

## Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November

### Psalm 50

The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks and summons the earth  
from the rising of the sun to where it sets.

**<sup>2</sup> From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth.**

<sup>3</sup> Our God comes and will not be silent; a fire devours before him,  
and around him a tempest rages.

**<sup>4</sup> He summons the heavens above,  
and the earth, that he may judge his people:**

<sup>5</sup> 'Gather to me this consecrated people,  
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice.'

**<sup>6</sup> And the heavens proclaim his righteousness,  
for he is a God of justice.**

<sup>7</sup> 'Listen, my people, and I will speak; I will testify against you, Israel:  
I am God, your God.

**<sup>8</sup> I bring no charges against you concerning your sacrifices  
or concerning your burnt offerings, which are ever before me.**

<sup>9</sup> I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens,

**<sup>10</sup> for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills.**

<sup>11</sup> I know every bird in the mountains,  
and the insects in the fields are mine.

**<sup>12</sup> If I were hungry I would not tell you,  
for the world is mine, and all that is in it.**

<sup>13</sup> Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats?

**<sup>14</sup> 'Sacrifice thank-offerings to God, fulfil your vows to the Most High,**

<sup>15</sup> and call on me in the day of trouble;  
I will deliver you, and you will honour me.'

**<sup>16</sup> But to the wicked person, God says: 'What right have you to recite my  
laws or take my covenant on your lips?**

<sup>17</sup> You hate my instruction and cast my words behind you.

**<sup>18</sup> When you see a thief, you join with him;  
you throw in your lot with adulterers.**

<sup>19</sup> You use your mouth for evil and harness your tongue to deceit.

**<sup>20</sup> You sit and testify against your brother  
and slander your own mother's son.**

<sup>21</sup> When you did these things and I kept silent, you thought I was exactly  
like you. But I now arraign you and set my accusations before you.

**<sup>22</sup> 'Consider this, you who forget God,  
or I will tear you to pieces, with no one to rescue you:**

<sup>23</sup> those who sacrifice thank-offerings honour me,  
and to the blameless I will show my salvation.'

### Matthew 12:1-21

<sup>12</sup> At that time Jesus went through the cornfields on the Sabbath. His  
disciples were hungry and began to pick some ears of corn and eat them.

<sup>2</sup> When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, 'Look! Your disciples are  
doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.'

<sup>3</sup> He answered, 'Haven't you read what David did when he and his  
companions were hungry? <sup>4</sup> He entered the house of God, and he and his  
companions ate the consecrated bread – which was not lawful for them to  
do, but only for the priests. <sup>5</sup> Or haven't you read in the Law that the  
priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are  
innocent? <sup>6</sup> I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. <sup>7</sup> If  
you had known what these words mean, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," you  
would not have condemned the innocent. <sup>8</sup> For the Son of Man is Lord of  
the Sabbath.'

<sup>9</sup> Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, <sup>10</sup> and a man with  
a shrivelled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against  
Jesus, they asked him, 'Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?'

<sup>11</sup> He said to them, 'If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the  
Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? <sup>12</sup> How much more  
valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the  
Sabbath.'

<sup>13</sup> Then he said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' So he stretched it out  
and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. <sup>14</sup> But the  
Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed  
him, and he healed all who were ill. <sup>16</sup> He warned them not to tell others  
about him. <sup>17</sup> This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet  
Isaiah:

<sup>18</sup> 'Here is my servant whom I have chosen,  
the one I love, in whom I delight;  
I will put my Spirit on him,  
and he will proclaim justice to the nations.  
<sup>19</sup> He will not quarrel or cry out;  
no one will hear his voice in the streets.  
<sup>20</sup> A bruised reed he will not break,  
and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out,  
till he has brought justice through to victory.  
<sup>21</sup> In his name the nations will put their hope.'

## **Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November**

### **Psalm 47**

Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy.

**<sup>2</sup> For the LORD Most High is awesome,  
the great King over all the earth.**

<sup>3</sup> He subdued nations under us, peoples under our feet.

**<sup>4</sup> He chose our inheritance for us, the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.**

<sup>5</sup> God has ascended amid shouts of joy,  
the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.

**<sup>6</sup> Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.**

<sup>7</sup> For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise.

**<sup>8</sup> God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.**

<sup>9</sup> The nobles of the nations assemble as the people of the God of Abraham,  
for the kings of the earth belong to God; he is greatly exalted.

### **Matthew 12:22-37**

<sup>22</sup> Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. <sup>23</sup> All the people were astonished and said, 'Could this be the Son of David?'

<sup>24</sup> But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, 'It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.'

<sup>25</sup> Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. <sup>26</sup> If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against

himself. How then can his kingdom stand? <sup>27</sup> And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. <sup>28</sup> But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

<sup>29</sup> 'Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house.

<sup>30</sup> 'Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. <sup>31</sup> And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. <sup>32</sup> Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

<sup>33</sup> 'Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognised by its fruit. <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. <sup>35</sup> A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. <sup>36</sup> But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. <sup>37</sup> For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.'

## **Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December**

### **Psalm 147:1-12**

Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God,  
how pleasant and fitting to praise him!

**<sup>2</sup> The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel.**

<sup>3</sup> He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds.

**<sup>4</sup> He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.**

<sup>5</sup> Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

**<sup>6</sup> The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.**

<sup>7</sup> Sing to the LORD with grateful praise; make music to our God on the harp.

**<sup>8</sup> He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain  
and makes grass grow on the hills.**

<sup>9</sup> He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.

**<sup>10</sup> His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse,  
nor his delight in the legs of the warrior;**

<sup>11</sup> the LORD delights in those who fear him,  
who put their hope in his unfailing love.

**<sup>12</sup> Extol the LORD, Jerusalem; praise your God, Zion.**

### **Matthew 12:38-end**

<sup>38</sup> Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him,  
'Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.'

<sup>39</sup> He answered, 'A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. <sup>40</sup> For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. <sup>41</sup> The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here. <sup>42</sup> The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here.

<sup>43</sup> 'When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. <sup>44</sup> Then it says, "I will return to the house I left." When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. <sup>45</sup> Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.'

<sup>46</sup> While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. <sup>47</sup> Someone told him, 'Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.'

<sup>48</sup> He replied to him, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?'

<sup>49</sup> Pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers.

<sup>50</sup> For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'

### **Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December**

#### **Psalm 42**

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.

**<sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.**

**When can I go and meet with God?**

<sup>3</sup> My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'

**<sup>4</sup> These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.**

<sup>5</sup> Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.

**<sup>6</sup> My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon – from Mount Mizar.**

<sup>7</sup> Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me.

**<sup>8</sup> By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me – a prayer to the God of my life.**

<sup>9</sup> I say to God my Rock, 'Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?'

**<sup>10</sup> My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me saying to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'**

<sup>11</sup> Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.

#### **Matthew 13:1-23**

13 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. <sup>2</sup> Such large crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. <sup>3</sup> Then he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. <sup>4</sup> As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

<sup>5</sup> Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. <sup>6</sup> But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. <sup>7</sup> Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. <sup>8</sup> Still other

seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. <sup>9</sup> Whoever has ears, let them hear.’

<sup>10</sup> The disciples came to him and asked, ‘Why do you speak to the people in parables?’

<sup>11</sup> He replied, ‘Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. <sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables:

‘Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.’<sup>14</sup> In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.”<sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.”

<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. <sup>17</sup> For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: <sup>19</sup> when anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. <sup>20</sup> The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. <sup>21</sup> But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. <sup>22</sup> The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. <sup>23</sup> But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.’

## Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December

### Psalm 25

In you, LORD my God, I put my trust.

**<sup>2</sup> I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

<sup>3</sup> No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause.

**<sup>4</sup> Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths.**

<sup>5</sup> Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.

**<sup>6</sup> Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.**

<sup>7</sup> Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good.

**<sup>8</sup> Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.**

<sup>9</sup> He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

**<sup>10</sup> All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.**

<sup>11</sup> For the sake of your name, LORD, forgive my iniquity, though it is great.

**<sup>12</sup> Who, then, are those who fear the LORD?**

**He will instruct them in the ways they should choose.**

<sup>13</sup> They will spend their days in prosperity, and their descendants will inherit the land.

**<sup>14</sup> The LORD confides in those who fear him; he makes his covenant known to them.**

<sup>15</sup> My eyes are ever on the LORD, for only he will release my feet from the snare.

**<sup>16</sup> Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted.**

<sup>17</sup> Relieve the troubles of my heart and free me from my anguish.

**<sup>18</sup> Look on my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins.**

<sup>19</sup> See how numerous are my enemies and how fiercely they hate me!

**<sup>20</sup> Guard my life and rescue me; do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.**

<sup>21</sup> May integrity and uprightness protect me, because my hope, LORD, is in you.

**<sup>22</sup> Deliver Israel, O God, from all their troubles!**

### **Matthew 13:24-43**

<sup>24</sup> Jesus told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. <sup>25</sup> But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. <sup>26</sup> When the wheat sprouted and formed ears, then the weeds also appeared.

<sup>27</sup> 'The owner's servants came to him and said, "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?"

<sup>28</sup> "An enemy did this," he replied.

'The servants asked him, "Do you want us to go and pull them up?"

<sup>29</sup> "No," he answered, "because while you are pulling up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. <sup>30</sup> Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: first collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."

<sup>31</sup> He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. <sup>32</sup> Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.'

<sup>33</sup> He told them still another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about thirty kilograms of flour until it worked all through the dough.'

<sup>34</sup> Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. <sup>35</sup> So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

'I will open my mouth in parables,

I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.'

<sup>36</sup> Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.'

<sup>37</sup> He answered, 'The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.

<sup>38</sup> The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, <sup>39</sup> and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

<sup>40</sup> 'As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. <sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will

weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

<sup>42</sup> They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>43</sup> Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

### **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> December**

#### **Psalm 9**

I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart;

I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

<sup>2</sup> I will be glad and rejoice in you;

I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.

<sup>3</sup> My enemies turn back; they stumble and perish before you.

<sup>4</sup> For you have upheld my right and my cause, sitting enthroned as the righteous judge.

<sup>5</sup> You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked; you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.

<sup>6</sup> Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies, you have uprooted their cities; even the memory of them has perished.

<sup>7</sup> The LORD reigns for ever; he has established his throne for judgment.

<sup>8</sup> He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity.

<sup>9</sup> The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

<sup>10</sup> Those who know your name trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

<sup>11</sup> Sing the praises of the LORD, enthroned in Zion; proclaim among the nations what he has done.

<sup>12</sup> For he who avenges blood remembers; he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.

<sup>13</sup> LORD, see how my enemies persecute me!

Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death,

<sup>14</sup> that I may declare your praises in the gates of Daughter Zion, and there rejoice in your salvation.

<sup>15</sup> The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug; their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.

<sup>16</sup> The LORD is known by his acts of justice; the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.

<sup>17</sup> The wicked go down to the realm of the dead,  
all the nations that forget God.

<sup>18</sup> But God will never forget the needy;  
the hope of the afflicted will never perish.

<sup>19</sup> Arise, LORD, do not let mortals triumph;  
let the nations be judged in your presence.

<sup>20</sup> Strike them with terror, LORD;  
let the nations know they are only mortal.

#### **Matthew 14:44-end**

<sup>44</sup> 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

<sup>45</sup> 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.

<sup>46</sup> When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

<sup>47</sup> 'Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. <sup>48</sup> When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. <sup>49</sup> This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous <sup>50</sup> and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>51</sup> 'Have you understood all these things?' Jesus asked.

'Yes,' they replied.

<sup>52</sup> He said to them, 'Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.'

<sup>53</sup> When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there.

<sup>54</sup> Coming to his home town, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. 'Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?' they asked. <sup>55</sup> 'Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? <sup>56</sup> Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?' <sup>57</sup> And they took offence at him.

But Jesus said to them, 'A prophet is not without honour except in his own town and in his own home.'

<sup>58</sup> And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.