

### **Sentence of Scripture**

Do not fear. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love. Zephaniah 3.16–17

### **Prayer of the day**

Almighty God,  
you sent your Son into a world  
where the wheat must be winnowed from the chaff  
and evil clings even to what is good:  
let the fire of your Spirit purge us of all corruption,  
so that, purified, we may wait eagerly for him  
whose coming is certain, whose Day draws near,  
your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### **Zephaniah 3:14-20**

#### **A Song of Joy**

<sup>14</sup> Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

<sup>15</sup> The LORD has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies.  
The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.

<sup>16</sup> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion;  
do not let your hands grow weak.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing<sup>18</sup> as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

<sup>19</sup> I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.

And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise  
and renown in all the earth.

<sup>20</sup> At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you;  
for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth,  
when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

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

## Isaiah 12:2-6 (instead of psalm)

2 Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,  
**for the LORD GOD<sup>[a]</sup> is my strength and my might;  
he has become my salvation.**

<sup>3</sup> With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

<sup>4</sup> **And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name;**  
make known his deeds among the nations;  
**proclaim that his name is exalted.**

<sup>5</sup> Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously;  
**let this be known<sup>[b]</sup> in all the earth.**

<sup>6</sup> Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,  
**for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.**

## Philippians 4:4-7

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. <sup>(NRSV)</sup>

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

## Luke 3:7-18

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

<sup>7</sup> John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup> Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

<sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” <sup>11</sup> In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.” <sup>12</sup> Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” <sup>13</sup> He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” <sup>14</sup> Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

<sup>15</sup> As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup> John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>18</sup> So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. <sup>(NRSV)</sup>

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

## Next Week’s Readings

Micah 5.2–5a    Luke 1.47–55 (page 9) or Psalm 80.1–7    Hebrews 10.5–10    Luke 1.39–45 (46–55)