

Lenten Devotional March 15, 2023

Scripture

Psalm 5

- 1 *Give ear to my words, O LORD;
give heed to my sighing.*
- 2 *Listen to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
for to you I pray.*
- 3 *O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice;
in the morning I plead my case to you, and watch.*
- 4 *For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil will not sojourn with you.*
- 5 *The boastful will not stand before your eyes;
you hate all evildoers.*
- 6 *You destroy those who speak lies;
the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful.*
- 7 *But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love,
will enter your house,
I will bow down toward your holy temple
in awe of you.*
- 8 *Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness
because of my enemies;
make your way straight before me.*
- 9 *For there is no truth in their mouths;
their hearts are destruction;
their throats are open graves;
they flatter with their tongues.*
- 10 *Make them bear their guilt, O God;
let them fall by their own counsels;
because of their many transgressions cast them out,
for they have rebelled against you.*
- 11 *But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them ever sing for joy.
Spread your protection over them,
so that those who love your name may exult in you.*
- 12 *For you bless the righteous, O LORD;
you cover them with favor as with a shield.*

Devotional

The Rev. Drew Himes '13

What we sigh to God reveals a lot about us. If we have harmed others, we will sigh with guilt. If we have been harmed by others, we will sigh with pain and anguish. Strangely we all find ourselves looking for the same thing: God's ear.

The Hebrew word translated as “sighing” in this Psalm is *hagigi*, which can alternately be rendered as “groaning.” Our groaning, aching sighs show the depth of our painful prayers to God, seeking intervention, reconciliation, and the renewal of God’s image among our communities.

Lent offers each of us a time to reflect on our guilt or our hurt. We are offered a time of introspection and investigation and ultimately an invitation: commit your prayers to our loving and liberating God.

Each of the other readings for today work with these themes. Jeremiah 8 offers an indictment to the people who have dishonored God’s image in the holy community. Paul in Romans 5:1-11 reminds us of God’s grace, given by the truckload for the victims of the broken world, oppressor and oppressed alike.

And the apex comes to us from John 8:12-20. “I am the light of the world,” Jesus tells his disciples. When we commit our cause to God—our groaning, our pain, our guilt—we find that Christ’s light is the one that shines in the darkness of our souls, offering each of us a more excellent way and the perfect embodiment of God’s image made real in his flesh.

Prayer

Holy, loving, liberating, and grace-giving God: In the flesh of Jesus our Christ, you make your light shine. In Jesus’ healing touch, we are offered a new way. Commit our lives by your Spirit to this new way of living that we too could bear your holy image in this world. Amen.