

5th Sunday after Epiphany

O.T. Lesson and Psalm: **Isaiah 58:1-9a (b-12)**

True Fasting

1

“Shout it aloud, do not hold back.
Raise your voice like a trumpet.
Declare to my people their rebellion
and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.

2

For day after day they seek me out;
they seem eager to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that does what is right
and has not forsaken the commands of its God.
They ask me for just decisions
and seem eager for God to come near them.

3

‘Why have we fasted,’ they say,
‘and you have not seen it?’
Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?’
“Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.

4

Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,
and in striking each other with wicked fists.
You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard on high.

5

Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble themselves?
Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?

6

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?

7

Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

8

Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.

9

Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,

10

and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.

11

The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.

12

Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

Psalm 112:1-9 (10)

1

Praise the Lord.
Blessed are those who fear the Lord,
who find great delight in his commands.

2

Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

3

Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

4

Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.

5

Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

6

Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.

7

They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.

8

Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.

9

They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor,
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn will be lifted high in honor.

10

The wicked will see and be vexed,
they will gnash their teeth and waste away;
the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.

*Epistle Lesson: **I Corinthians 2:1-12 (13-16)***

1 And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. **2** For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. **3** I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. **4** My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, **5** so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

God's Wisdom Revealed by the Spirit

6 We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. **7** No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. **8** None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. **9** However, as it is written:

"What no eye has seen,
what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived" —
the things God has prepared for those who love him —

10 these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. **11** For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. **12** What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words. **14** The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. **15** The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, **16** for,
"Who has known the mind of the Lord
so as to instruct him?"
But we have the mind of Christ.

Gospel reading: **Matthew 5:13-20**

Salt and Light

13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. **15** Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. **16** In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

The Fulfillment of the Law

17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. **18** For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. **19** Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. **20** For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.