

Sentence of Scripture

Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.'
Isaiah 35:3–4

Prayer of the day

Sustain us, O God,
with the power of your love on our journey
to meet the One who is coming:
strengthen our weak hands,
make firm our feeble knees,
and open blind eyes to the dawning of your kingdom,
so that our hearts may rejoice
as we behold the majesty of our God.
We ask this through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Readings

Isaiah 35:1–10

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. ³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.
(NRSV)

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Psalms 146

¹ Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul:

while I live I will praise the Lord;

² While I have any being:

I will sing praises to my God.

³ Put not your trust in princes:

nor in flesh and blood, which cannot save.

⁴ For when their breath goes from them, they return again to the earth:

and on that day all their thoughts perish.

⁵ Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob:

whose hope is in the Lord their God,

⁶ The God who made heaven and earth:

the sea, and all that is in them,

⁷ Who keeps faith for ever:

who deals justice to those that are oppressed.

⁸ The Lord gives food to the hungry:

and sets the captives free.

⁹ The Lord gives sight to the blind:

the Lord lifts up those that are bowed down.

¹⁰ The Lord loves the righteous:

the Lord cares for the stranger in the land.

¹¹ He upholds the widow and the fatherless:

as for the way of the wicked, he turns it upside down.

¹² The Lord shall be king for ever:

your God, O Zion, shall reign through all generations. Praise the Lord.

James 5:7–10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. (NRSV)

Hear the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Matthew 11:2–11

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ **Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. (NRSV)

This is the Gospel of our Lord, **praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**