

## **Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany, February 4**

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer.  
The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from the Gods Word Translation.

**The Collect:** Set us free, O God, from the bondage of our sins, and give us the liberty of that abundant life which you have made known to us in your Son our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

### **Old Testament: Isaiah 40:21-31**

21 Don't you know?

Haven't you heard?

Haven't you been told from the beginning?

Don't you understand the foundations of the earth?

22 God is enthroned above the earth,  
and those who live on it are like grasshoppers.

He stretches out the sky like a canopy  
and spreads it out like a tent to live in.

23 He makes rulers unimportant  
and makes earthly judges worth nothing.

24 They have hardly been planted.

They have hardly been sown.

They have hardly taken root in the ground.

Then he blows on them and they wither,  
and a windstorm sweeps them away like straw.

25 "To whom, then, can you compare me?

Who is my equal?" asks the Holy One.

26 Look at the sky and see.

Who created these things?

Who brings out the stars one by one?

He calls them all by name.

Because of the greatness of his might and the strength of his power,  
not one of them is missing.

27 Jacob, why do you complain?

Israel, why do you say,

“My way is hidden from the Lord,  
and my rights are ignored by my God”?

28 Don't you know?

Haven't you heard?

The eternal God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth,  
doesn't grow tired or become weary.

His understanding is beyond reach.

29 He gives strength to those who grow tired  
and increases the strength of those who are weak.

30 Even young people grow tired and become weary,  
and young men will stumble and fall.

31 Yet, the strength of those who wait with hope in the Lord  
will be renewed.

They will soar on wings like eagles.

They will run and won't become weary.

They will walk and won't grow tired.

**Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

### **Psalm: Psalm 147:1-12, 21c**

1 Hallelujah!

How good it is to sing praises to our God! \*

how pleasant it is to honor him with praise!

2 The Lord rebuilds Jerusalem; \*

he gathers the exiles of Israel.

3 He heals the brokenhearted \*

and binds up their wounds.

4 He counts the number of the stars \*

and calls them all by their names.

5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; \*

there is no limit to his wisdom.

6 The Lord lifts up the lowly, \*

but casts the wicked to the ground.

7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving; \*

make music to our God upon the harp.

8 He covers the heavens with clouds \*

and prepares rain for the earth;

9 He makes grass to grow upon the mountains \*

and green plants to serve mankind.

10 He provides food for flocks and herds \*

and for the young ravens when they cry.

11 He is not impressed by the might of a horse; \*

he has no pleasure in the strength of a man;

12 But the Lord has pleasure in those who fear him, \*

in those who await his gracious favor.

21 Hallelujah!

### **Epistle: 1 Corinthians 9:16-23**

16 If I spread the Good News, I have nothing to brag about because I have an obligation to do this. How horrible it will be for me if I don't spread the Good News! 17 If I spread the Good News willingly, I'll have a reward. But if I spread the Good News unwillingly, I'm 「only」 doing what I've been entrusted to do.

18 So what is my reward? It is to spread the Good News free of charge. In that way I won't use the rights that belong to those who spread the Good News.

19 Although I'm free from all people, I have made myself a slave for all people to win more

of them. 20 I became Jewish for Jewish people. I became subject to the laws in Moses' Teachings for those who are subject to those laws. I did this to win them even though I'm not subject to Moses' Teachings. 21 I became like a person who does not have Moses' Teachings for those who don't have those teachings. I did this to win them even though I have God's teachings. I'm really subject to Christ's teachings. 22 I became like a person weak in faith to win those who are weak in faith. I have become everything to everyone in order to save at least some of them. 23 I do all this for the sake of the Good News in order to share what it offers.

### **Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people**

#### **Gospel: Mark 1:29-39**

29 After they left the synagogue, they went directly to the house of Simon and Andrew. James and John went with them. 30 Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever. The first thing they did was to tell Jesus about her. 31 Jesus went to her, took her hand, and helped her get up. The fever went away, and she prepared a meal for them.

32 In the evening, when the sun had set, people brought to him everyone who was sick and those possessed by demons. 33 The whole city had gathered at his door. 34 He cured many who were sick with various diseases and forced many demons out of people. However, he would not allow the demons to speak. After all, they knew who he was.

35 In the morning, long before sunrise, Jesus went to a place where he could be alone to pray. 36 Simon and his friends searched for him. 37 When they found him, they told him, "Everyone is looking for you."

38 Jesus said to them, "Let's go somewhere else, to the small towns that are nearby. I have to spread the Good News in them also. This is why I have come."

39 So he went to spread the Good News in the synagogues all over Galilee, and he forced demons out of people.

#### **The Gospel of the Lord**

**Closing Prayer: On February 7 we celebrate the life of Cornelius the Centurion. Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*.**

All that we know about Cornelius is contained in the Acts of the Apostles (chapters 10–11). He was the first Gentile converted to the Christian faith, along with his household. A centurion was commander of a company of one hundred men in the Roman army, responsible for their discipline, both on the field of battle and in camp. A centurion was a Roman citizen, a military career man, well-paid, and generally noted for courage and competence. Some centurions, such as Cornelius, and those whom we know about from the gospel narratives, were men of deep religious piety.

The author of Acts considered Cornelius' conversion very momentous for the future of Christianity. He records that it occurred as the result of divine intervention and revelation, and as a response to the preaching of Peter, the chief apostle. The experience of Cornelius' household was regarded as comparable to a new Pentecost, and it was a primary precedent for the momentous decision of the apostolic council, held in Jerusalem a few years later, to admit Gentiles to full and equal partnership with Jewish converts in the household of faith.

According to tradition, Cornelius was the second Bishop of Caesarea, the metropolitan see of Palestine. Undoubtedly, Cornelius and his household formed the nucleus of the first church in this important city, a church that was gathered by Philip the Evangelist.

**Let us Pray:** O God, by your Spirit you called Cornelius the Centurion to be the first Christian among the Gentiles: Grant to your Church such a ready will to go where you send and to do what you command, that, under your guidance, it may welcome all who turn to you in love and faith, and proclaim the Gospel to all nations; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.