

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL MARCH 3, 2016

The Rev. Anthony Rivera, Associate Director of Recruiting and Admissions, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 27

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When evildoers assail me
to devour my flesh —
my adversaries and foes —
they shall stumble and fall.

3 Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me,
yet I will be confident.

4 One thing I asked of the LORD,
that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the LORD,
and to inquire in his temple.

5 For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will set me high on a rock.

6 Now my head is lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,
be gracious to me and answer me!

8 “Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!”
Your face, LORD, do I seek.

9 Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger,
you who have been my help.
Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,
O God of my salvation!
10 If my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will take me up.

11 Teach me your way, O LORD,
and lead me on a level path
because of my enemies.
12 Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries,
for false witnesses have risen against me,
and they are breathing out violence.

13 I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.
14 Wait for the LORD;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the LORD!

DEVOTIONAL

Lent is a season of letting go of those things that can easily cling so closely which, if left unchecked, can hinder one's walk with God. For some, it is a season to make resolutions: to pray a little more, to read the Bible with attentiveness, and to attend church a bit more often, with a hope of making things right and, hopefully, gaining the favor of God.

David did not work that hard. On the contrary, he expressed a longing that goes beyond resolutions and promises; he longed to live in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. This longing comes from a heart yearning to be close to God, not based on David's own merits but on the merits of God's favor and grace toward him.

The fascinating aspect of David's request is a desire to see the beauty of the Lord. His longing for the overshadowing presence of God's holiness makes all the difference in the world for him. It cuts through the motions and brings him to a genuine relationship with and worship of the God he seeks.

PRAYER

Triune God, throughout this season of Lent, stir my heart to desire and seek you as I let go of the things that hinder my walk with you. May your overshadowing presence come upon and transform me as I live in communion with you. This I pray.
Amen.

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