

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. And I will trust in you.

Old Testament Reading: 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

New Testament Reading: Hebrews 12: 3-13

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely,^{*} and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of^{*} the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

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.

Prayers

Collect of St Luke: The Physician

Almighty God, you called Luke the physician, whose praise is in the gospel, to be an evangelist and physician of the soul: by the grace of the Spirit and through the wholesome medicine of the gospel, give your Church the same love and power to heal; 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.

PRAYERS

O God, we thank you for our healthcare systems and all who work in them. We pray for healthcare workers, known and unknown to us, that through their love and compassion, those who are suffering, vulnerable and needy might come to know healing and peace in their lives. We pray for those who have to make difficult decisions about resources or treatments that they will do so with care and integrity. Lord, continue your ministry of healing in the lives of those who are broken, vulnerable and in need. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Lord Jesus, who healed the sick and gave them new life, be with doctors, nurses and carers and all others involved in the vast care system, as they act as agents of your healing touch. In these desperate Covid-19 times, keep them strong yet loving; and when their work is done, be with them in their weariness and in their tears. Prosper the work of those who are seeking a vaccine for the coronavirus, and please comfort those who are mourning the loss of loved ones or living in fear of this disease.

Please give to governing authorities, wisdom in their management of this crisis, and give to your people your peace beyond understanding, generous and wise hearts and a renewed trust in your goodness and glory.

We hold before you all those in need of healing, comfort and encouragement, especially those who have asked for our prayers ... calm the anxious mind, bring balm to the depressed spirit, and strengthen the weakened body, be with those who mourn the loss of loved ones at this time that all who suffer may know your healing presence surrounding, holding and comforting them. Amen

A Prayer from The Archbishop of Canterbury for all those affected by Coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy.

Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort

knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

AMEN