

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

Psalm 139:1-6, 13 -18

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

***You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.***

You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.

***Even before a word is on my tongue,
O Lord, you know it completely.***

You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.

***Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.***

For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.

***I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
that I know very well.***

My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

***Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written***

***all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.***

How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!

***I try to count them—they are more than the sand;
I come to the end—I am still with you.***

A reading from the Letter of Paul to Philemon, beginning at verse 1

(Philemon: 1-25)

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in your house:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith towards the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ. I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back for ever, no longer as a slave but as more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.

One thing more—prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your prayers to be restored to you.

Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow-workers.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Hear the word of the Lord,

thanks be to God.

The Gospel

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke, chapter 14, beginning at verse 25

(Luke 14: 25-35)

Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Now large crowds were travelling with Jesus; and he turned and said to them, ‘Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, “This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.” Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a

