

The Readings
The Rev. Paul DeWitt Reid
The Feast Day of Martin Luther King, Jr., January 17, 2021

Habakkuk 2:9–14; Psalm 12:1–7; 2 Corinthians 6:2b–10; Luke 12:2–12

The Readings

The Collect of the Day

Almighty God, by the hand of Moses your servant you led your people out of slavery, and made them free at last: Grant that your Church, following the example of your prophet Martin Luther King, Jr., may resist oppression in the name of your love, and may secure for all your children the blessed liberty of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The First Lesson

A reading from Habakkuk 2:9–14

“Alas for you who get evil gain for your houses,
setting your nest on high
to be safe from the reach of harm!”

You have devised shame for your house
by cutting off many peoples;
you have forfeited your life.

The very stones will cry out from the wall,
and the plaster will respond from the woodwork.

“Alas for you who build a town by bloodshed,
and found a city on iniquity!”

Is it not from the Lord of hosts
that peoples labour only to feed the flames,
and nations weary themselves for nothing?

But the earth will be filled
with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,
as the waters cover the sea.

Psalm 12:1–7

Help me, Lord, for there is no godly one left; *
the faithful have vanished from among us.

Everyone speaks falsely with his neighbor; *
with a smooth tongue they speak from a double heart.

Oh, that the Lord would cut off all smooth tongues, *
and close the lips that utter proud boasts!

Those who say, "With our tongue will we prevail; *
our lips are our own; who is lord over us?"

"Because the needy are oppressed, and the poor cry out in misery, *
I will rise up," says the Lord, "and give them the help they long for."

The words of the Lord are pure words, *
like silver refined from ore and purified seven times in the fire.
O Lord, watch over us *
and save us from this generation for ever.

The Second Lesson

A reading from 2 Corinthians 6:2b–10

See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

The Gospel

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke 12:2–12

Jesus said, "Nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered behind closed doors will be proclaimed from the housetops. "I tell you, my friends, do not fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear him who, after he has killed, has authority to cast into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him! Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God's sight. But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows. "And I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others, the Son of Man also will acknowledge before the angels of God; but whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. When they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you are to defend yourselves or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that very hour what you ought to say."