

YEAR 1, PROPER 4, MONDAY: EVENING PRAYER

The First Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from Ecclesiastes

I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to the sons of men to be busy with. I have seen everything that is done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind. What is crooked cannot be made straight, and what is lacking cannot be numbered. I said to myself, “I have acquired great wisdom, surpassing all who were over Jerusalem before me; and my mind has had great experience of wisdom and knowledge.” And I applied my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is but a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow. I said to myself, “Come now, I will make a test of pleasure; enjoy yourself.” But behold, this also was vanity. I said of laughter, “It is mad,” and of pleasure, “What use is it?” I searched with my mind

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ECCLESIASTES 1:12–2:11*; LUKE 17:1–10

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how to cheer my body with wine—my mind still guiding me with wisdom—and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven during the few days of their life. I made great works; I built houses and planted vineyards for myself; I made myself gardens and parks, and planted in them all kinds of fruit trees. I made myself pools from which to water the forest of growing trees. I bought male and female slaves, and had slaves who were born in my house; I had also great possessions of herds and flocks, more than any who had been before me in Jerusalem. I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces; I got singers, both men and women, and many concubines, man's delight. So I became great and surpassed all who were before me in Jerusalem; also my wisdom remained with me. And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them; I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil. Then I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had spent in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun. So I turned to consider

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wisdom and madness and folly; for what can the man do who comes after the king? Only what he has already done. Then I saw that wisdom excels folly as light excels darkness. The wise man has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness; and yet I perceived that one fate comes to all of them. Then I said to myself, “What befalls the fool will befall me also; why then have I been so very wise?” And I said to myself that this also is vanity.

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.

The Second Lesson. The Reader begins

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke

And Jesus said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come; but woe to him by whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung round his neck and he were cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him; and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, and says, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.” The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” And

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the Lord said, “If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this sycamine tree, ‘Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you. Will any one of you, who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep, say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and sit down at table’? Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and gird yourself and serve me, till I eat and drink; and afterward you shall eat and drink’? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? what was our duty.’ ”

The Reader concludes

The Word of the Lord.

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