

Lenten Devotional March 30, 2024

Scripture

Psalm 43

- 1 *Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
against an ungodly people;
from those who are deceitful and unjust
deliver me!*
- 2 *For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
why have you cast me off?
Why must I walk about mournfully
because of the oppression of the enemy?*
- 3 *O send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling.*
- 4 *Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy;
and I will praise you with the harp,
O God, my God.*
- 5 *Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.*

Devotion

The Rev. Alyce Weaver Dunn '88

“Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?” The heart-wrenching words of the psalmist have resonated with me over the past five years as I have navigated some difficult times: the death of my dear mother; a pandemic which snatched away a sense of well-being; and then a season of disaffiliation in the United Methodist Church in which colleagues and churches willingly left the connection in which I had invested my life and ministry. The psalmist gives voice to the desolation, brokenness and anxiety which often maneuvers its way into my spirit.

On this Holy Saturday, I am sure the followers of Jesus experienced disquieted spirits. Their beloved teacher, Jesus, had been denied, betrayed, and brutally murdered. When his body was laid in the tomb, all of their expectations for a new reality of love and peace had been buried. The faithful community of believers for whom Jesus brought good news had been shattered and scattered, their souls cast down, their spirits disquieted.

On this “quiet day” on the liturgical calendar, we have space to consider that the psalmist’s cry did not end with pain; the desperate cry to God led instead to a word of hope: “Hope in God; for I shall praise him, my help and my God.” The psalmist trusted in the provision of God, the one who would carry him through the present pain and uncertainty. As well, the gospel story does not end with the brokenness of the cross and tomb—it concludes with the startling hope of resurrection, restoration and reconciliation.

Today's psalm is a powerful reminder that God's light and love shines through the darkness of our lives, even in the moments when our disquieted spirits ache and yearn for a better day. May the God of disquieted days give you hope as you wait for tomorrow to come!

Prayer

Gracious God, on those days when my soul is disquieted, remind me that you are a God of hope and resurrection. Restore me in my brokenness so that like the psalmist and the followers of Jesus, I can praise you yet again! Amen.