

First Reading

Isaiah 50:4-9a

In our first lesson, we learn that the life of faith may require suffering, but God promises never to leave or forsake us in the midst of trial.

A Reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens—wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

Psalm 31:9-16

- 9 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; *
***my eye is consumed with sorrow,
and also my throat and my belly.***
- 10 For my life is wasted with grief,
and my years with sighing; *
***my strength fails me because of affliction,
and my bones are consumed.***
- 11 I have become a reproach to all my enemies and
even to my neighbors,
a dismay to those of my acquaintance; *
when they see me in the street they avoid me.
- 12 I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind; *
I am as useless as a broken pot.
- 13 For I have heard the whispering of the crowd;
fear is all around; *
***they put their heads together against me;
they plot to take my life.***
- 14 But as for me, I have trusted in you, O LORD. *
I have said, "You are my God.
- 15 My times are in your hand; *
***rescue me from the hand of my enemies,
and from those who persecute me.***
- 16 Make your face to shine upon your servant, *
and in your loving-kindness save me."

In this second lesson, we see that Jesus is the example for how to live our lives. We are not equal with God, as Jesus is, but even though he has this power and prestige, he made himself a servant. How much more are we called to be servants, rather than masters?

A Reading from Paul's letter to the Church in Philippi.

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

- Deacon* The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.
People Glory to you, Lord Christ.
- Narrator* It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him; for they said,
- C. Priest* Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.
- Narrator* While Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head. But some were there who said to one another in anger,
- Bystndr 1* Why was the ointment wasted in this way?
- Bystndr 2* For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii, and the money given to the poor.
- Narrator* And they scolded her. But Jesus said,
- Jesus* Let her alone; why do you trouble her? She has performed a good service for me. For you always have the poor with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you wish; but you will not always have me. She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her.
- Narrator* Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went to the chief priests in order to betray Jesus to them. When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money. So Judas began to look for an opportunity to betray Jesus.
- On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, Jesus' disciples said to him,
- Disciple* Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?
- Narrator* So Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying to them,
- Jesus* Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him, and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, "The Teacher asks, 'Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?'" He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.
- Narrator* So the disciples set out and went to the city, and found everything as Jesus had told them; and they prepared the Passover meal.

When it was evening, Jesus came with the twelve. And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said,

Jesus Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.

Narrator They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another,

Disciple Surely, not I?

Narrator Jesus said to them,

Jesus It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me. For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.

Narrator While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said,

Jesus Take; this is my body.

Narrator Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them,

Jesus This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Narrator When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. And Jesus said to them,

Jesus You will all become deserters; for it is written, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered," But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.

Narrator Peter said to him,

Peter Even though all become deserters, I will not.

Narrator Jesus said to him,

Jesus Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.

Narrator But Peter said vehemently,

Peter Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.

Narrator And all of the disciples said the same.

They went to a place called Gethsemane; and Jesus said to his disciples,

Jesus Sit here while I pray.

Narrator Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated. And he said to the three disciples,

Jesus I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and keep awake.

Narrator And going a little farther, Jesus threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said,

Jesus Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.

Narrator Jesus came and found the disciples sleeping; and he said to Peter,

Jesus Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Narrator And again Jesus went away and prayed, saying the same words. And once more he came and found the disciples sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him.

Jesus came a third time and said to them,

Jesus Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.

Narrator Immediately, while Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. Now the betrayer had given the crowd a sign, saying,

Judas The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard.

Narrator So when Judas came, he went up to Jesus at once and said,

Judas Rabbi!

Narrator and kissed him. Then the crowd laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to them,

Jesus Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.

Narrator All of Jesus' followers deserted him and fled. A certain young man was following Jesus, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. The crowd caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled. Peter had followed Jesus at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself

at the fire.

Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. Some stood up and gave false testimony against Jesus, saying,

Witness We heard him say, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands."

Narrator But even on this point their testimony did not agree. Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus,

H. Priest Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?

Narrator But Jesus was silent and did not answer. Again the high priest asked him,

H. Priest Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?

Narrator Jesus said,

Jesus I am; and "you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power," and "coming with the clouds of heaven."

Narrator Then the high priest tore his clothes and said,

H. Priest Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?

Narrator The whole council condemned Jesus as deserving death. Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him,

Council Prophecy!

Narrator The guards also took Jesus over and beat him.

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant-girls of the high priest came by. When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said,

Servant You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.

Narrator But Peter denied it, saying,

Peter I do not know or understand what you are talking about.

Narrator And Peter went out into the forecourt. Then the cock crowed. And the servant-girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders,

Servant This man is one of them.

Narrator But again Peter denied it. Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter,

Bystndr 1 Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.

Narrator But Peter began to curse, and he swore an oath,

Peter I do not know this man you are talking about.

Narrator At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him,

Jesus Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.

Narrator And Peter broke down and wept.

[*Mark 15:1-39, (40-47)*]

As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him,

Pilate Are you the King of the Jews?

Narrator Jesus answered him,

Jesus You say so.

Narrator Then the chief priests accused Jesus of many things. Pilate asked him again,

Pilate Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.

Narrator But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now at the festival Pilate used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then Pilate answered them,

Pilate Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?

Narrator For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas for them instead.

Pilate spoke to them again,

Pilate Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?

Narrator The crowd shouted back,

Crowd Crucify him!

Narrator Pilate asked them,

Pilate Why, what evil has he done?

Narrator But they shouted all the more,

Crowd Crucify him!

Narrator So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, Pilate handed him over to be crucified.

Then the soldiers led Jesus into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed Jesus in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him saying,

Soldier Hail, King of the Jews!

Narrator They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

The soldiers compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry Jesus' cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then the soldiers brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull).

All stand.

And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And the soldiers crucified Jesus, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified Jesus. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews," And with Jesus they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left.

Those who passed by derided Jesus, shaking their heads and saying,

Passer-by Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!

Narrator In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking Jesus among themselves and saying,

C. Priest He saved others; he cannot save himself.

Scribe Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.

Narrator Those who were crucified with Jesus also taunted him.

When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the

afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice,

Jesus Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?

Narrator which means,

Jesus My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Narrator When some of the bystanders heard it, they said,

Bystndr 1 Listen, he is calling for Elijah.

Narrator And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to Jesus to drink, saying,

Bystndr 2 Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.

Narrator Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Silence may be kept.

And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way Jesus breathed his last, he said,

Centurion Truly this man was God's Son!

Narrator There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. These used to follow Jesus and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Then Pilate wondered if Jesus were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether Jesus had been dead for some time. When Pilate learned from the centurion that Jesus was dead, he granted the body to Joseph.

Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. Joseph then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb.

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

Deacon The Gospel of the Lord.
People Praise to you, Lord Christ.