

Lent Devotional March 29, 2026

Scripture

Psalm 42

*1 As a deer longs for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God.*

*2 My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.*

*When shall I come and behold
the face of God?*

*3 My tears have been my food
day and night,
while people say to me continually,
“Where is your God?”*

*4 These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:
how I went with the throng
and led them in procession to the house of God,
with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving,
a multitude keeping festival.*

*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.*

*My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I remember you
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
from Mount Mizar.*

*7 Deep calls to deep
at the thunder of your torrents;
all your waves and your billows
have gone over me.*

*8 By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.*

*9 I say to God, my rock,
“Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I walk about mournfully
because the enemy oppresses me?”*

*10 As with a deadly wound in my body,
my adversaries taunt me,
while they say to me continually,
“Where is your God?”*

*11 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. Dr. Nancy Lowmaster '11/'21

Some have observed that the most frequent divine command throughout Scripture is “Do not be afraid.” “Do not be afraid” is what God tells Abram when he laments that he has no heir (Gen 15:1-6), what the LORD tells the people through the prophet Isaiah as he reassures them of God’s salvation even though the way ahead seems dark (Isa 43:1-2), what the angel tells the women when the stone was rolled back, revealing an empty tomb (Matt 28:1-7).

If “Do not be afraid” is Scripture’s most frequent command, the second may be “Remember.” Psalm 42 illustrates the close connection between these two commands. The poet is facing a time of uncertainty, challenge, even persecution. The psalmist feels deep anxiety and a distance from God; fear threatens to overwhelm. But then the Spirit whispers, “Remember.” Remember God’s never-ending love, poured out extravagantly in the past. Remember God’s faithfulness to all God’s promises to rescue and restore. Remember the community of the faith-filled which buoys us when our own faith wavers, prays with us and for us when we are empty, and remembers for us when we forget. Remembering leads away from fear and toward hope: the assurance of God’s loving presence with us. Remember and have hope—the trust that God will make a way even where there seems to be no way.

On this Palm Sunday, even as we hold palm branches aloft, we stare at the deep darkness into which Jesus descends during Holy Week. Like the first disciples, we watch from the shadows as Jesus faces terrible cruelty and injustice, always trusting His Father and never abandoning the holy way of love and peace. As we each face our own dark times in our lives, may we be Christ-like in our trust. “Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.”

Prayer

Lord God, I live so much of my life afraid—of circumstances I can’t control, problems I can’t fix, dangers I can’t foresee. Help me remember Your perfect love that casts out fear. Fill my heart with hope—not with a flimsy wish for the future, but with a confident assurance in Your abiding presence and a deep trust in Your saving grace today. In Christ I pray, amen.