

## Bible Readings for September 12, 2021

### Isaiah 50:4-9 (MSG)

*This text uses various images to illustrate how damaging and hurtful the way we speak to and about others can be. Not only are we to control our speech, but what we say and how we say it are to reflect our faith.*

<sup>4-9</sup>The Master, GOD, has given me  
a well-taught tongue,  
So I know how to encourage tired people.  
He wakes me up in the morning,  
Wakes me up, opens my ears  
to listen as one ready to take orders.  
The Master, GOD, opened my ears,  
and I didn't go back to sleep,  
didn't pull the covers back over my head.  
I followed orders,  
stood there and took it while they beat me,  
held steady while they pulled out my beard,  
Didn't dodge their insults,  
faced them as they spit in my face.  
And the Master, GOD, stays right there and helps me,  
so I'm not disgraced.  
Therefore I set my face like flint,  
confident that I'll never regret this.  
My champion is right here.  
Let's take our stand together!  
Who dares bring suit against me?  
Let him try!  
Look! the Master, GOD, is right here.  
Who would dare call me guilty?

### Psalm: Psalm 116:1-9

<sup>1</sup>I love the LORD, who has heard my voice,  
and listened to my supplication,  
<sup>2</sup>for the LORD has given ear to me  
whenever I called.

<sup>3</sup>The cords of death entangled me; the anguish of the grave came upon me;  
I came to grief and sorrow.

<sup>4</sup>Then I called upon the name of the LORD:  
“O LORD, I pray you, save my life.”

<sup>5</sup>Gracious is the LORD and righteous;  
our God is full of compassion.

<sup>6</sup>The LORD watches over the innocent;  
I was brought low, and God saved me.

<sup>7</sup>Turn again to your rest, O my soul.  
for the LORD has dealt well with you.

<sup>8</sup>For you have rescued my life from death,  
my eyes from tears, and my feet from stumbling;

<sup>9</sup>I will walk in the presence of the LORD  
in the land of the living.

### **Second Reading: James 3:1-12**

*This text uses various images to illustrate how damaging and hurtful the way we speak to and about others can be. Not only are we to control our speech, but what we say and how we say it are to reflect our faith.*

<sup>1</sup>Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. <sup>2</sup>For all of us make many mistakes. Anyone who makes no mistakes in speaking is perfect, able to keep the whole body in check with a bridle. <sup>3</sup>If we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide their whole bodies. <sup>4</sup>Or look at ships: though they are so large that it takes strong winds to drive them, yet they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. <sup>5</sup>So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great exploits.

How great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! <sup>6</sup>And the tongue is a fire. The tongue is placed among our members as a world of iniquity; it stains the whole body, sets on fire the cycle of nature, and is itself set on fire by hell. <sup>7</sup>For every species of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by the human species, <sup>8</sup>but no one can tame the tongue—a restless evil, full of deadly poison. <sup>9</sup>With it we bless the Lord and Father, and with it we curse those who are made in the likeness of God. <sup>10</sup>From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers and sisters, this ought not to be so. <sup>11</sup>Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and brackish water? <sup>12</sup>Can a fig tree, my brothers and sisters, yield olives, or a grapevine figs? No more can salt water yield fresh.

## Gospel: Mark 8:27-38 (MSG)

*This story provides the turning point in Mark's gospel. Peter is the first human being in the narrative to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah, but he cannot accept that as the Messiah Jesus will have to suffer. Moreover, Jesus issues a strong challenge to all by connecting discipleship and the cross.*

<sup>27</sup> Jesus and his disciples headed out for the villages around Caesarea Philippi. As they walked, he asked, "Who do the people say I am?"

<sup>28</sup> "Some say 'John the Baptizer,'" they said. "Others say 'Elijah.' Still others say 'one of the prophets.'"

<sup>29</sup> He then asked, "And you—what are you saying about me? Who am I?"

Peter gave the answer: "You are the Christ, the Messiah."

<sup>30-32</sup> Jesus warned them to keep it quiet, not to breathe a word of it to anyone. He then began explaining things to them: "It is necessary that the Son of Man proceed to an ordeal of suffering, be tried and found guilty by the elders, high priests, and religion scholars, be killed, and after three days rise up alive." He said this simply and clearly so they couldn't miss it.

<sup>32-33</sup> But Peter grabbed him in protest. Turning and seeing his disciples wavering, wondering what to believe, Jesus confronted Peter. "Peter, get out of my way! Satan, get lost! You have no idea how God works."

<sup>34-37</sup> Calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to saving yourself, your true self. What good would it do to get everything you want and lose you, the real you? What could you ever trade your soul for?"

<sup>38</sup> "If any of you are embarrassed over me and the way I'm leading you when you get around your fickle and unfocused friends, know that you'll be an even greater embarrassment to the Son of Man when he arrives in all the splendor of God, his Father, with an army of the holy angels."

## Prayers of Intercession

- 1) Made children and heirs of God's promise, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need.
- 2) Revealing God, you have made yourself known through bread and wine, water and word. Continue to nurture your church, that it is a place where your presence is experienced and shared. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

- 3) Creating God, you brought life into being and called it good. Bring new creation to lands devastated by tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, fires, and other disasters (*recent destructive events may be named here*). Restore forests and curb overflowing waters. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
- 4) Protecting God, you desire all people to live in peace and safety. Provide for all who are in danger. Strengthen first responders to help meet to the complex needs of others. Provide care and compassion as they face trauma themselves. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
- 5) Transforming God, you announce release to the captives and freedom to the oppressed. Break chains of discrimination and injustice. Amplify voices that go unheard and inspire us to advocate for the those who are overlooked. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
- 6) Forming God, you gather this community together. Shape our communal life, that in our prayer, praise, and worship, we honor you and encourage one another. Keep our disagreements civil and increase our joy in working together. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
- 7) Redeeming God, you accompany your people through every stage of life. We give you thanks for the saints who now rest in your embrace (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
- 8) Silent prayer.
- 9) Receive these prayers, O God, and those in our hearts known only to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen**