

Lent Devotional March 6, 2026

Scripture

Psalm 130

*1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
2 Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!

3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
4 But there is forgiveness with you,
so that you may be revered.

5 I wait for the Lord; my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
6 my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.

7 O Israel, hope in the Lord!
For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.
8 It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.*

Devotion

The Rev. Rebecca Konegen '22

“Out of the depths I cry”—surely no one reading this has not experienced the depths in some sense or another. In English, when we consider the depths, we might think of a well or a canyon, or even of a pit or a grave, but commentators focus here on the depths of waters. There is a sense of drowning here, then—a sense of being overwhelmed by one’s troubles and even of a misery “unto death.”

I still remember a comparison of the Hebrew creation stories with the ones of neighboring cultures from my first Old Testament class. In the stories of neighboring peoples, a violent battle takes place between the gods Marduk and Tiamat, and Marduk makes the earth and heavens from the fatally wounded body of Tiamat. In that creation story, the earth is created out of chaos and conflict. In contrast, in the Hebrew stories—our stories—God simply speaks, and there is light. God speaks again, and even the waters have boundaries.

But we see in other Scriptures that people often still see the waters as unpredictable and even terrible, and this is understandable: without weather forecasts or mechanical propulsion, one could never know what one would experience traveling those waters. A person might fear the depths as that place from which human beings were powerless to return. And so the psalmist cries out for rescue in these terms, because in situations this deep, one cannot rescue oneself. Only divine rescue can make a way.

While we have more control over traveling over actual water than the psalmist did—we do have mechanical propulsion now—there are still powers that crash over us, things beyond our control. We cannot even control all of the results of our own actions! The psalmist here openly considers the

possibility that he has created his misery out of his own wrongdoing—"If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities ... who could stand?"

But the psalmist also insists that in the midst of all of the storms, God gives grace—that there is forgiveness: "For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is great power to redeem." The psalmist insists that the same God who created the world with a word is the One with whom there is always steadfast love and grace. Even in the depths, even in the clear acknowledgment of trouble beyond human power to resolve, the psalmist insists that God will "redeem Israel." And so even when rescue is not in sight, we can cry out with the psalmist, and know that God's love is faithful.

Prayer

Holy and gracious God, we give You thanks for the steadfastness of Your grace and Your lovingkindness. We give You thanks for Your presence in the storms and in the depths. We ask that You strengthen our trust in You, so that even in our lament, it is You to whom we turn. Amen.