

Lent Devotional February 26, 2026

Scripture

Psalm 102

*1 Hear my prayer, O Lord;
let my cry come to you.
2 Do not hide your face from me
in the day of my distress.
Incline your ear to me;
answer me speedily in the day when I call.*

*3 For my days pass away like smoke,
and my bones burn like a furnace.
4 My heart is stricken and withered like grass;
I am too wasted to eat my bread.
5 Because of my loud groaning,
my bones cling to my skin.
6 I am like a desert owl of the wilderness,
like a little owl of the waste places.
7 I lie awake;
I am like a lonely bird on the housetop.
8 All day long my enemies taunt me;
those who deride me use my name for a curse.
9 Indeed, I eat ashes like bread
and mingle tears with my drink,
10 because of your indignation and anger,
for you have lifted me up and thrown me aside.
11 My days are like a lengthening shadow;
I wither away like grass.*

*12 But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever;
your name endures to all generations.
13 You will rise up and have compassion on Zion,
for it is time to favor it;
the appointed time has come.
14 For your servants hold its stones dear
and have pity on its dust.
15 The nations will fear the name of the Lord
and all the kings of the earth your glory.
16 For the Lord will build up Zion;
he will appear in his glory.
17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute
and will not despise their prayer.*

*18 Let this be recorded for a generation to come,
so that a people yet unborn may praise the Lord:
19 that he looked down from his holy height,
from heaven the Lord looked at the earth,*

*20 to hear the groans of the prisoners,
to set free those who were doomed to die,
21 so that the name of the Lord may be declared in Zion
and his praise in Jerusalem,
22 when peoples gather together,
and kingdoms, to serve the Lord.*

*23 He has broken my strength in midcourse;
he has shortened my days.
24 "O my God," I say, "do not take me away
at the midpoint of my life,
you whose years endure
throughout all generations."*

*25 Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.
26 They will perish, but you endure;
they will all wear out like a garment.
You change them like clothing, and they pass away,
27 but you are the same, and your years have no end.
28 The children of your servants shall live secure;
their offspring shall be established in your presence.*

Devotion

The Rev. Dr. Karen Anderson '97

When my daughter died very unexpectedly in February 2024 from unknown causes, I began a journey no mother ever wants to take. It has been incredibly difficult spiritually as well as emotionally. I find myself crying out to God much like the writer of this Psalm. The grief is debilitating at times. I want answers to questions like: Does it do any good to pray, God, when Your will is that someone is going to die? Why? Why? Why? These are questions without answers other than "accept it" and "God is God and you are not."

At Lent last year, I found myself thinking for the first time about Jesus' mother, Mary. She too was a grieving mother. Maybe she asked similar questions: "God, couldn't You save Your Son and work out Your plan some other way?" Jesus knew the suffering His mother would face as she grieved His death, and that may be why He asked John to take care of her. He loved her and knew the pain she was facing.

I believe Jesus loves me and has compassion for my pain. I believe Jesus can handle my anger, frustration, and doubt. And because of what He did on the cross, I believe in something I call "the resurrection principle," where God takes the heartbreak and tragedy in our lives and brings blessings out of them. I saw this when I was widowed at 40. Now, I am seeing blessings with Jennifer's death. It means our grief and suffering are not useless.

God had a plan and a purpose for my daughter's life just as God did for Jesus'. I may never understand it, but God is God, and I am not. And God is a good God.

Prayer

Lord, comfort us through the power of Your Holy Spirit when we suffer loss, disappointment, frustration, and doubt and do not understand. We do know Your love. Help us remember the times You have worked things out for our good. Help us hold on till the joy of resurrection comes.