

Jake Horner '15

Scripture

Psalm 34

¹ I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
² My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.
³ O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.
⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
⁵ Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.
⁶ This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD,
and was saved from every trouble.
⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
⁸ O taste and see that the LORD is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.
⁹ O fear the LORD, you his holy ones,
for those who fear him have no want.
¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.
¹¹ Come, O children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
¹² Which of you desires life,
and covets many days to enjoy good?
¹³ Keep your tongue from evil,
and your lips from speaking deceit.
¹⁴ Depart from evil, and do good;
seek peace, and pursue it.
¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their cry.
¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against evildoers,
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
¹⁷ When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears,
and rescues them from all their troubles.
¹⁸ The LORD is near to the brokenhearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.
¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the LORD rescues them from them all.
²⁰ He keeps all their bones;
not one of them will be broken.
²¹ Evil brings death to the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

²² The LORD redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

Devotional

Today's lectionary passages take on the theme of affliction. The Gospel passage tells us that "everyone will be salted with fire." And Psalm 34 states that "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all."

The Christ was prophesied to be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Jesus is a righteous man—THE righteous man in fact—and he was salted with fire and endured affliction. But the LORD did not deliver him out of them, but rather delivered him up to be crucified. The truth is, Jesus is the only human being whom God has treated unjustly. We get what we deserve, that is, death, for our failure as children of God. Jesus did not. As a Son who kept covenant in his Father's house, he deserved life.

Yet because he tasted death on our behalf, affliction has been turned on its head. What was once the fruit of sinners living in a cosmos subjected to futility is now, in the hands of the risen Christ, a sharpened scalpel shaving the rottenness of unrighteousness away from our lives.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, when there is affliction in my life, give me grace to endure patiently and trust in your purpose to bring about righteousness. Amen