Lord God go before you, to take vengeance on our enemies.’ So they returned from the tent and went to their posts.

## **2 Timothy 2:14-end**

Remind them of this, and warn them before God that they are to avoid wrangling over words, which does no good but only ruins those who are listening. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth. Avoid profane chatter, for it will lead people into more and more impiety, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth by claiming that the resurrection has already taken place. They are upsetting the faith of some. But God’s firm foundation stands, bearing this inscription: ‘The Lord knows those who are his’, and, ‘Let everyone who calls on the name of the Lord turn away from wickedness.’

In a large house there are utensils not only of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for special use, some for ordinary. All who cleanse themselves of the things I have mentioned will become special utensils, dedicated and useful to the owner of the house, ready for every good work. Shun youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Have nothing to do with stupid and senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient, correcting opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth, and that they may escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

## **The Collect of the Day**

Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord.