Thurs., Dec. 1, 2011
The Rev. Dr. William (Bill) Myers ’67, Adjunct Faculty in Education Ministries

Scripture

Psalm 18:1-20

1 I love you, O LORD, my strength.
2 The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
3 I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, so I shall be saved from my enemies.

4 The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of perdition assailed me;
5 the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me.

6 In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.

7 Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry.
8 Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him.
9 He bowed the heavens, and came down; thick darkness was under his feet.
10 He rode on a cherub, and flew; he came swiftly upon the wings of the wind.
11 He made darkness his covering around him, his canopy thick clouds dark with water.
12 Out of the brightness before him there broke through his clouds hailstones and coals of fire.
13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice.
14 And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them;
he flashed forth lightnings, and routed them.

Then the channels of the sea were seen,
and the foundations of the world were laid bare
at your rebuke, O LORD,
at the blast of the breath of your nostrils.

He reached down from on high, he took me;
he drew me out of mighty waters.

He delivered me from my strong enemy,
and from those who hated me;
for they were too mighty for me.

They confronted me in the day of my calamity;
but the LORD was my support.

He brought me out into a broad place;
he delivered me, because he delighted in me.

The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands he recompensed me.

Devotional

Beset by adversaries, Psalm 18’s author offers testimony. When God was called upon for help, God delivered. The psalmist’s enemies were defeated and peace fills the land.

Because the psalmist knows, in his bones, that God pulled him out of the entangling cords of those who would kill him, the psalmist extravagantly sings praises to God. It’s not enough to sing about God’s healing the brokenhearted and binding their wounds; the psalmist wants us to fear God’s hailstones, coals of fire, and well-shot arrows, all directed at the enemies of the psalmist. This God is a powerful God, angered by those who oppose him. This anger is made visible: God’s nostrils are filled with smoke; his mouth contains a devouring fire.

All who experience such mighty acts join the psalmist in this hymn of praise to God.

Prayer

Creator God, you who calmed the storm and who stand with us even as we tremble, be with us when we are beaten down and desolate. Hear us when we call for help. In Jesus’ name, Amen.