

LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 10, 2017

The Rev. Dr. Nancy Lowmaster '11, Pastor of Community Presbyterian Church of Geneseo, N.Y. / Board Member, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 105

- 1 O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples.
- 2 Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wonderful works.
- 3 Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.
- 4 Seek the LORD and his strength;
seek his presence continually.
- 5 Remember the wonderful works he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered,
- 6 O offspring of his servant Abraham,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones.
- 7 He is the LORD our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.
- 8 He is mindful of his covenant forever,
of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,
- 9 the covenant that he made with Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,
- 10 which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant,
- 11 saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
as your portion for an inheritance."
- 12 When they were few in number,
of little account, and strangers in it,
- 13 wandering from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people,
- 14 he allowed no one to oppress them;
he rebuked kings on their account,
- 15 saying, "Do not touch my anointed ones;
do my prophets no harm."
- 16 When he summoned famine against the land,
and broke every staff of bread,
- 17 he had sent a man ahead of them,
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
- 18 His feet were hurt with fetters,

his neck was put in a collar of iron;
19 until what he had said came to pass,
the word of the LORD kept testing him.
20 The king sent and released him;
the ruler of the peoples set him free.
21 He made him lord of his house,
and ruler of all his possessions,
22 to instruct his officials at his pleasure,
and to teach his elders wisdom.

23 Then Israel came to Egypt;
Jacob lived as an alien in the land of Ham.
24 And the LORD made his people very fruitful,
and made them stronger than their foes,
25 whose hearts he then turned to hate his people,
to deal craftily with his servants.

26 He sent his servant Moses,
and Aaron whom he had chosen.
27 They performed his signs among them,
and miracles in the land of Ham.
28 He sent darkness, and made the land dark;
they rebelled against his words.

29 He turned their waters into blood,
and caused their fish to die.
30 Their land swarmed with frogs,
even in the chambers of their kings.
31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies,
and gnats throughout their country.
32 He gave them hail for rain,
and lightning that flashed through their land.
33 He struck their vines and fig trees,
and shattered the trees of their country.
34 He spoke, and the locusts came,
and young locusts without number;
35 they devoured all the vegetation in their land,
and ate up the fruit of their ground.
36 He struck down all the firstborn in their land,
the first issue of all their strength.

37 Then he brought Israel out with silver and gold,
and there was no one among their tribes who stumbled.
38 Egypt was glad when they departed,
for dread of them had fallen upon it.
39 He spread a cloud for a covering,
and fire to give light by night.

40 They asked, and he brought quails,
and gave them food from heaven in abundance.
41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed through the desert like a river.
42 For he remembered his holy promise,
and Abraham, his servant.

43 So he brought his people out with joy,
his chosen ones with singing.
44 He gave them the lands of the nations,
and they took possession of the wealth of the peoples,
45 that they might keep his statutes
and observe his laws.
Praise the LORD!

DEVOTIONAL

I am surrounded by a surprising number of aids to help me remember. Appointment cards magnetted to my refrigerator, lists in my planner, chiming pop-up reminders on my computer, a sticky-note phone widget. Even my microwave will record and play messages to assist me in remembering what I have to remember today.

I need those aids, because I forget (more than I'd like to admit). So did the Israelites. They forgot who provided them with a land and an identity. They forgot who blessed them with sun and rain and harvest. They forgot who protected them from plagues and enemies. They forgot who claimed them as a people and promised always to be their God. And when they forgot—because of hardship or arrogance or fear or boredom—the Israelites turned away from the God who had given them life and freedom. We are no different now.

Psalms 105 is a call for us today to remember God and to remember all God's blessings . . . because when we remember, we can't help but praise and worship the God who never forgets God's loving and grace-filled covenant with us.

PRAYER

Eternal God, fill me with your Holy Spirit of encouragement and chiding and remembering. In this moment, show me the many ways you have blessed me Let me live my praise and worship of you today and throughout these days of Lent while never forgetting that you gave your love for me enfleshed in Jesus Christ, in whose name I offer myself and this prayer to you. Amen.

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