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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 an 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 For 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 an evening 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 worship 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 mid-point 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.

Psalm 148

¹ Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!
² Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!

³ Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!

⁴ Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!

⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.

⁶ He established them forever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,

⁸ fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!

⁹ Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!

¹⁰ Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!

¹¹ Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!

¹² Young men and women alike,
old and young together!

¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.

¹⁴ He has raised up a horn for his people,
praise for all his faithful,
for the people of Israel who are close to him.
Praise the Lord!

Devotional

The psalmist understood how life sometimes brutally surprises us. Something terrible happens; we are in despair. We lie awake, torn by thoughts of what might or could have been done to avoid that which is ripping us apart. But there is no solution. Our bread tastes like ashes. We feel alone, cut away from those we love, including God.

Nevertheless, says the psalmist. Nevertheless, God is there for us. He is trustworthy. He is the one who sets us free from despair and has fixed a place within his good world for us. So, like the psalmist, we dare to invoke God's presence, knowing he will listen to our prayer and speedily answer us in the day that we call.

Prayer

God of all good things, we seek your presence, especially when we are in great pain. Be with us, even as you have been in our past. In Jesus name, Amen.