

Prayer of the Day

Heavenly Father,
whose children suffered at cruel hands,
though they had done no wrong:
give us grace neither to act cruelly
not to stand indifferently by,
but to defend the weak from the tyranny of the strong;
in the name of Jesus Christ who suffered for us,
yet is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

A reading from the Prophet of Jeremiah,

Chapter 31 beginning at Verse 15

¹⁵ Thus says the Lord: A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. ¹⁶ Thus says the Lord: Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for there is a reward for your work, says the Lord: they shall come back from the land of the enemy; ¹⁷ there is hope for your future, says the Lord: your children shall come back to their own country.

¹⁸ Indeed I heard Ephraim pleading: "You disciplined me, and I took the discipline; I was like a calf untrained. Bring me back, let me come back, for you are the Lord my God. ¹⁹ For after I had turned away I repented; and after I was discovered, I struck my thigh; I was ashamed, and I was dismayed because I bore the disgrace of my youth." ²⁰ Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he the child I delight in? As often as I speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore I am deeply moved for him; I will surely have mercy on him, says the Lord.

[NRSV Jeremiah 31:15-20]

Hear the word of the Lord, ***thanks be to God.***

Psalm 124

- ¹ If the Lord had not been on our side,
now may Israel say:
if the Lord had not been on our side,
when our enemies rose against us,
- ² Then they would have swallowed us alive:
when their anger was kindled against us.
- ³ Then the waters would have overwhelmed us,
and the torrent gone over us:
the raging waters would have gone clean over us.
- ⁴ But praised be the Lord:
who has not given us as a prey to their teeth.
- ⁵ We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler:
the snare is broken, and we have gone free.
- ⁶ Our help is in the name of the Lord:
who has made heaven and earth.

A reading from the First Letter of John,

Chapter 1 beginning at Verse 5

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; ⁷ but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

[NRSV 1 John 1:5-2:2]

Hear the word of the Lord, ***thanks be to God.***

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew,

Chapter 2 beginning at Verse 13

Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ

¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more." [NRSV Matthew 2:13-18]

This is the Gospel of the Lord, ***praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.***

Sentence

**O Lord our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
Your glory above the heavens is sung by the mouths of babes and infants.**