***Introit (Psalm 71)***

P: Rejoice in the Lord always!

**C: Again I say rejoice!**

P: I will always hope,

**C: And I will praise God more and more.**

P: All day, I will announce Your righteous works and saving work.

**C: Your work is too-much for me to know all.**

P: I will tell people about the Lord’s powerful work.

**C: I will remind them only about Your righteousness.**

P: God, all my life You teach me.

**C: I continue announcing Your wonderful work.**

P: God, when I am old, don’t ignore me.

**C: Let me announce Your power to another generation and all future people.**

**All: Glory give to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, the same as it was in the beginning, is now, and will continue forever. Amen.**

***Prayer for God’s Word***

P: Lord Jesus Christ, please attend our prayers. Visit us in Your grace and put Your light in our dark hearts. You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: (copy) Amen.

The Old Testament lesson is from Isaiah chapter 35.

The dry country will be-happy and flowers will grow in the empty dirt. The dry country will grow many plants and it will sing and shout with happiness. The dry country will become beautiful the same-as the country named LEBANON, and beautiful same-as Mount CARMEL and SHARON. People will see the Lord’s glory there. They will see God’s power there.

The Lord will make the weak hands become strong, and support the weak knees. Tell all the people who fear, “Be-strong and not afraid. Look! Your God comes in anger. He will punish your enemies and save you.”

Then blind people will see, and the deaf people will hear. The lame people will jump and dance, and the mute people will shout with joy. Water will flow into the dry country. The hot dirt will become a lake, and dry land will have water springs. The dry places that wild dogs lived will grow grass.

A road will go through that place named “The Holy Road.” No sinners will travel on that road. The road is for people following God’s way. Even foolish people will not become lost. No lions will be-there and no dangerous animals. The people the Lord saves will travel home on that road. God’s people will go to the city named JERUSALEM singing and shouting with happiness. God’s people will be-happy forever; always free from sadness and grief.

This is the word of the Lord.

C: (copy) Thanks give to God.

The New Testament lesson is from James chapter 5.

Christian friends, be-patient until the Lord comes. See how the farmer is patient. He waits for the Fall and Spring rains to make the plants grow. You, also, be-patient. Make your hearts strong, because the Lord will come soon. Christian friends, don’t complain against each-another, then God will not judge you. You know the judge will come soon. Christian friends, remember the prophets speaking for the Lord. Think about their example, how they suffered and they were patient. We see God blessed those people who continued faithful. You heard about JOB and how he didn’t give-up. You saw the Lord’s work, that He is full of mercy.

This is the word of the Lord.

C: (copy) Thanks give to God.

The Gospel lesson is from Matthew chapter 11.

C: (copy) Glory to You, O Lord.

JOHN was in prison and he heard about Jesus’ works. Then JOHN sent two of his disciples to speak to Jesus and ask, “Are You that person God promised us, or we should wait for another person?”

Jesus answered, “Go, tell JOHN the things you hear and see. Now blind people can see. Lame people can walk. People with the sickness named LEPROSY become healed. Deaf people can hear. Dead people become alive. And I preach Good News to poor people. Bless that person who doesn’t lose faith in Me.”

Then JOHN’s disciples went away. Jesus began to talk about JOHN with the people. “You went into the dry country to see what? You want to see a plant waving-in-the-wind? Or, you go to see a man in soft clothes? You know men with soft clothes live in a king’s house. You went to see what? A prophet? I tell you, JOHN is better than a prophet. The Holy Writings say this about JOHN: ‘Look! I send My preacher before You. He will prepare the way for You.’

I tell you the truth. Compared to all people born from a woman, JOHN the BAPTIZER is the greatest. But in the Kingdom of heaven, the least important person is greater than JOHN.

From the time of JOHN the BAPTIZER until now, people attack the Kingdom of heaven. Angry people try to control the Kingdom of heaven. Because all the prophets and Law announced God’s word until JOHN came. The Bible said ELIJAH will come. If you will accept this, JOHN is ELIJAH. If you will pay-attention, then pay-attention.”

This is the gospel of the Lord.

C: (copy) Praise to You, O Christ.