

**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**

**by Ed Pacht
Rochester NH**

Advent 3

Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Jeremiah 1:4-10, 17-19

***Here beginneth the fourth verse
of the first chapter of the Prophet Jeremiah.***

4 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,
5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee;
and before thou camest forth out of the womb I
sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto
the nations.

6 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot
speak: for I am a child.

7 But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a
child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee,
and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.

8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to
deliver thee, saith the LORD.

9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched
my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I
have put my words in thy mouth.

10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations
and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull
down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build,
and to plant.

17 Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and
speak unto them all that I command thee: be not
dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before
them.

18 For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced
city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against
the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against
the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and
against the people of the land.

Sure we are, but listen on:

*Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD
JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:*

Let us pray again the words of today's Collect:

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end.

19 And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.

Here endeth the first lesson.

Second Lesson: Luke 1:57-80

Here beginneth the fifty-seventh verse of the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke.

57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.

66 And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,
 68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,
 69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;
 70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:
 71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;
 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;
 73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,
 74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,
 75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.
 76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;
 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,
 78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,
 79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.
 80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

Can there ever be enough ordained workers to reach everyone?
 Can we expect a priest or a deacon or even a licensed reader, to bring our next-door neighbor to salvation? or to point our co-workers to the Lord?
 Do they need to hear?

The bishops are not the Church.
 The priests are not the Church.
 They certainly lead us, but we are the Church.
 the laborers for whom we pray are not all ordained men, though some of them are and the need is great.
 The laborers for whom we pray are already with us.
 They are us.
 The work will not get done if we don't do it.

In our First Lesson, Isaiah sang:

We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

We are that strong city.
 The salvation of the Cross has been entrusted to us.
 When we are confronted by evil, hear what he said:

The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.

Not the mighty, not the educated, not the official, but the poor and the needy.
 Us.
 Are we fearful when we face this responsibility?

to every people and every language
in the whole world.

We believe in an Apostolic ministry, and rightly so.
We affirm that those Apostles appointed bishops,
and that our bishops today bear their message
and their authority.
We believe in an ordained order of priests,
who are entrusted with the Word and the Sacraments.
Thank God that He has left us these!
Without them we could not endure,
and the work could not be accomplished.

*"The harvest is plenteous,
but the laborers are few."*

Are there enough ordained workers?
How many are there struggling along
without priests?
How many are there who have not even heard?
How many are there even in our own communities
that are without the saving Gospel
and Sacraments?
How many does Our Lord wish to reach
and to save?
Pray that the Lord of the harvest send laborers
into the harvest.
Pray for vocations.
Encourage those who are called.
Let word of the need be constantly before us.

*"The harvest is plenteous,
but the laborers are few."*

Homily

This morning the lessons and collect concern
St. John the Baptist
-- or perhaps better, the Baptizer --
as he was not a member
of that particular denomination of Christians.

John came as a bridge between
the Old Testament or Covenant and the New.
His voice is both the last voice
of Old Testament prophecy
and the opening voice
of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Just before today's New Testament reading,
as we recall,
John's birth
(to a woman past the age of childbearing)
had been announced to his father by an angel.
Zacharias had been struck dumb
as a token that, regardless of his doubt,
the message was true,
and he was unable to speak for nine full months,
rather a difficult situation for a priest.
The boy was born.
His name was given,
Suddenly his father could speak,
and his pent up desire
to praise his God with his voice
brought us the canticle we ordinarily use in
Morning Prayer,
called "Benedictus" from its first word in Latin,
"Blessed."
Zacharias then turned to his newborn boy,
and spoke directly and prophetically to him:

"Child, you're going to go before the Lord.
 You'll prepare the road for Him,
 You'll bring His people the message of salvation,
 and give them light."

And the boy grew up,
 sought God in the desert,
 and emerged
 with a message and a baptism of repentance,
 a fierce call to confess
 and forsake the sin that infects us all,
 and to seek the promised forgiveness --
 a message both harsh
 in its proclamation of judgment,
 and hopeful in its promise
 of redemption in the coming King.

Did Zacharias realize how closely he echoed the
 Prophet Jeremiah?

It seems very likely, as
 the Old Testament Scriptures were then being read
 through the lens of strong Messianic expectation.

The Old Testament reading, from Jeremiah,
 relates a conversation the Prophet had with God,
 at the time of his call.

"I'm too young," he said, "really only a child,
 how can I be a prophet?"

"You are," said God,

"Before you were born I knew you,
 and called you, and chose you."

*"Say not, I am a child:
 for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee,*

*"he gave them power against unclean spirits, to
 cast them out,
 and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner
 of disease."*

and he sent them forth to preach
 in the places he could not physically reach.

Later he called seventy more
 and sent them out in a similar way.

And then the time came:

He was killed
 as a sacrifice for the sins of the world,
 the whole point of all this preaching,
 and conquered death,
 and was taken up into heaven.

The message remained,
 fuller and more blessed than it ever had been.
 The world still needed to hear the message,
 but the Christ no longer walked here
 in the way he had.

He left a Church.

On the Eleven remaining
 after the defection of Judas,
 on the seventy still laboring,
 and on the rest of the infant Church,
 He poured out His Holy Spirit,
 and filled the Church with the power of God.
 He entrusted the work and the message
 to those Apostles.

He commissioned them,
 and all those over whom they had the leadership,
 to bring the message of repentance,
 of hope, and of salvation

Homily

*"The harvest is plenteous,
but the laborers are few."*

Our Lord Himself,
though he was God Almighty
walking on the earth,
was, by divine choice, one single man,
limited, as are we, to one single place,
limited to the strengths and weaknesses
of a human being.
Unless he were to exercise
the omnipotence of God,
and force the free will of man,
he had voice and example and human touch
as the only available instruments
for the work at hand,
and that work was to carry the Gospel of God
to every man woman and child on the planet.
As man he couldn't be everywhere at one,
and, as man he could not be present in all of time.
How was he to spread the Good News?
Simple, really -- by recruiting men.
That is what he did.

Today we hear that he chose twelve.
We have their names:
Simon Peter, Andrew; James the son of Zebedee,
John, Philip, Bartholomew; Thomas,
Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus;
Simon the Canaanite,
and Judas Iscariot.

*and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.
Be not afraid of their faces:
for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD.*

Jeremiah did as He was asked.
He spoke boldly what the Lord gave him to speak.
He trusted God to deliver him.
and he was martyred for his efforts.

Though this was Jeremiah's story,
lived out in Jeremiah's life,
we find it also to be prophetic,
fulfilled in detail in John the Baptist,
whom God knew before he was conceived,
on whom He poured out the Spirit
while he was still in the womb,
whom He called to preach fearlessly,
trusting in God,
and who, also, was martyred for his efforts.

Jeremiah's ministry and preaching
was fulfilled in John.
John's ministry and preaching was fulfilled
in the One whose way he prepared,
Our Lord Jesus Christ,
begotten of the Father before all worlds,
conceived of the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
who also suffered and died
-- for our sins and for the sins of the world.
who fulfilled it all when he rose from the dead,
according to the Scriptures.

And where do we come in?

He knew us and called us,
 as St. Paul said,
 before the foundation of the world.
 He's commissioned us to go into the world,
 to speak truth,
 to trust in his protection,
 and perhaps to pay a price.
 We too are called to present ourselves, our souls
 and bodies,
 to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto
 Him.
 No matter what it may cost,
 it is by that same message we are called to share,
 by that Passion, cross, and resurrection,
 that we are saved, that we hope,
 that we will come, at last, to everlasting joy.

Let us pray again the words of today's Collect:

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst
 send thy messenger to prepare thy way before
 thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy
 mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready
 thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to
 the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming
 to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable
 people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with
 the Father and the Holy Spirit ever, one God,
 world without end.

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 see also the sermon by Canon Hollister
 under this date
 in the Sermons by Other Authors

4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who
 also betrayed him.
 5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded
 them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles,
 and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not:
 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of
 Israel.
 7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of
 heaven is at hand.
 8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead,
 cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely
 give.
 9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your
 purses,
 10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats,
 neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is
 worthy of his meat.
 11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter,
 enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye
 go thence.
 12 And when ye come into an house, salute it.
 13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace
 come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your
 peace return to you.
 14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear
 your words, when ye depart out of that house or
 city, shake off the dust of your feet.
 15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable
 for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of
 judgment, than for that city.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

11 LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

Second Lesson: Matthew 9:35-10:15

Here beginneth the thirty-fifth verse of the ninth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

10:1 And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother;

3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;

Morning Prayer B

First Lesson: Isaiah 35

Here beginneth the thirty-fifth chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.

1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.

5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:

10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Here endeth the first lesson.

Second Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-23

Here beginneth the twelfth verse of the fifth chapter of the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Thessalonians.

12 And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;

13 And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

14 Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.

15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

16 Rejoice evermore.

17 Pray without ceasing.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

19 Quench not the Spirit.

20 Despise not prophesyings.

Evening Prayer B

First Lesson: Isaiah 26:1-11

Here beginneth the twenty-sixth chapter of the Prophet Isaiah.

1 In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

2 Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in.

3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

4 Trust ye in the LORD for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength:

5 For he bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, he layeth it low; he layeth it low, even to the ground; he bringeth it even to the dust.

6 The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.

7 The way of the just is uprightness: thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

8 Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O LORD, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

9 With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

10 Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the LORD.

and the confessors, who likewise laid theirs down,
but somehow survived.

This is the only vocation a Christian has:
to give himself, to give herself, to die to self,
to lay it all down for Him.

This world is not a friendly place
for the Christian faith.
Secular society continually looks for ways
to get God out of the way.

Churches conform to the world
and fall away from truth.
As Traditional Anglicans some of us have indeed
left much.

If we are faithful, we will leave more.

St. Paul gives us an example
of that kind of commitment.

He looked for no privilege.

He did not seek an easy way.

He gave everything,
and called upon God's people to do the same,
and to march together on the battlefield.

Let us pray again the words of today's Collect:

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst
send thy messenger to prepare thy way before
thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy
mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready
thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to
the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming
to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable
people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with
the Father and the Holy Spirit ever, one God,
world without end.

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21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you
wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul
and body be preserved blameless unto the coming
of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here endeth the second lesson.

Homily

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord!"

was the cry of St. John the Baptist,

"Make straight in the desert
a highway for our God!"

Listen to what Isaiah said in our First lesson:

*... [a] highway shall be there, and a way,
and it shall be called The way of holiness;
the unclean shall not pass over it;*

There is something different about the road a
Christian walks.

It is not the path of those who live to please them-
selves.

It is not a road we have marked to serve our own
purposes.

It is not the same road that everyone walks.

It is a highway of holiness.

Holiness has at least three meanings, related, but
not quite the same:

To be holy is to be pure.
 To be holy is to be separated from a world of sin.
 To be holy is to be set aside for God.

There is a highway we are called to walk.
 There is a highway that will bring us to heaven,
 but, as Isaiah went on,
 it shall be for those entitled to walk it:

*"the wayfaring men, though fools,
 shall not err therein.
 No lion shall be there,
 nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon,
 it shall not be found there;
 but the redeemed shall walk there: "*

There are temptations and pitfalls
 to the right and to the left.
 To stray from the path is to be in danger
 from the roaring lion seeking someone to devour,
 but on that highway the forces of evil cannot walk,
 He who walks in holiness will not fall.
"The redeemed shall walk there."

Though we walk through the desert,
 he tells us of abundant blooming.
 Though we have been blind,
 we shall see the beauty of His works..
 Though we have been deaf,
 we shall hear His word.

*"Yea, though I walk through the valley of death,"
 says the Psalmist,
 "I will fear no evil, for thou art with me,
 thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."*

From the very beginning of this world,
 Satan and all his forces
 have been challenging the righteousness of God,
 and have successfully led men to abandon truth,
 to desert holiness,
 to pursue self-will and every evil result of it.

God gave His Son,
 General, Teacher, and Sacrifice.
 He came into this world,
 became one of us as we shall be celebrating in two
 weeks,
 taught us the way of holiness,
 and paid a price.

What is the cost of war?
 Everything. --- Everything.
 He that goes to war,
 goes in the full knowledge
 that he thus offers his very life to that cause.
 His life is not his own, not any more.
 At Gethsemane our Lord counted the cost.
 He knew to its fullest what that cost would be.
 He even asked that he might be released from that cup.
 but, finally, he said,
 "Not my will, Father, but Yours!"
 And He gave Himself a Sacrifice for our sins.

He's called us to follow Him,
 to take up our cross,
 to present ourselves a living sacrifice.
 Holy Church, from the earliest days,
 recognized two categories of saints:
 the martyrs,
 whose life was taken from them in the battle,

War is serious business.
It requires everything a nation has.
and often requires vastly more than it has.

Have you stopped to think that the people of God
are repeatedly called a holy nation?
Have you realized that this nation is at war,
and has been from the beginning,
and will be to the end of the age?

*(Revelation 12:7) "And there was war in heaven:
Michael and his angels fought against the dragon:
and the dragon fought and his angels."*

The Prophet Nahum, in the First Lesson,
spoke of the anger and power of the Lord,
of judgment,
of drought and earthquake and conflagration,
of the utter defeat of the enemies of God.
In the midst of the rage and the warning,
he suddenly says to God's people:
"God is good."

He describes a coming Deliverer in these terms:
*"Behold upon the mountains
the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,
that publisheth peace!"*

and declares a promise:
*"O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts,
perform thy vows:
for the wicked shall no more pass through thee;
he is utterly cut off."*

Make no mistake about it.
We are at war.

We hear a promise of strength
in weak hands and weak knees,
a message of hope to those who have not hoped
"The redeemed shall walk there."

"The redeemed shall walk there."

Redeemed, as St. John wrote in the Apocalypse,
*"by the blood of the Lamb
and the word of our testimony,"*
bought and paid for by the Sacrifice
that stands at the center of time,
filled with life by His resurrection,
and choosing, under His guidance,
to walk the path He has shown us.

Every chance we get we come to the altar.
Every chance we get
we join with that holy Offering.
Every chance we get
we feast on His Body and His Blood.
Every time we do these things
"in remembrance of Him",
we are placed in the very center of
the Highway of holiness -
but do we walk there?
Do we stay on the safe road?
Our lesson from St. Paul bears repeating.
It is a marvelous and short outline
of what it is to walk that highway,
a picture of just what holiness looks like.
Listen ...

*... we beseech you, brethren,
to know them which labour among you,
and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you;
And to esteem them very highly in love
for their work's sake.*

We do not walk alone.
God has given us bishops and priests
and other leaders,
both in our own day, and in days gone by.
Do we look to them
as those He has placed over us,
or as those hired to serve us?

And be at peace among yourselves.

We are in the midst of so many controversies today.
Is it the wrangling that is most easily seen?
Or is it the peace that passes understanding?

*Now we exhort you, brethren,
warn them that are unruly,
comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak,
be patient toward all men.
See that none render evil for evil unto any man;
but ever follow that which is good,
both among yourselves, and to all men.
Rejoice evermore.*

*Pray without ceasing.
In every thing give thanks: for this is the will
of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
Quench not the Spirit.*

*20 Despise not prophesyings.
21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.
22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

Homily

WAR

One day in the 1940s ,
nearly every newspaper in America
had the same headline.

The same three letters
in the largest type they could find
filled the front pages -- everywhere.

WAR

The clash of nations was out in the open.
"Sides" were clearly chosen.

Great strivings and great sufferings were begun.
and great outcomes were sought.

WAR

The time of neutrality was past.
The resources of a nation were channeled.
There was only one purpose evident.

WAR

St. Paul began our New Testament lesson this way:
*"Who goeth a warfare any time at his own
charges?"*

He was echoing some words of his Lord and ours:

*"...what king, going to make war
against another king,
sitteth not down first, and consulteth
whether he be able with ten thousand
to meet him that cometh against him
with twenty thousand?*

*...likewise, whosoever he be of you
that forsaketh not all that he hath,
he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:29 & 31)*

16 For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

17 For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.

18 What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.

19 For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.

20 And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;

21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.

22 To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

23 And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.

Here endeth the Second Lesson.

And that is what holiness looks like.
Do we look like that?

23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

May it be so.

Let us pray again the words of today's Collect:

O Lord Jesus Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end.

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Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Nahum 1:3-8, 15

Here beginneth the third verse of the second chapter of the Prophet Nahum.

3 The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

4 He rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, and drieth up all the rivers: Bashan languisheth, and Carmel, and the flower of Lebanon languisheth.

5 The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt, and the earth is burned at his presence, yea, the world, and all that dwell therein.

6 Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.

7 The LORD is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.

8 But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.

15 Behold upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts, perform thy vows: for the wicked shall no more pass through thee; he is utterly cut off.

Here endeth the First Lesson.

Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 9:7-23

Here beginneth the seventh verse of the ninth chapter of the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

7 Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?

8 Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?

9 For it is written in the law of Moses, thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.

11 If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

12 If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

13 Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

14 Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

15 But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.