

Worship for Wednesday
March 18, 2020

OPENING PRAYER

O Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it the spirit of grace and of supplication: Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

A READING FROM JEREMIAH 7:23-28

But this command I gave them, ‘Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and walk only in the way that I command you, so that it may be well with you.’ Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but, in the stubbornness of their evil will, they walked in their own counsels, and looked backwards rather than forwards. From the day that your ancestors came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day; yet they did not listen to me, or pay attention, but they stiffened their necks. They did worse than their ancestors did. So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will not answer you. You shall say to them: This is the nation that did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.

PSALM 95:6-11

O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!
Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,

as on the day at Massah in the wilderness,
when your ancestors tested me,
and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.
For forty years I loathed that generation
and said, 'They are a people whose hearts go astray,
and they do not regard my ways.'
Therefore in my anger I swore,
'They shall not enter my rest.'

A READING FROM LUKE 11:14-23

Now [Jesus] was casting out a demon that was mute; when the demon had gone out, the one who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed. But some of them said, 'He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.' Others, to test him, kept demanding from him a sign from heaven. But he knew what they were thinking and said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself becomes a desert, and house falls on house. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? —for you say that I cast out the demons by Beelzebul. Now if I cast out the demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your exorcists cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his castle, his property is safe. But when one stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away his armour in which he trusted and divides his plunder. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

A SHORT REFLECTION

Psalm 95 is a fixture in Morning Prayer: we call it the *Venite* which is the first word of the psalm in Latin meaning "Come". Today's reading from the psalm is a portion of Psalm 95 that contains one of the most reassuring images in all of scripture – that of God as our Good Shepherd, and we as God's sheep.

The world is anxious right now. On top of the usual anxieties that we each have, we find ourselves grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, take time to reflect on God as your Good Shepherd. Think about what it means to be in God's pasture. Think about what it means to be cared for by God. At times such as this we look for something, anything that makes sense. Look to God; look to Jesus Christ. Look to the love that surrounds us from God and God alone.

Just as a shepherd leads her sheep to springs of water and green pastures, so leads our God. Let the Jesus, the Good Shepherd help you bear your anxieties. Let the Good Shepherd provide for your needs.

Prayers

Our Father, who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy Name,
 thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those
 who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.

Lord, hear our prayer; and let our cry come to you.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my peace I leave with you:" Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly city, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of the sheep, you gather the lambs in your arms and carry them in your bosom: We commend to your loving care those who are battling the coronavirus. Relieve their pain, guard them from all danger, restore to them your gifts of gladness and strength, and raise them up to a life of service to you. Hear us, we pray, for you dear Name's sake. *Amen.*

May we go in Peace to love and serve the Lord.