

The First Reading is from Isaiah 50:4-9a

The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens-- wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught. The Lord God has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward. I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near. Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together. Who are my adversaries? Let them confront me. It is the Lord God who helps me; who will declare me guilty?

The Word of the Lord

Today, we will read Psalm 116:1-8. We will read it responsively, breaking at the asterisk. It can be found on the screens behind me, on page 759 in the Book of Common Prayer, or in the bulletin.

1 I love the Lord, because he has heard the voice of my supplication, *

because he has inclined his ear to me whenever I called upon him.

2 The cords of death entangled me; the grip of the grave took hold of me; *

I came to grief and sorrow.

3 Then I called upon the Name of the Lord: *

"O Lord, I pray you, save my life."

4 Gracious is the Lord and righteous; *

our God is full of compassion.

5 The Lord watches over the innocent; *

I was brought very low, and he helped me.

6 Turn again to your rest, O my soul, *

for the Lord has treated you well.

7 For you have rescued my life from death, *

my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling.

8 I will walk in the presence of the Lord *

in the land of the living.

The Second Reading is from James 3:1-12

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue-- a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine yield figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

The Word of the Lord.