

EMPTY WORDS

You are daily assailed by empty words: idle small talk, advertising slogans, and news reports that play on your fears. Political and business leaders spew spin. King David was only too familiar with such afflictions: “When one comes to see me,” he said, “he utters empty words, while his heart gathers iniquity; when he goes out, he tells it abroad” (Psalm 41:6). Our Lord’s powerful Word was David’s refuge from vain and malicious talk. It is your refuge too. In Baptism, Jesus Christ has lifted you out of the verbal cesspool and placed you firmly on the rock of His Word. That Word is never empty, but it shall accomplish that which He purposes for you.

OPENING HYMN: 438

OPENING SENTENCES

- P** O Lord, open my lips,
C and my mouth will declare Your praise.
P Make haste, O God, to deliver me;
C make haste to help me, O Lord.
C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

PSALM

Psalm 41

- P** Blessed is the one who considers the poor!
C In the day of trouble the LORD delivers him;
P the LORD protects him and keeps him alive; he is called blessed in the land;
C You do not give him up to the will of his enemies.
P The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness You restore him to full health.

- C** As for me, I said, “O LORD, be gracious to me; heal me, for I have sinned against You!”
- P** My enemies say of me in malice, “When will he die and his name perish?”
- C** And when one comes to see me, he utters empty words, while his heart gathers iniquity; when he goes out, he tells it abroad.
- P** All who hate me whisper together about me; they imagine the worst for me.
- C** They say, “A deadly thing is poured out on him; he will not rise again from where he lies.”
- P** Even my close friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me.
- C** But You, O LORD, be gracious to me, and raise me up, that I may repay them!
- P** By this I know that You delight in me: my enemy will not shout in triumph over me.
- C** But You have upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in Your presence forever.
- Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

READING: PSALM 52:1–9

Psalms 52:1–9

P A reading from Psalms, the fifty-second chapter.

¹Why do you boast of evil, O | mighty man?*

The steadfast love of God endures | all the day.

²Your tongue plots de- | struction,*

like a sharp razor, you worker | of deceit.

³You love evil | more than good,*

and lying more than speaking | what is right.

⁴You love all words | that devour,*

O de- | ceitful tongue.

⁵But God will break you down for- | ever;*
he will snatch and tear you from your tent;
he will uproot you from the land of the | living.

⁶The righteous shall | see and fear,*
and shall laugh at him, | saying,

⁷“See the man who would not make
God his | refuge,*
but trusted in the abundance of his riches
and sought refuge in his own de- | struction!”

⁸But I am like a green olive tree
in the | house of God.*

I trust in the steadfast love of God
forever and | ever.

⁹I will thank you forever,
because you have | done it.*

I will wait for your name, for it is good,
in the presence of the | godly.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

READING: JAMES 3:1–10

James 3:1–10

P A reading from James, the third chapter.

¹Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. ²For we all stumble in many ways, and if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body. ³If we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they obey us, we guide their whole bodies as well. ⁴Look at the ships also: though they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are guided by a very small rudder wherever the will of the pilot directs. ⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!

⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness.

The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. ⁷For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

READING: MATTHEW 26:57–62

Matthew 26:57–62

P A reading from St. Matthew, the twenty-sixth chapter.

⁵⁷Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. ⁵⁸And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end. ⁵⁹Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, ⁶⁰but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward ⁶¹and said, “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.’” ⁶²And the high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?”

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

LENT RESPONSORY

P Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.

C Rescue me from my enemies, protect me
from those who rise against me.

P In You, O Lord, do I put my trust, leave me not, O
Lord, my God.

C Rescue me from my enemies, protect me
from those who rise against me.

P Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of
my salvation.

C Rescue me from my enemies, protect me
from those who rise against me.

SERMON HYMN: 432

SERMON
OFFERING

ANTIPHON

P Let my prayer rise before You as incense,

C and the lifting up of my hands as the evening
sacrifice.

KYRIE

Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.

PRAYERS

PRAYER HYMN: 427

LORD'S PRAYER

C Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done on earth
as it is in heaven;
give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those

**who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For Thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **AMEN.**

BENEDICTION

P The grace of our Lord † Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: 878

