

# LENTEN DEVOTIONAL



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# ABOUT PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to the formation of women and men for theologically reflective ministry and to scholarship in service to the global Church of Jesus Christ.

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**Graduate Certificate in Ministry**

**Graduate Certificate in Missional Leadership**

**Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies**

**Graduate Certificate in Urban Ministry**

**Spiritual Formation Certificate**

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

**Church Planting Initiative**

**Continuing Education**

**Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archaeology**

**Miller Summer Youth Institute**

**Metro-Urban Institute**

**World Mission Initiative**

**Zeitah Excavations**

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In addition to their on-campus duties, our faculty are experts in their fields and are available to preach and teach. Learn more about their **topics of research and writing** and invite them to present at your congregation or gathering.

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The Seminary hosts a wide range of events—many of them free!—on topics of faith including church planting, mission, vocation, spiritual formation, pastoral care and counseling, archaeology, and many more. Visit our **calendar** often for a listing of upcoming events.

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# LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 23, 2018

## SCRIPTURE

### PSALM 22

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?
- 2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer;  
and by night, but find no rest.
- 3 Yet you are holy,  
enthroned on the praises of Israel.
- 4 In you our ancestors trusted;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.
- 5 To you they cried, and were saved;  
in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.
- 6 But I am a worm, and not human;  
scorned by others, and despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me mock at me;  
they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;
- 8 “Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver —  
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!”
- 9 Yet it was you who took me from the womb;  
you kept me safe on my mother’s breast.
- 10 On you I was cast from my birth,  
and since my mother bore me you have been my God.
- 11 Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.
- 12 Many bulls encircle me,  
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
- 13 they open wide their mouths at me,  
like a ravening and roaring lion.
- 14 I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint;  
my heart is like wax;  
it is melted within my breast;
- 15 my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to my jaws;  
you lay me in the dust of death.
- 16 For dogs are all around me;  
a company of evildoers encircles me.  
My hands and feet have shriveled;
- 17 I can count all my bones.  
They stare and gloat over me;
- 18 they divide my clothes among themselves,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.
- 19 But you, O LORD, do not be far away!  
O my help, come quickly to my aid!
- 20 Deliver my soul from the sword,  
life from the power of the dog!
- 21 Save me from the mouth of the lion!  
From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.
- 22 I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:
- 23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!  
All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;  
stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!
- 24 For he did not despise or abhor  
the affliction of the afflicted;  
he did not hide his face from me,  
but heard when I cried to him.

- 25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.
- 26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek him shall praise the LORD.  
May your hearts live forever!
- 27 All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn to the LORD;  
and all the families of the nations  
shall worship before him.
- 28 For dominion belongs to the LORD,  
and he rules over the nations.
- 29 To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
and I shall live for him.
- 30 Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord,
- 31 and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying that he has done it.

## DEVOTIONAL

**Written by the Rev. B. De Neice Welch '04, Pastor, Bidwell Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa. / Theological Reflections on Ministry Discussion Course Leader**

We often think of prayer as an act of faith initiated by us. We seek the Lord with all our hearts in times of great need, in times of devotional meditation, and in times of thanksgiving. We are often taught to strengthen our spiritual discipline through the practice of prayer. Since we believe that we initiate the act, we struggle with words: we struggle with eloquence, and we struggle with articulation, whether we are praying privately or publicly. But as we turn our attention to the depth of the meaning of Lent, we should remember that prayer is an act of the heart where God is the constant observer. God calls us to prayer and then “words” our mouths, because God gives speech to mortals. God will teach us as God reads our hearts and understands what mere words cannot possibly capture. It is never our initiation that meets God in “the deep,” where only deep calls. It is always God who summons us by the Spirit to answer the longing of our hearts. Our public prayers should not be a function of the mind, wit, or language without being connected to our hearts that long for the Divine. Let God guide your prayers and give you speech this Lenten season.

## PRAYER

Holy One, We are ever in your mind and you are ever present in our lives. Word our mouths and give us speech so that we might thank you, praise you, adore you in our private time and in our public lives. Lead us to the place where the cross is overcome by the empty tomb so that we might know that our eloquence will never match your power. Amen.

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