

LENT DEVOTIONAL



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LENTEN DEVOTIONAL FEBRUARY 27, 2024

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 25

1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
2 O my God, in you I trust;
do not let me be put to shame;
do not let my enemies exult over me.
3 Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD;
teach me your paths.
5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.
6 Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,
for they have been from of old.

7 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;
according to your steadfast love remember me,
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!
8 Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
9 He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.
11 For your name's sake, O LORD,
pardon my guilt, for it is great.
12 Who are they that fear the LORD?
He will teach them the way that they should choose.
13 They will abide in prosperity,
and their children shall possess the land.
14 The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,
and he makes his covenant known to them.
15 My eyes are ever toward the LORD,
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.
16 Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.
17 Relieve the troubles of my heart,
and bring me out of my distress.
18 Consider my affliction and my trouble,
and forgive all my sins.
19 Consider how many are my foes,
and with what violent hatred they hate me.
20 O guard my life, and deliver me;
do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.
21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me,
for I wait for you.
22 Redeem Israel, O God,
out of all its troubles.

DEVOTION

Lynn Cox '14

I pray Psalm 25 with renewed focus now that I'm in my seventies. Its lament and longing are especially meaningful during Lent: Lord, remember not the sins of my youth (v 7) and let me be counted among your true friends (v 14) in this life.

You probably have your own catalog of youthful sins. My youth looks tame to an outside observer, but the Lord knows the truth. Memories of hidden transgressions can ambush my senior self without warning. I wince to recall people hurt by youthful habits: my petty greed and grasping, my wheedling to gain position, my desperation to cover any hint of ignorance or failure. The list goes on. Asking God to forget the sins of our youth is at the same time to re-acknowledge the wrongs done in a past we cannot change.

The psalmist does not want to live in the memory of past sins though and neither should we. Accordingly, we ask God to remember us not for our sinful past, but for his goodness' sake. Out of his goodness, God does much more. He pardons our guilt, leads us, and teaches us his way of steadfast love and faithfulness. In the process God reveals himself and gives us his friendship.

Jesus is now that revelation and in him we have what the psalmist longed for: the "stroll in the garden" intimacy of Eden once lost because of our sin. In Christ we are privy to the Father's plan: we are friends of God (John 15:14-15).

From the security of this relationship, Lent invites us to recall the sins of our youth, to feel and regret the harm we've done, that we might recognize afresh the benefits of God's forgiveness and forgetfulness and the joy of holy friendship gifted to us by Christ.

PRAYER

Thank you, God, for your steadfast love, faithfulness, and forgiveness. Free us, Lord, from the burden of a past which we cannot change but which you can redeem. Lead us in your truth, instruct us in your way, and teach us how to walk with you as our savior and friend. Amen.

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