

Lent Devotional February 29, 2020

Scripture

Ezekiel 39:21-29

21 I will display my glory among the nations; and all the nations shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid on them. 22 The house of Israel shall know that I am the LORD their God, from that day forward. 23 And the nations shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity, because they dealt treacherously with me. So I hid my face from them and gave them into the hand of their adversaries, and they all fell by the sword. 24 I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their transgressions, and hid my face from them. 25 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Now I will restore the fortunes of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for my holy name. 26 They shall forget their shame, and all the treachery they have practiced against me, when they live securely in their land with no one to make them afraid, 27 when I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them from their enemies' lands, and through them have displayed my holiness in the sight of many nations. 28 Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God because I sent them into exile among the nations, and then gathered them into their own land. I will leave none of them behind; 29 and I will never again hide my face from them, when I pour out my spirit upon the house of Israel, says the Lord GOD.

Devotional

The Rev. Lisa Dormire '86, Specialized Ministry (2006)

There is an old Chinese proverb that says, "May you live in interesting times." Certainly we are living in interesting times. There are other words that we might also use . . . difficult, sad, confusing, overwhelming. The people of Israel in this passage from Ezekiel were also living in "interesting times."

Sin. Exile. God's face hidden from them. Perhaps like we do, they found it hard to get out of bed in the morning. Perhaps like we do, they wondered how to live faithfully in their "interesting times."

Nevertheless, a word came to them from God in the midst of such times: "I will have compassion. I will forgive. I will gather them back. I will show them my face once again. I will pour out my Spirit upon them."

Anne Lamott blogs, ". . . the world has always been this way, people have always been this way, grace always bats last, it just does—and finally, when all is said and done, and the dust settles, which it does, Love is sovereign here" (Facebook post, July 15, 2016). Alleluia.

Prayer

Holy God, on this Lenten journey we feel at times as though your face is hidden from us. Speak love to us. Gather us back. Show us your face. Remind us that your love carries us, no matter how "interesting" the times in which we are living. Amen.