

Though the people of God have suffered, God promises that the future is bright; deliverance is coming for those who have been oppressed.

### **A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah: 9:1-4**

There will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who lived in a land of deep darkness--  
on them light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation,  
you have increased its joy;  
they rejoice before you  
as with joy at the harvest,  
as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden,  
and the bar across their shoulders,

the rod of their oppressor,  
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

*Reader: The Word of the Lord.*

**Psalm 27:1, 5-13** (*8am spoken, 10am sung*)

<sup>1</sup> The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom then shall I fear? \*

the LORD is the strength of my life;  
of whom then shall I be afraid?

<sup>5</sup> One thing have I asked of the LORD;  
one thing I seek; \*  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my  
life;

<sup>6</sup> To behold the fair beauty of the LORD \*  
and to seek him in his temple.

<sup>7</sup> For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe in his shelter; \*  
he shall hide me in the secrecy of his dwelling  
and set me high upon a rock.

<sup>8</sup> Even now he lifts up my head \*  
above my enemies round about me.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation  
with sounds of great gladness; \*  
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

<sup>10</sup> Hearken to my voice, O LORD, when I call; \*  
have mercy on me and answer me.

<sup>11</sup> You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." \*

    Your face, LORD, will I seek.

<sup>12</sup> Hide not your face from me, \*

    nor turn away your servant in displeasure.

<sup>13</sup> You have been my helper;

    cast me not away; \*

    do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.

People eagerly divide themselves into categories and tribes; this is antithetical to the gospel, which preaches that all are one in Christ Jesus.

**A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians:  
1:10-18**

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

*Reader: The Word of the Lord.*