

LENT DEVOTIONAL

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LENTEN DEVOTION FEBRUARY 23, 2024

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 130

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.
2 Lord, hear my voice!
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!
3 If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
4 But there is forgiveness with you,
so that you may be revered.
5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
6 my soul waits for the Lord
more than those who watch for the morning,

more than those who watch for the morning.
7 O Israel, hope in the LORD!
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.
8 It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.

DEVOTION

The Rev. Dr. Scott Dennis '13

The 130th Psalm is a *Pilgrimage Psalm*, which is fitting since Lententide is a journey that begins with us getting our “sorry ashes” in church, and one we end at the foot of the cross and peeking into the empty tomb. However, before we can begin our journey with the psalmist and the countless *great cloud of witnesses* who have gone before us, *the Saints*, we find ourselves transported to an all too alien, uncomfortable, and yet all too familiar place: a depth, possibly a great depth, or even *the valley of the shadow of death* itself.

In this place of removal, distance, and isolation, what happens? We find ourselves joining the psalmist in crying out to the Lord, who seems so distant from this place of deep isolation. Yet, he alone is our only hope during this pilgrimage journey of our spiritual discontent. If we proceed from verses 1 and 2 on to verses 3 and 4, we are reminded of the good news that the Lord is our help alone, since none of us can stand on our own merits. None of us mortals have any hope within ourselves. Hence, *should the Lord consider our iniquities*, we must rely upon his forgiveness. Thus, we journey from verses 3 and 4 on to verses 5 and 6, where we join the psalmist in waiting for the Lord with that which is deepest within ourselves, for as long as it takes him to appear and liberate us from the depths!

No wonder, then, we journey from verses 5 and 6 on to the psalm’s conclusion in verses 7 and 8. With predecessors gone before us, we hope in the Lord as individuals united in the Church Militant, who rely on his *hesed*, his steadfast, unbreakable, never-ending faithful love to us, his children. Here we conclude with the psalmist that the Lord shall redeem us from our iniquities, from our time of separation in the deep pit of isolation and hopelessness. Such a fitting psalm for Lententide, since we know where our journey ends: with redemption. Now, that’s a journey worth embracing!

PRAYER

Dearest Lord Jesus, aid our Lententide pilgrimage to your cross and tomb. Take our spiritual discontent to fill us with your assurance that you journey with us each step of the way to redemption. Grant us a holy, restful, and safe sleep this night that we may arise eager for the new day. This we ask for your namesake. Amen.

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