

**Addresses
for
Morning and Evening Prayer**

**according to the
1943 Lectionary
of the
USA 1928 Book of Common Prayer**

**Intended for use
by Layreaders
in the absence of a priest**

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Palm Sunday

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Zech 9:9-12

Here beginneth the ninth verse of the ninth chapter of the Prophet Zechariah.

9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

10 And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

11 As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.

12 Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee;

Here endeth the First Lesson

Second Lesson: Mark 11:1-11

Here beginneth the eleventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark.

1 And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

He was lifted up on a cruel cross,
died in agony in the sight of everyone,
died among the criminals,
naked and bloody,
a scandal to the world.
And from that Cross He draws all men,
all who will accept Him and follow Him,
through death and into resurrection.

Holy Week has begun.
Let us in our hearts and our minds,
in the liturgy of the Church,
in the holy Sacraments,
follow Him on that awful path,
the path that leads to eternal life.

Savior of the World, who by thy Cross and Passion
hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly
beseech thee, O Lord.

A bit earlier in Jesus' ministry,
St. John recorded this:

*"And there were certain Greeks among them
that came up to worship at the feast:
The same came therefore to Philip,
which was of Bethsaida of Galilee,
and desired him, saying,
Sir, we would see Jesus."*

They were wise to seek Him,
but did they know what they sought?
The people of Jerusalem did not
on the day the Lord rode in.
When they were disappointed they turned on Him.

When Philip brought Christ the message,
He confused everyone
by beginning to talk about His death,
and in such strange terms:

*The hour is come,
that the Son of man should be glorified.*

Glorified?
Well, that sounds like a victory parade, doesn't it?
Or does it?

That glorification began on a cross,
passed through a grave,
and only then led to resurrection.
He said this:

*"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,
will draw all men unto me."*

2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village
over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into
it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat;
loose him, and bring him.

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this?
say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and
straightway he will send him hither.

4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied
by the door without in a place where two ways
met; and they loose him.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto
them, What do ye, loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had
commanded: and they let them go.

7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their
garments on him; and he sat upon him.

8 And many spread their garments in the way: and
others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed
them in the way.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed,
cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh
in the name of the Lord:

10 Blessed be the kingdom of our father David,
that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in
the highest.

11 And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the
temple: and when he had looked round about upon
all things, and now the eventide was come, he
went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

Here endeth the Second Lesson

Homily

The land of promise was under oppression,
 under the rule of foreigners,
 dominated by a faraway power
 that had no interest in the ancient ways
 of an ancient land,
 and no interest in the God of their fathers,
 but served alien gods,
 and spread an alien culture and alien laws
 that seized their property,
 squeezed ever higher taxes from them,
 and enforced their laws with brutal force.

Ordinary Jewish people hurt deeply
 under this oppression.
 They valued their God,
 the worship in the Temple and in the synagogues,
 and the customs and traditions
 of their ancient way of life.
 All this was threatened,
 and their material well-being also.
 They were poor, poorer than they had been,
 their substance was being seized by foreigners,
 and sent away to far places.

There was an ancient tradition,
 a little vague and poorly understood,
 veiled in the words of the prophets,
 but central to their message,
 and remembered in the countless folktales
 of a captive nation.
 The air was full of this expectation,
 of a Messiah, an anointed one, a King,
 an heir of the House of David,
 who would deliver His people.

This passage describes a people
 who are so deep in sin
 that they are not better than their enemies,
 and a Lord that will help them,
 but only when they have turned from their sins,
 and knows full well that they will not,
 not on their own.

*"Yea, truth faileth;
 and he that departeth from evil
 maketh himself a prey:
 and the LORD saw it,
 and it displeased him that there was no judgment.
 And he saw that there was no man,*

*"There is none righteous, no not one,"
 it says elsewhere, and
 "All have sinned
 and come short of the glory of God."
 We are so unclean as to be incapable of coming to
 please God.*

*"and wondered that there was no intercessor:
 therefore his arm brought salvation unto him;
 and his righteousness, it sustained him."*

Over and over, this phrase, "the arm of the Lord"
 in the Old Testament,
 finds fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Himself.
 There was no intercessor,
 therefore God the Son took flesh and became man
 that He might be that Intercessor,
 that though Him there might be hope,
 that through Him we might be saved.

Homily

*"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion,
and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob,
saith the LORD. "*

We call this Palm Sunday,
as if the little parade
with the donkey and the palm branches,
and the cheering people
was what it is all about.

That is a start.

We can read the lesson from Isaiah
as pointing to that.

The Redeemer did come to Zion Hill,
to the city of Jerusalem where the Temple stood.
He did enter in with a triumphant greeting,
but He did not come, as many of them thought,
to validate the high opinion this nation had of itself.
He came to those who would turn from transgression.

It was not a message of sweet comfort He brought.
He did not come to make things easier

*"...your iniquities have separated
between you and your God,"*

wrote the prophet,

*"and your sins have hid his face from you,
that he will not hear."*

More and more they rested their hopes on this promise.
More and more they pined for His coming.
There was a man, a desert preacher, named John,
whose charismatic ministry had led many to wonder
if this was the promised Messiah;
but he was now dead,
his head chopped off by the despised King Herod.
Hopes were dashed once more, but ...
there was another preacher, a man from Nazareth,
a certain Joshua ben Joseph
(we know him by the Greek form, Jesus),
who had been preaching and working miracles
all through Judea and Galilee,
even in Samaria and in the Gentile North.
Maybe this was the Messiah at last.

It was almost Passover.

People were coming to Jerusalem
from every direction.
Many of them had stories about this Jesus,
and there was a lot of talk about his preaching,
his message, and his miracles.

And then, in the crowded streets, they saw,
just as it was predicted so long ago, --
riding on a donkey,
with his followers alongside --
the very one of whom they were talking.
They threw branches in the road before him,
and even their own cloaks,
for him to ride over, as Malachi had written,
and as that John had quoted,
to prepare a way for the Lord.

"Hosanna!"
 "It is the King!"
 "Hail the Son of David!"
 They shouted in the streets,
 and made way for him as they would for a king.

But the excitement of His entrance
 isn't the message of this day.
 Though He deserves every bit of the praise,
 though rejoicing in his presence is always right,
 this is not a day of rejoicing.
 This is the beginning of the solemn remembrance
 of His passion and death,
 of the Cross and the Sacrifice there offered.

The jubilant shouts of his entrance
 are strangely, ironically, echoed mere days later,
 as the crowds shout once again,
 "Crucify him! Crucify him!"
 The Gospel of today's Mass is not
 the one we just heard,
 but the solemn reading of
 the Passion according to St Matthew,
 the account of His condemnation,
 suffering, and death.

Yes, we remember an entrance,
 yes, it is the entrance of the King of kings,
 and, yes,
 it is an entrance into new and everlasting life.
 Next week we remember
 His triumphant resurrection from the grave,
 but this life is entered only through the grave.

31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall
 the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw
 all men unto me.

33 This he said, signifying what death he should
 die.

34 The people answered him, We have heard out
 of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how
 sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?
 who is this Son of man?

35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is
 the light with you. Walk while ye have the light,
 lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh
 in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye
 may be the children of light. These things spake
 Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from
 them.

Here endeth the Second Lesson

Second Lesson: John 12:20-36

Here beginneth the twentieth verse of the twelfth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John.

20 And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

28 Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

29 The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

Today's entrance is to a dire and dark walk.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death..."

says the Psalm, and through that valley He walked, and, with Him, it is through that valley we walk, and it is dark before the dawn.

Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, as we, with those children of old, rejoice in thy presence among us, may we be faithful to thee in the valleys of life, and, in solemn remembrance of thy Cross and passion, may we come with thee to life everlasting. Amen.

Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Isa 52:13-53:12

Here beginneth the thirteenth verse of the fifty-second chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.

13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14 As many were astonied at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men:

15 So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.

53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

15 Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment.

16 And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him.

17 For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

18 According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompence to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompence.

19 So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him.

20 And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

21 As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

Here endeth the First Lesson

Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Isa 59:1-3, 9-21

Here beginneth the fifty-ninth chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.

1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

3 For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

9 Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

10 We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noon day as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men.

11 We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.

12 For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them;

13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

14 And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Here endeth the First Lesson

Second Lesson: Matt 26

*Here beginneth the twenty-sixth chapter
of the Gospel according to St. Matthew*

1 And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

2 Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

3 Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill him.

5 But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

6 Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat.

8 But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

10 When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

We don't need deliverance from the pain of life.
That pain
is often a symptom of what really needs healing,
of our deep seated sin.

Only in the sacrifice of the Cross is sin healed,
only in knowing that we deserved what we see,
and, aside from His free acceptance of our evil,
we still do.

It's not a visible conquering king that we preach.
It's not all kinds of psychological healing,
"But we preach Christ crucified."

Let us pray.

O eternal Word, Son of God, Lord everlasting,
King of kings, Lord of our souls, thou rulest from
thy painful throne, from that tree whereon thou
didst hang for our salvation, and thereupon thou
lookest upon us with love. Heal the depths of our
hearts by thy precious Blood. Burn away our sins
with thy piercing gaze. Make us clean and well
within, and, at the last, bring us to everlasting life
with thee as though reignest with the Father and
the Holy Ghost, now and unto all ages. Amen.

To those looking for concrete evidence,
 a king with an army would have been proof
 that God was setting things right.
 Visible evidence is what the Jews wanted.
 It's pretty much what we want, isn't it?
 There are still those who won't believe
 without watertight logical proof.
 Several of them have best-selling books.
 But we preach Christ crucified.
 To the positive thinkers,
 to those who need visible proof,
 to those who require that things come out UK,
 by their definition, in the here and now,
 the sight of a leader being executed,
 especially in such a messy and horrible way,
 seems to define his cause as all in vain,
 worthless, meaningless.
 To those looking for logical proof,
 well, the crucifix just doesn't make sense.
 It won't fit into any of their categories of reason.
 It's all foolishness.

*"But unto them which are called,
 both Jews and Greeks,
 Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.
 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men;
 and the weakness of God is stronger than men. "*

Superficial healing is worse than none at all.
 The weak and self-serving message
 heard from most pulpits today
 is quite able
 to make people feel better about themselves,
 but is that what we need?

13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.
 14 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,
 15 And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.
 16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.
 17 Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?
 18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.
 19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.
 20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.
 21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.
 22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?
 23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.
 24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

26 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

36 Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

But would that have healed their sickness?
Would it have got rid of the underlying rot?
Or would it have closed up the wound,
and left the sins to fester within,
and destroy them?

*"...they have
healed the hurt of the daughter of my people
slightly,
saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."*

None of the peace
that passes all human understanding.

*"Is there no balm in Gilead;
is there no physician there?
why then is not the health
of the daughter of my people recovered? ...
Oh that my head were waters,
and mine eyes a fountain of tears,
that I might weep day and night
for the slain of the daughter of my people!"*

He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
He came to do
what we didn't even know needed doing.

Listen to St. Paul:

*"...the Jews require a sign,
and the Greeks seek after wisdom:
But we preach Christ crucified,
unto the Jews a stumblingblock,
and unto the Greeks foolishness;"*

Homily

*"...every one dealeth falsely.
For they have
healed the hurt of the daughter of my people
slightly,
saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace."*

Striking words from today's reading from Jeremiah. They come as part of a strong indictment of the serious sins of the wise men, the prophets, and the priests of God's people. The rest of them are obvious evils, but healing? We tend to think of that as always a good thing, but, in this list, it is perhaps the worst of all. To heal -- slightly. Another translation speaks of healing wounds superficially. Do you know what happens if you stitch up a wound without disinfecting it? Infection. Hidden rot. Perhaps gangrene. And after gangrene, death. Healing slightly may be worse than not healing at all.

Palm Sunday.
A grand and exciting parade.
A celebration for the King, the Messiah,
who has come to drive those awful Romans out.
Hosanna!
If He had been what they thought He was,
he certainly would have been able to do that,
to drive the Romans out,
to set the nation free,
and let the priests restore every appearance
of a God-fearing chosen nation.

37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.
38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.
39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.
40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?
41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.
42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.
43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.
44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.
45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.
46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.
47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus and took him.

51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

57 And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

58 But Peter followed him afar off unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Here endeth the Second Lesson

Second Lesson: 1 Cor 1:17-31

Here beginneth the seventeenth verse of the first chapter of the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians

17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect.

18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

24 But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

63 But Jesus held his peace, And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

68 Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Here endeth the Second Lesson

18 When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me.

19 Behold the voice of the cry of the daughter of my people because of them that dwell in a far country: Is not the LORD in Zion? is not her king in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with their graven images, and with strange vanities?

20 The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

21 For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.

22 Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

9:1 Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!

Here endeth the First Lesson

Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Jer 8:9-15, 18-9:1

Here beginneth the ninth verse of the eighth chapter of the Prophet Jeremiah.

9 The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?

10 Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

11 For they have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace.

12 Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the LORD.

13 I will surely consume them, saith the LORD: there shall be no grapes on the vine, nor figs on the fig tree, and the leaf shall fade; and the things that I have given them shall pass away from them.

14 Why do we sit still? assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the defenced cities, and let us be silent there: for the LORD our God hath put us to silence, and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD.

15 We looked for peace, but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!

Homily

Where does one begin in preaching these lessons? There is enough content in these two passages to fill out a year's worth of sermons. All one can do is try.

This is Palm Sunday. The name stresses the triumphant entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, but these lessons don't even reference that. You see, the cheering crowds were looking for a conquering king. They hoped that this man had come to take arms and drive the Romans out. Yes, it was the entrance of a King, but what kind of King? An entrance into what? and for what purpose?

We heard that bone-chilling passage from Isaiah, the one where he asks
"Who hath believed our report?"

Who indeed? Surely not the cheering crowds. They certainly did not have in mind a man of sorrows and grief, one who bore their griefs, sorrows, and sins, one who was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted --- for them. It was a hoped-for conqueror they cheered, and the prophets words were strange to them, strange and ignored.

"Who hath believed our report?"

Not the apostles.
 Right up until the very moment
 he refused to believe what Christ Himself
 said about his impending death.

"Who hath believed our report?"

One woman did,
 probably not the most reputable of women.
 She knew who He was,
 and brought precious oils to anoint Him,
 as He said,

*"in that she hath poured this ointment on my body,
 she did it for my burial. "*

The entrance of Palm Sunday
 looked like a triumphant entrance,
 the coming of a conquering King,
 and so it ultimately was,
 but it was an entrance into fearful suffering,
 painful betrayal, an unjust trial,
 the heaping of shame upon the Innocent One,
 and a horrible death.

The time was drawing near.
 He celebrated Passover with His friends.
 He gave them His own Body and Blood,
 the seal of that soon-to-be-offered Sacrifice.
 He went to the garden to pray with them,
 and they failed him there.
 He was arrested, and they ran and hid.
 The boldest of His disciples quaked in fear,
 and denied knowing Him.

"Who hath believed our report?"

asked Isaiah.

Have we? Have we really?
 Do we know the consequences of our own sin?
 Do we look at the crucifix and remember why?
 Are we prepared to follow Him
 as though we know the cost?
 Or do we expect that things will be easy?
 Do we want a faith that does everything for us,
 and doesn't cost?

Let us pray

Ah, Holy Jesus, how hast thou offended,
 that man to judge thee hath in hate pretended?
 By foes derided, by thine own rejected,
 O most afflicted.

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?
 Alas, my treason, Jesus hath undone thee.
 "Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee"
 I crucified thee. Amen.
