

Lent Devotional April 8, 2023

Scripture

Psalm 143

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD;
give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness;
answer me in your righteousness.

2 Do not enter into judgment with your servant,
for no one living is righteous before you.

3 For the enemy has pursued me,
crushing my life to the ground,
making me sit in darkness like those long dead.

4 Therefore my spirit faints within me;
my heart within me is appalled.

5 I remember the days of old,
I think about all your deeds,
I meditate on the works of your hands.

6 I stretch out my hands to you;
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.

7 Answer me quickly, O LORD;
my spirit fails.

Do not hide your face from me,
or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.

8 Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning,
for in you I put my trust.

Teach me the way I should go,
for to you I lift up my soul.

9 Save me, O LORD, from my enemies;
I have fled to you for refuge.

10 Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God.

Let your good spirit lead me
on a level path.

11 For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life.
In your righteousness bring me out of trouble.

12 In your steadfast love cut off my enemies,
and destroy all my adversaries,
for I am your servant.

Devotional

The Rev. Charles L. Fischer III, Vice President for Seminary Advancement

“Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning, for in you I put my trust. Teach me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.” (Psalm 143:8, NRSV)

There is something about the midnight hour that holds one in suspense. There is no certainty about what is before you. The late evening when you can't see yet know that something is in front of you. The late evening when you wrestle with the decisions that are to be made and wait with great anticipation as to what the new day might reveal. In the midnight hour, there are the ruminations that one may go through as they think about the day that has passed and the day before them. It may be the tossing and turning of what had not been accomplished which gives you angst. Or it may be the enthusiasm around the excitement of a new day that is to come.

The words of the psalmist are a plea to the Lord. What might be the sound of love that one yearns to hear? Is it a familiar sound of affirmation? Will it be the chirping of birds after morning has broken? The sound of steadfast love may be the most assuring sound. The confirmation that all is well and that there is nothing else to be worried about.

I can hear these same pleas coming from those who witnessed the horrific events of a lynching the day before. Their teacher has been executed and those who had followed him are now hopeless. They have lost the one who had been the manifestation of all assurances. And now they find themselves in the dark, a midnight hour like no other, desiring nothing more than to hear the steadfast love of the Lord in the morning.

Prayer

Collect for Holy Saturday, *The Book of Common Prayer*

O God, Creator of heaven and earth: Grant that, as the crucified body of your dear Son was laid in the tomb and rested on this holy Sabbath, so we may await with him the coming of the third day, and rise with him to newness of life; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.