



A Celebration for the Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Sentence

'Is not this the fast that I choose,' says the Lord: 'to loose the bonds of injustice, and to let the oppressed go free?'
(Isaiah 58:6)

or

Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.
(Matthew 5:16)

Opening Prayer or Collect

Year C

Faithful God,
you have appointed us your witnesses,
to be a light that shines in the world:

let us not hide the bright hope you have given us,
but tell everyone your love,
revealed in Jesus Christ the Lord,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God,
for ever and ever. Amen. **Amen.**

Readings for the Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany (Year A)

Old Testament: Isaiah 58:1-9a, (9b-12)

A Reading from the prophet Isaiah, Chapter 58 beginning at verse 1

Shout out, do not hold back!
Lift up your voice like a trumpet!
Announce to my people their rebellion,
to the house of Jacob their sins.
Yet day after day they seek me
and delight to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that practised righteousness
and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;
they ask of me righteous judgements,
they delight to draw near to God.
'Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?'
Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day,
and oppress all your workers.
Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.
Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?
Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

*If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.*

*The Lord will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.*

*Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
you shall be called the repairer of the breach,
the restorer of streets to live in.*

Hear the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Psalm 112 APBA p 344

- 1 O praise the Lord. Blessed are they that fear the Lord:
and greatly delight in his commandments.
- 2 Their children shall be mighty in the land:
an upright race who will be blessed.
- 3 Riches and plenty shall be in their house:
and their righteousness shall stand for ever.
- 4 Light arises in darkness for the upright:
gracious and merciful are the righteous.
- 5 It goes well with those who act generously and lend:
who guide their affairs with justice.

- 6 Surely they shall never be moved:
the righteous shall be held in everlasting remembrance.
- 7 They will not fear bad tidings:
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.
- 8 Their hearts are confident and will not fear:
they will see the downfall of their enemies.
- 9 They give freely to the poor:
their righteousness stands for ever, their head is uplifted in glory.
- 10 The wicked shall see it and be angry:
they shall gnash their teeth and consume away;
and the hope of the wicked shall fail.

New Testament: 1 Corinthians 2:1-13, (14-16)

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians, Chapter 2, Verse 1

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,

'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,
nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him'—

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are discerned spiritually. Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny.

*'For who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?'
But we have the mind of Christ.*

Hear the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Gospel: Matthew 5:13-20

*A Reading from the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew, Chapter 5,
beginning at verse 13* **Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ**

'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

‘You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

For the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ