

Lent Devotional March 25, 2020

Scripture

Psalm 147:1-11

1 Praise the Lord!

*How good it is to sing praises to our God;
for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.*

*2 The Lord builds up Jerusalem;
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.*

*3 He heals the brokenhearted,
and binds up their wounds.*

*4 He determines the number of the stars;
he gives to all of them their names.*

*5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
his understanding is beyond measure.*

*6 The Lord lifts up the downtrodden;
he casts the wicked to the ground.*

*7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;
make melody to our God on the lyre.*

*8 He covers the heavens with clouds,
prepares rain for the earth,
makes grass grow on the hills.*

*9 He gives to the animals their food,
and to the young ravens when they cry.*

*10 His delight is not in the strength of the horse,
nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner;*

*11 but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,
in those who hope in his steadfast love.*

Devotional

The Rev. Dr. Carolyn J. Jones '77/'89, Pastoral Ministry (2005)

Reading Psalm 147 seems a bit like preparing for or listening to the pastoral prayer offered during corporate worship. The prayer is directed to God, but it needs to “connect” with the people. So great is God’s power, so broad the range of the Creator’s care and activity, that anyone who is paying attention will almost inevitably be moved to be generous with praise. Since time doesn’t ordinarily allow for exhaustive lists to be spoken aloud, the one who prays and praises can be tempted to yield to what English teachers used to critique as “glittering generalities.” So some specifics need to be cited.

Here the psalmist deals with this dilemma by identifying in particular a number of ways in which God’s goodness is made known. The One who is the great God of Israel also cares for outcasts and the brokenhearted. The God of Creation not only counts and names the stars in the heavens, but also makes the rain fall and the grass grow and sees to it that each bird and animal is fed. In all these ways—and countless others—God is simply being God. But according to the Psalmist, a kind of divine delight is generated when people such as we are moved to love and honor God with our praise.

How will we give God pleasure today?

Prayer

Following the example of the psalmist, offer your own song of praise, giving thanks for something remarkable in the created order that amazes, pleases, or surprises you; committing to God's care at least one brokenhearted or downtrodden individual or group; expressing gratitude for a plant or animal that enriches your life; and acknowledging one particular way in which you have experienced God's love. Praise the Lord! Amen.