

Monday, December 8, 2014

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Scripture

Psalm 40:1-3

1 I waited patiently for the Lord;
he turned to me and heard my cry.

2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.

3 He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the Lord
and put their trust in him.

Devotional

If the spiritual life can be summed up in one word that word might be “wait.” Nothing is more fundamental to the wisdom of the desert fathers and mothers, who repeatedly urge their pupils to “wait in your cell, and it will teach you what you need to know.” If we are to mature in faith, we must become masters of waiting, masters of the long haul.

Yet few things are more counter-intuitive to the culture in which we find ourselves. When we find ourselves between a rock and a hard place, we quickly seek to move on. The Psalmist acknowledges that after waiting patiently for the Lord, rescue from the slimy pit finally came. But waiting came first. The slimy pit was the Psalmist’s cell; the desert fathers would have urged the Psalmist to wait and learn what the cell had to teach. If you find yourself in a pit of mud and mire, your first impulse might be to search for an emergency exit. Perhaps the only option will be to wait. Rescue will come; God will put a new song in your mouth. But first, see what the pit has to teach you. Don’t waste the wait.

Prayer

O God, none can compare with you for great are the things you have done. In this Advent season, grant to us boldness in our waiting, courage in our desolation, and strength to sing a new song. Give us eyes to see what you would have us learn and help us to reside in your love and faithfulness to which we are called as witnesses. In Your Son’s name we pray, Amen.