

March 7, 2017

The Rev. Derek Davenport '05, Director of Enrollment and Co-director of the Miller Summer Youth Institute, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Scripture

Psalm 34

- ¹ I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- ² My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.
- ³ O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.
- ⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵ Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.
- ⁶ This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD,
and was saved from every trouble.
- ⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
- ⁸ O taste and see that the LORD is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.
- ⁹ O fear the LORD, you his holy ones,
for those who fear him have no want.
- ¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.
- ¹¹ Come, O children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
- ¹² Which of you desires life,
and covets many days to enjoy good?
- ¹³ Keep your tongue from evil,
and your lips from speaking deceit.
- ¹⁴ Depart from evil, and do good;
seek peace, and pursue it.
- ¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their cry.
- ¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against evildoers,
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
- ¹⁷ When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears,
and rescues them from all their troubles.
- ¹⁸ The LORD is near to the brokenhearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.
- ¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the LORD rescues them from them all.
- ²⁰ He keeps all their bones;
not one of them will be broken.

²¹ Evil brings death to the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

²² The LORD redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

Devotional

Reading this psalm is somewhat shocking because it is so physical. The psalmist writes about mouths, lips, and tongues. We read of eyes, faces, and bones.

This psalm accomplishes two things with such physical words. First, it encourages us to consider how physical and tangible faith can be. Living our faith requires us to use our bodies, not just our minds. The words that come out our mouths are just as important as the thoughts we have in our minds. Second, the physicality of expression in this psalm emphasizes God as immanent. The psalmist says so explicitly— “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted”—and also implicitly with the language of God’s face and eyes and ears.

As we observe Lent, let us consider both of these lessons. Let’s consider how to be faithful with everything that we are, body and mind. Also, let’s spend time simply enjoying a God who chose to be Emmanuel, God with us.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for choosing to be near, even when we feel you are far away. Help us to live out our faith with all that we are. Amen.