

After suffering so much loss, Job yearns to plead his case before the Lord.

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF JOB [23:1-9, 16-17]

Job said: "Today also my complaint is bitter; his hand is heavy despite my groaning. Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his dwelling! I would lay my case before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would learn what he would answer me, and understand what he would say to me. Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power? No; but he would give heed to me. There an upright person could reason with him, and I should be acquitted forever by my judge. "If I go forward, he is not there; or backward, I cannot perceive him; on the left he hides, and I cannot behold him; I turn to the right, but I cannot see him. God has made my heart faint; the Almighty has terrified me; If only I could vanish in darkness, and thick darkness would cover my face!"

The Word of the Lord.

PSALM 22:1-15 *(said by half-verse)*

- ¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? *
and are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress?
- ² O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; *
by night as well, but I find no rest.
- ³ Yet you are the Holy One, *
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.
- ⁴ Our forefathers put their trust in you; *
they trusted, and you delivered them.
- ⁵ They cried out to you and were delivered; *
they trusted in you and were not put to shame.
- ⁶ But as for me, I am a worm and no man, *
scorned by all and despised by the people.
- ⁷ All who see me laugh me to scorn; *
they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,
- ⁸ "He trusted in the LORD; let him deliver him; *
let him rescue him, if he delights in him."
- ⁹ Yet you are he who took me out of the womb, *
and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.
- ¹⁰ I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; *
you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.
- ¹¹ Be not far from me, for trouble is near, *
and there is none to help.
- ¹² Many young bulls encircle me; *
strong bulls of Bashan surround me.

- ¹³ They open wide their jaws at me, *
like a ravening and a roaring lion.
- ¹⁴ I am poured out like water;
all my bones are out of joint; *
my heart within my breast is melting wax.
- ¹⁵ My mouth is dried out like a pot-sherd;
my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; *
and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.

In his role as high priest, Jesus identified with our struggles and conquered them.

A READING FROM THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS [4:12-16]

The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account. Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The Word of the Lord.