

Advent Devotional December 5, 2023

Scripture

Psalm 85

- 1 *LORD, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.*
- 2 *You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin. Selah*
- 3 *You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.*

- 4 *Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us.*
- 5 *Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?*
- 6 *Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?*
- 7 *Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.*

- 8 *Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.*
- 9 *Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.*

- 10 *Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.*
- 11 *Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.*
- 12 *The LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.*
- 13 *Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.*

Devotion

Michelle Spomer, Donald G. Miller Librarian and Director of the Clifford E. Barbour Library

Psalms can often be poetic and rich in imagery, and this psalm is no different. I was immediately drawn to “righteousness and peace will kiss each other” and the other phrases in verses 10 and 11. However, as I reread the psalm, it was one solitary word that captured my attention: again. By asking that God “restore us *again*” and “revive us *again*,” there is acknowledgement that the current relationship with God is not the same as it once was. There is also acknowledgement that God’s love isn’t a one-off, and that God can extend that love over and over.

As with many of you, my relationship with God ebbs and flows. At my lowest points, I've felt as though I have failed God, or worse, that God has failed me. During these times, I'm thankful to have memories of being more connected to God, of feeling God's grace and love for me. And eventually, I ask for restoration and revival. Again.

If you're at a low point in your life, or maybe just a little too cynical and jaded, it may be time to ask God for restoration and revival. Advent, a hopeful anticipation of God's love and grace for us, might just be the perfect time to do it.

Prayer

God of love and hope, draw us near to you. Help us to remember how much you desire to be in our lives, and how you have given us your grace over and over. May our faithfulness "spring up from the ground." Amen.