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A Reading for the Book of Genesis

Then God said: Let us make* human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth.

God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female* he created them.

God blessed them and God said to them: Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it.* Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that crawl on the earth.

God also said: See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on all the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food;

and to all the wild animals, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the earth, I give all the green plants for food. And so it happened.

God looked at everything he had made, and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed.

On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken.

God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading From the Book of Proverbs

When one finds a worthy wife, her value is far beyond pearls. Her husband, entrusting his heart to her, has an unfailing prize.

She brings him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. She obtains wool and flax and makes cloth with skillful hands.

Like merchant ships, she secures her provisions from afar.

She rises while it is still night, and distributes food to her household. She picks out a field to purchase; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.

She is bound with strength, and sturdy are her arms.

She enjoys the success of her dealings; at night her lamp is undimmed. She puts her hands to the distaff, and her fingers ply the spindle.

She reaches out her hands to the poor, and extends her arms to the needy. She fears not the snow for her household; all her charges are doubly clothed. She makes her own coverlets; fine linen and purple are her clothing.

Her husband is prominent at the city gates as he sits with the elders of the land.

She makes garments and sells them, and stocks the merchants with belts. She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs at the days to come.

She opens her mouth in wisdom, and on her tongue is kindly counsel. She watches the conduct of her household, and eats not her food in idleness.

Her children rise up and praise her; her husband, too, extols her: “Many are the women of proven worth, but you have excelled them all.”

Charm is deceptive and beauty fleeting; the woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Give her a reward of her labors, and let her works praise her at the city gates.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens.

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.

A time to kill and a time to heal; a time to tear down, and a time to build.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them; a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces.

A time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away.

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to be silent, and a time to speak.

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

What advantage has the worker from his toil?

I have considered the task which God has appointed for a man to be busied about.

He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts, without men's ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done.

I recognized that there is nothing better than to be glad and to do well during life.

For every man, moreover, to eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of all his labor is a gift of God.

I recognized that whatever God does will endure forever; there is no adding to it, or taking from it. Thus has God done that he may be revered.

The Word of the Lord.

A Reading from the Book of Wisdom

The souls of the just are in the hand of God,
and no torment shall touch them.

They seemed, in the view of the foolish, to be dead;
and their passing away was thought an affliction
and their going forth from us, utter destruction.

But they are in peace.

For if before men, indeed, they be punished,
yet is their hope full of immortality;

Chastised a little, they shall be greatly blessed,
because God tried them
and found them worthy of himself.

As gold in the furnace, he proved them,
and as sacrificial offerings he took them to himself.

Those who trust in him shall understand truth,
and the faithful shall abide with him in love:

Because grace and mercy are with his holy ones,
and his care is with his elect.

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

On this mountain he will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, The web that is woven over all nations;

he will destroy death forever. The Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces; The reproach of his people he will remove from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken.

On that day it will be said: "Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us! This is the LORD for whom we looked; let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"

The word of the Lord.

A reading from the Book of Lamentations

I will call this to mind, as my reason to have hope:

The favors of the LORD are not exhausted, his mercies are not spent;

They are renewed each morning, so great is his faithfulness.

My portion is the LORD, says my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

Good is the LORD to one who waits for him, to the soul that seeks him;

It is good to hope in silence for the saving help of the LORD.

The word of the Lord.