

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

February 4, 2018



THE LESSON Isaiah 40:21-31

²¹Don't you know? Haven't you heard? Wasn't it announced to you from the beginning? Haven't you understood since the earth was founded? ²²God inhabits the earth's horizon—its inhabitants are like locusts—stretches out the skies like a curtain and spreads it out like a tent for dwelling. ²³God makes dignitaries useless and the earth's judges into nothing. ²⁴Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely is their shoot rooted in the earth when God breathes on them, and they dry up; the windstorm carries them off like straw. ²⁵So to whom will you compare me, and who is my equal? says the holy one.

²⁶Look up at the sky and consider: Who created these? The one

who brings out their attendants one by one, summoning each of them by name. Because of God's great strength and mighty power, not one is missing. ²⁷Why do you say, Jacob, and declare, Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD my God ignores my predicament"? ²⁸Don't you know? Haven't you heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He doesn't grow tired or weary. His understanding is beyond human reach, ²⁹giving power to the tired and reviving the exhausted. ³⁰Youths will become tired and weary, young men will certainly stumble; ³¹but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength; they will fly up on wings like eagles; they will run and not be tired; they will walk and not be weary.

THE RESPONSE Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

Praise the LORD!

Because it is good to sing praise to our God! Because it is a pleasure to make beautiful praise!

²The LORD rebuilds Jerusalem, gathering up Israel's exiles. ³God heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds. ⁴God counts the stars by number, giving each one a name.

⁵**Our Lord is great and so strong! God's knowledge can't be grasped!**

⁶The LORD helps the poor, but throws the wicked down on the dirt!

⁷**Sing to the LORD with thanks; sing praises to our God with a lyre! ⁸God covers the skies with clouds; God makes rain for the earth; God makes the mountains sprout green grass.**

⁹God gives food to the animals—even to the baby ravens when they cry out. ¹⁰God doesn't prize the strength of a horse; God doesn't treasure the legs of a runner.

¹¹**No. The LORD treasures the people who honor him, the people who wait for his faithful love. ²⁰Praise the LORD!**

THE EPISTLE

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

¹⁶If I preach the gospel, I have no reason to brag, since I'm obligated to do it. I'm in trouble if I don't preach the gospel. ¹⁷If I do this voluntarily, I get rewarded for it. But if I'm forced to do it, then I've been charged with a responsibility. ¹⁸What reward do I get? That when I preach, I offer the good news free of charge. That's why I don't use the rights to which I'm entitled through the gospel.

¹⁹Although I'm free from all people, I make myself a slave to all

people, to recruit more of them. ²⁰I act like a Jew to the Jews, so I can recruit Jews. I act like I'm under the Law to those under the Law, so I can recruit those who are under the Law (though I myself am not under the Law). ²¹I act like I'm outside the Law to those who are outside the Law, so I can recruit those outside the Law (though I'm not outside the law of God but rather under the law of Christ). ²²I act weak to the weak, so I can recruit the weak. I have become all things to all people, so I could save some by all possible means. ²³All the things I do are for the sake of the gospel, so I can be a partner with it.

THE GOSPEL Mark 1:29-39

²⁹After leaving the synagogue, Jesus, James, and John went home with Simon and Andrew. ³⁰Simon's mother-in-law was in bed, sick with a fever, and they told Jesus about her at once. ³¹He went to her, took her by the hand, and raised her up. The fever left her, and she served them.

³²That evening, at sunset, people brought to Jesus those who were sick or demon-possessed. ³³The whole town gathered near the door. ³⁴He healed many who were sick with all kinds of diseases, and he threw out many demons. But he didn't let the

demons speak, because they recognized him.

³⁵Early in the morning, well before sunrise, Jesus rose and went to a deserted place where he could be alone in prayer. ³⁶Simon and those with him tracked him down. ³⁷When they found him, they told him, "Everyone's looking for you!"

³⁸He replied, "Let's head in the other direction, to the nearby villages, so that I can preach there too. That's why I've come." ³⁹He traveled throughout Galilee preaching in their synagogues and throwing out demons.

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