

**Lessons for The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany**

**February 4, 2024**

Psalm 147:1–11 ~ *This psalm of praise celebrates God's care for his creation and restoration of Israel.*

Isaiah 40:21–31 ~ *The Creator of the heavens and the earth, gives strength to those who trust Him.*

1 Corinthians 9:16–27 ~ *Paul's love for the lost and his commitment to the Gospel compelled his mission.*

Mark 1:29–39 ~ *Jesus was moved by His compassion to cure and heal, and to preach the good news.*

**GATHERING THE TEXTS:** For Pity's Sake

From a heart of compassion people will respond to appeals for help. When we appeal to God for strength when we are weary and for power in our weakness, He renews us to carry out His work. St. Paul showed his compelling care by conforming himself to the various conditions of his hearers so that he could effectively bring them the Gospel. Jesus' divine mercy moved Him to heal the sick and demon possessed and to preach the message of God's kingdom power.

**PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE:** Father of mercy, when I am weak and weary, I know I can rely on you. You renew me with a strong spirit and a caring heart so that I can show others your love in Christ. Amen.

**STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT:** God has put us in a world where there are so many needs; so many people are wearied by the pressures of life! He has given us time and resources – and a heart of love – to respond to those who are hurting, wanting, and perishing.

**OFFERING PRAYER:** O Holy One of Israel, fill our weakness with Your power.  
Bless our labors and their gifts that we bring to You this hour.  
Awaken our hope with Your love that we may heed  
And carry Your healing Word to those in need. Amen.

**CONVICTION AND COMFORT:** All the pressures of life and our concerns for the things of this world wear us out. When we try to muster our own strength, we fail and fall prey to the ailments and alien powers of this age. But God provides strength to those who rely on Him. They are renewed in their journey and filled with a love for all those who are burdened by the weight of life. The One who created this world still calls forth health and salvation with His word. That is why He has come!

**Questions to Consider:** How does God know what you need?

- How is trust an indication of need?
- Why did Paul understand what unbelievers needed?
- What kind of help did Jesus bring to the people of his day?
- What do you have to offer to those who are alienated and hurting in life?