**Psalm 147:1-11**

**1**Praise the Lord.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=psalm+147&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-16353a" \o "See footnote a)]

How good it is to sing praises to our God,
    how pleasant and fitting to praise him!

**2**The Lord builds up Jerusalem;
    he gathers the exiles of Israel.
**3**He heals the brokenhearted
    and binds up their wounds.
**4**He determines the number of the stars
    and calls them each by name.
**5**Great is our Lord and mighty in power;
    his understanding has no limit.
**6**The Lord sustains the humble
    but casts the wicked to the ground.

**7**Sing to the Lord with grateful praise;
    make music to our God on the harp.

**8**He covers the sky with clouds;
    he supplies the earth with rain
    and makes grass grow on the hills.
**9**He provides food for the cattle
    and for the young ravens when they call.

**10**His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse,
    nor his delight in the legs of the warrior;
**11**the Lord delights in those who fear him,
    who put their hope in his unfailing love.

**Old Testament Reading – Isaiah 40:21-31**

**21**Do you not know?
    Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
    Have you not understood since the earth was founded?
**22**He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth,
    and its people are like grasshoppers.
He stretches out the heavens like a canopy,
    and spreads them out like a tent to live in.
**23**He brings princes to naught
    and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.
**24**No sooner are they planted,
    no sooner are they sown,
    no sooner do they take root in the ground,
than he blows on them and they wither,
    and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

**25**“To whom will you compare me?
    Or who is my equal?” says the Holy One.
**26**Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens:
    Who created all these?
He who brings out the starry host one by one
    and calls forth each of them by name.
Because of his great power and mighty strength,
    not one of them is missing.

**27**Why do you complain, Jacob?
    Why do you say, Israel,
“My way is hidden from the Lord;
    my cause is disregarded by my God”?
**28**Do you not know?
    Have you not heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God,

the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary,
    and his understanding no one can fathom.
**29**He gives strength to the weary
    and increases the power of the weak.
**30**Even youths grow tired and weary,
    and young men stumble and fall;
**31**but those who hope in the Lord
    will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
    they will run and not grow weary,
    they will walk and not be faint.

**New Testament Reading – 1 Corinthians 9:16-27**

**16**For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! **17**If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. **18**What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make full use of my rights as a preacher of the gospel.

**Paul’s Use of His Freedom**

**19**Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. **20**To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. **21**To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. **22**To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. **23**I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

**The Need for Self-Discipline**

**24**Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. **25**Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. **26**Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. **27**No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

**Gospel Reading – Mark 1:29-39**

**Jesus Heals Many**

**29**As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. **30**Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. **31**So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

**32**That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. **33**The whole town gathered at the door, **34**and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

**Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place**

**35**Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. **36**Simon and his companions went to look for him, **37**and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

**38**Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” **39**So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.