

COLLECT: (*Remain Standing*)

Set us free, heavenly Father, from every bond of prejudice and fear; that, honoring the steadfast courage of your servant Absalom Jones, we may show forth in our lives the reconciling love and true freedom of the children of God, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Prov. 30:1-4, 24-33 (*Please be seated*)

Reader: A reading from the book of Proverbs.

Thus says the man: I am weary, O God,
I am weary, O God. How can I prevail?
Surely I am too stupid to be human;
I do not have human understanding.
I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I knowledge of the holy ones.
Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in the hollow of
the hand?
Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is the person's name?
And what is the name of the person's child?
Surely you know!

Four things on earth are small,
yet they are exceedingly wise:
the ants are a people without strength,
yet they provide their food in the summer;

the badgers are a people without power,
yet they make their homes in the rocks;
the locusts have no king,
yet all of them march in rank;
the lizard can be grasped in the hand,
yet it is found in kings' palaces.

Three things are stately in their stride;
four are stately in their gait:
the lion, which is mightiest among wild animals
and does not turn back before any;
the strutting rooster, the he-goat,
and a king striding before his people.

If you have been foolish, exalting yourself,
or if you have been devising evil,
put your hand on your mouth.
For as pressing milk produces curds,
and pressing the nose produces blood,
so pressing anger produces strife.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God

Psalm

Reader: Let us pray together the words of **Psalm 28**.

1 O Lord, I call to you;
my Rock, do not be deaf to my cry; *
lest, if you do not hear me,
I become like those who go down to the Pit.

2 Hear the voice of my prayer when I cry out to you, *
when I lift up my hands to your holy of holies.

3 Do not snatch me away with the wicked or
with the evildoers, *
who speak peaceably with their neighbors,
while strife is in their hearts.

4 Repay them according to their deeds, *
and according to the wickedness of their actions.

5 According to the work of their hands repay them, *

and give them their just deserts.

6 They have no understanding of the Lord's
doings, nor of the works of his hands; *
therefore he will break them down and not
build them up.

7 Blessed is the Lord! *
for he has heard the voice of my prayer.

8 The Lord is my strength and my shield; *
my heart trusts in him, and I have been helped;

9 Therefore my heart dances for joy, *
and in my song will I praise him.

10 The Lord is the strength of his people, *
a safe refuge for his anointed.

11 Save your people and bless your inheritance; *
shepherd them and carry them for ever.

Philippians 3:1-11 *(Please be seated)*

Reader: A reading from the book of Philippians.

Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord.

To write the same things to you is not troublesome to me, and for you it is a safeguard.

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh! For it is we who are the circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh— even though I, too, have reason for confidence in the flesh.

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

John 18:28-38 *(Please stand as you are able)*

Priest: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

Then they took Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate's headquarters. It was early in the morning. They themselves did not enter the headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate went out to them and said, 'What accusation do you bring against this man?' They answered, 'If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.' Pilate said to them, 'Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.' The Jews replied, 'We are not permitted to put anyone to death.' (This was to fulfil what Jesus had said when he indicated the kind of death he was to die.)

Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.' Pilate asked him, 'What is truth?'

After he had said this, he went out to the Jews again and told them, 'I find no case against him.'

Deacon or Priest: The Gospel of the Lord. **All: Praise to you, Lord Christ**