The Ministry of the Word

FIRST READING

Alas for you who desire the day of the LORD! Why do you want the day of the LORD? It is darkness, not light; as if someone fled from a lion, and was met by a bear; or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall, and was bitten by a snake.
Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light, and gloom with no brightness in it? I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Amos 5.18–24

PSALM

You are my helper and deliverer.

1 Be pleased, O God, to deliver me;
O Lord, make haste to help me.
2 Let those who seek my life be ashamed and altogether dismayed;
let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and be disgraced.

You are my helper and deliverer.

3 Let those who say to me 'Aha!' and gloat over me turn back, because they are ashamed.
4 Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;
let those who love your salvation say for ever, Great is the Lord!'

You are my helper and deliverer.

5 But as for me, I am poor and needy;
come to me speedily, O God.
6 You are my helper and my deliverer;
O Lord, do not tarry.

You are my helper and deliverer.

Psalm 70

THE SECOND READING

We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died.
For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died.
For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord for ever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 4.13–18

GOSPEL

Jesus spoke this parable to the disciples:
'The kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.
Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.
When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. But at midnight there was a shout,
"Look! Here is the bridegroom!
Come out to meet him."
Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps.
The foolish said to the wise,
"Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out."
But the wise replied,
"No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves."
And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut.

Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying,
"Lord, lord, open to us."
But he replied, "Truly I tell you, I do not know you."

Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.'

Matthew 25.1–13

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