

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL



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ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 5, 2022

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 40

- 1 I waited patiently for the Lord;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
- 2 He drew me up from the desolate pit,[a]
out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.
- 3 He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear
and put their trust in the Lord.
- 4 Happy are those who make
the Lord their trust,

who do not turn to the proud,
 to those who go astray after false gods.
 5 You have multiplied, O Lord my God,
 your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
 none can compare with you.
 Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
 they would be more than can be counted.
 6 Sacrifice and offering you do not desire,
 but you have given me an open ear.[b]
 Burnt offering and sin offering
 you have not required.
 7 Then I said, "Here I am;
 in the scroll of the book it is written of me.[c]
 8 I delight to do your will, O my God;
 your law is within my heart."
 9 I have told the glad news of deliverance
 in the great congregation;
 see, I have not restrained my lips,
 as you know, O Lord.
 10 I have not hidden your saving help within my heart;
 I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
 I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness
 from the great congregation.
 11 Do not, O Lord, withhold
 your mercy from me;
 let your steadfast love and your faithfulness
 keep me safe forever.
 12 For evils have encompassed me
 without number;
 my iniquities have overtaken me
 until I cannot see;
 they are more than the hairs of my head,
 and my heart fails me.
 13 Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me;
 O Lord, make haste to help me.
 14 Let all those be put to shame and confusion
 who seek to snatch away my life;
 let those be turned back and brought to dishonor
 who desire my hurt.
 15 Let those be appalled because of their shame
 who say to me, "Aha, Aha!"
 16 But may all who seek you
 rejoice and be glad in you;
 may those who love your salvation
 say continually, "Great is the Lord!"
 17 As for me, I am poor and needy,
 but the Lord takes thought for me.
 You are my help and my deliverer;
 do not delay, O my God.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Mark Winters, DMin student

Unless you're an angsty middle schooler, you may have trouble finding a reference for this kind of material. But what happens when instead of thinking about external "others" as our enemy, we turn inward? What is it like to deal with those internal voices which seem to pick apart every decision or thought, making us question every move, lose confidence, or maybe even give up before we start?

If you suffer from this predicament, you know the voices I'm talking about, telling you things like, "That's a terrible idea", "No one wants to hear what you have to say", or "Of course you're late again. Can't you ever be on time?"

If any of this sounds familiar, Psalm 40 is your prayer, my friend. With the psalmist, we can pray for God to deliver us, make haste to help us. We can pray for God to put those voices to shame who seek to snatch away our life, turn them back, and

make the finger-waggers in our mind be put to shame. Because the Lord will draw us up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set our feet upon a rock.

God can put a new song in our mouths, a song of praise, a song which harmonizes with God's own voice, reminding us over and over again that we are worthy, we are beautiful, and we are loved.

PRAYER

Block out the critical, belittling voices, O God, the voices that make us feel like we are anything less than you created us to be. Show us how to rejoice in ourselves, as you do. Amen.

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