

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October

Psalm 71

<sup>1</sup> In you, Lord, I have taken refuge;  
let me never be put to shame.

<sup>2</sup> **In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me;  
turn your ear to me and save me.**

<sup>3</sup> Be my rock of refuge,  
to which I can always go;  
give the command to save me,  
for you are my rock and my fortress.

<sup>4</sup> **Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked,  
from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel.**

<sup>5</sup> For you have been my hope, Sovereign Lord,  
my confidence since my youth.

<sup>6</sup> **From birth I have relied on you;  
you brought me forth from my mother's womb.  
I will ever praise you.**

<sup>7</sup> I have become a sign to many;  
you are my strong refuge.

<sup>8</sup> **My mouth is filled with your praise,  
declaring your splendour all day long.**

<sup>9</sup> Do not cast me away when I am old;  
do not forsake me when my strength is gone.

<sup>10</sup> **For my enemies speak against me;  
those who wait to kill me conspire together.**

<sup>11</sup> They say, "God has forsaken him;  
pursue him and seize him,  
for no one will rescue him."

<sup>12</sup> **Do not be far from me, my God;  
come quickly, God, to help me.**

<sup>13</sup> May my accusers perish in shame;  
may those who want to harm me  
be covered with scorn and disgrace.

<sup>14</sup> **As for me, I will always have hope;  
I will praise you more and more.**

<sup>15</sup> My mouth will tell of your righteous deeds,  
of your saving acts all day long—  
though I know not how to relate them all.

<sup>16</sup> **I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, Sovereign Lord;  
I will proclaim your righteous deeds, yours alone.**

<sup>17</sup> Since my youth, God, you have taught me,  
and to this day I declare your marvellous deeds.

<sup>18</sup> **Even when I am old and grey,  
do not forsake me, my God,  
till I declare your power to the next generation,  
your mighty acts to all who are to come.**

Acts 21:37 –22:21

<sup>37</sup> As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?"  
"Do you speak Greek?" he replied. <sup>38</sup> "Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the wilderness some time ago?"  
<sup>39</sup> Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people."

<sup>40</sup> After receiving the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to them in Aramaic  
<sup>1</sup> "Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defence."<sup>2</sup> When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet. Then Paul said: <sup>3</sup> "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. <sup>4</sup> I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, <sup>5</sup> as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

<sup>6</sup> "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. <sup>7</sup> I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul!

Why do you persecute me?<sup>8</sup> “Who are you, Lord?” I asked. “I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. <sup>9</sup> My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. <sup>10</sup> “What shall I do, Lord?” I asked. “Get up,” the Lord said, “and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.” <sup>11</sup> My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

<sup>12</sup> “A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. <sup>13</sup> He stood beside me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And at that very moment I was able to see him.

<sup>14</sup> “Then he said: ‘The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. <sup>15</sup> You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. <sup>16</sup> And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

<sup>17</sup> “When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance <sup>18</sup> and saw the Lord speaking to me. ‘Quick!’ he said. ‘Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.’

<sup>19</sup> “‘Lord,’ I replied, ‘these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. <sup>20</sup> And when the blood of your martyr<sup>[a]</sup> Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.’

<sup>21</sup> “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.’

## Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October

### Psalm 73: 21-28

When my heart was grieved  
and my spirit embittered,

<sup>22</sup> **I was senseless and ignorant;  
I was a brute beast before you.**

<sup>23</sup> Yet I am always with you;  
you hold me by my right hand.

<sup>24</sup> **You guide me with your counsel,  
and afterward you will take me into glory.**

<sup>25</sup> Whom have I in heaven but you?  
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.

<sup>26</sup> **My flesh and my heart may fail,  
but God is the strength of my heart  
and my portion forever.**

<sup>27</sup> Those who are far from you will perish;  
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.

<sup>28</sup> **But as for me, it is good to be near God.  
I have made the Sovereign Lord my refuge;  
I will tell of all your deeds.**

### Acts 22: 22- the end

<sup>22</sup> The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, “Rid the earth of him! He’s not fit to live!”

<sup>23</sup> As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, <sup>24</sup> the commander ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and interrogated in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. <sup>25</sup> As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, “Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn’t even been found guilty?”

<sup>26</sup> When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. “What are you going to do?” he asked. “This man is a Roman citizen.”

<sup>27</sup> The commander went to Paul and asked, “Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?” “Yes, I am,” he answered.

<sup>28</sup> Then the commander said, “I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship.” “But I was born a citizen,” Paul replied.

<sup>29</sup> Those who were about to interrogate him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.

<sup>30</sup> The commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews. So the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the members of the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

## Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October

### Psalm 77: 1-12

I cried out to God for help;

I cried out to God to hear me.

**<sup>2</sup> When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;  
at night I stretched out untiring hands,  
and I would not be comforted.**

<sup>3</sup> I remembered you, God, and I groaned;  
I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.<sup>[b]</sup>

**<sup>4</sup> You kept my eyes from closing;  
I was too troubled to speak.**

<sup>5</sup> I thought about the former days,  
the years of long ago;

**<sup>6</sup> I remembered my songs in the night.  
My heart meditated and my spirit asked:**

<sup>7</sup> "Will the Lord reject forever?

Will he never show his favour again?

**<sup>8</sup> Has his unfailing love vanished forever?  
Has his promise failed for all time?**

<sup>9</sup> Has God forgotten to be merciful?  
Has he in anger withheld his compassion?"

**<sup>10</sup> Then I thought, "To this I will appeal:  
the years when the Most High stretched out his right hand.**

<sup>11</sup> I will remember the deeds of the Lord;  
yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago.

**<sup>12</sup> I will consider all your works  
and meditate on all your mighty deeds."**

### Acts 23: 12-24

<sup>12</sup> The next morning some Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. <sup>13</sup> More than forty men were involved in this plot. <sup>14</sup> They went to the chief priests and the elders and said, "We have taken a solemn oath not to eat anything until we have killed Paul. <sup>15</sup> Now then, you and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to bring him before you on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about his case. We are ready to kill him before he gets here."

<sup>16</sup> But when the son of Paul's sister heard of this plot, he went into the barracks and told Paul.

<sup>17</sup> Then Paul called one of the centurions and said, "Take this young man to the commander; he has something to tell him." <sup>18</sup> So he took him to the commander. The centurion said, "Paul, the prisoner, sent for me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you."

<sup>19</sup> The commander took the young man by the hand, drew him aside and asked, "What is it you want to tell me?"

<sup>20</sup> He said: "Some Jews have agreed to ask you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomorrow on the pretext of wanting more accurate information about him. <sup>21</sup> Don't give in to them, because more than forty of them are waiting in ambush for him. They have taken an oath not to eat or drink until they have killed him. They are ready now, waiting for your consent to their request."

<sup>22</sup> The commander dismissed the young man with this warning: "Don't tell anyone that you have reported this to me.

<sup>23</sup> Then he called two of his centurions and ordered them, "Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. <sup>24</sup> Provide horses for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Governor Felix." accusers get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

## Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October

### Psalm 78: 1-8

My people, hear my teaching;  
listen to the words of my mouth.

**<sup>2</sup> I will open my mouth with a parable;  
I will utter hidden things, things from of old—**

<sup>3</sup> things we have heard and known,  
things our ancestors have told us.

**<sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their descendants;  
we will tell the next generation  
the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord,  
his power, and the wonders he has done.**

<sup>5</sup> He decreed statutes for Jacob  
and established the law in Israel,  
which he commanded our ancestors  
to teach their children,

**<sup>6</sup> so the next generation would know them,  
even the children yet to be born,  
and they in turn would tell their children.**

<sup>7</sup> Then they would put their trust in God  
and would not forget his deeds  
but would keep his commands.

**<sup>8</sup> They would not be like their ancestors—  
a stubborn and rebellious generation,  
whose hearts were not loyal to God,  
whose spirits were not faithful to him.**

#### Acts 24

Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. <sup>2</sup> When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: “We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. <sup>3</sup> Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. <sup>4</sup> But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly.

<sup>5</sup> “We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect <sup>6</sup> and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. <sup>8</sup> By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him.”

<sup>9</sup> The other Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.

<sup>10</sup> When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: “I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defence.

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October

#### Psalm 55: 1-8

Listen to my prayer, O God,  
do not ignore my plea;

<sup>2</sup> **hear me and answer me.**

**My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught**

<sup>3</sup> because of what my enemy is saying,

because of the threats of the wicked;  
for they bring down suffering on me  
and assail me in their anger.

**<sup>4</sup> My heart is in anguish within me;  
the terrors of death have fallen on me.**

<sup>5</sup> Fear and trembling have beset me;  
horror has overwhelmed me.

**<sup>6</sup> I said, “Oh, that I had the wings of a dove!  
I would fly away and be at rest.**

<sup>7</sup> I would flee far away  
and stay in the desert;<sup>[5]</sup>

**<sup>8</sup> I would hurry to my place of shelter,  
far from the tempest and storm.”**

#### Acts 25:1-12

Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> where the chief priests and the Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul. <sup>3</sup> They requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. <sup>4</sup> Festus answered, “Paul is being held at Caesarea, and I myself am going there soon. <sup>5</sup> Let some of your leaders come with me, and if the man has done anything wrong, they can press charges against him there.”

<sup>6</sup> After spending eight or ten days with them, Festus went down to Caesarea. The next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him. <sup>7</sup> When Paul came in, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him. They brought many serious charges against him, but they could not prove them. <sup>8</sup> Then Paul made his defence: “I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law or against the temple or against Caesar.”

<sup>9</sup> Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favour, said to Paul, “Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?”

<sup>10</sup> Paul answered: “I am now standing before Caesar’s court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. <sup>11</sup> If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!”

<sup>12</sup> After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: “You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!”

