



ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 15, 2017

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 102

- 1 Hear my prayer, O LORD;
let my cry come to you.
- 2 Do not hide your face from me
in the day of my distress.
Incline your ear to me;
answer me speedily in the day when I call.
- 3 For my days pass away like smoke,
and my bones burn like a furnace.
- 4 My heart is stricken and withered like grass;
I am too wasted to eat my bread.
- 5 Because of my loud groaning
my bones cling to my skin.

6 I am like an owl of the wilderness,
like a little owl of the waste places.

7 I lie awake;
I am like a lonely bird on the housetop.

8 All day long my enemies taunt me;
those who deride me use my name for a curse.

9 For I eat ashes like bread,
and mingle tears with my drink,
10 because of your indignation and anger;
for you have lifted me up and thrown me aside.

11 My days are like an evening shadow;
I wither away like grass.

12 But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever;
your name endures to all generations.

13 You will rise up and have compassion on Zion,
for it is time to favor it;
the appointed time has come.

14 For your servants hold its stones dear,
and have pity on its dust.

15 The nations will fear the name of the LORD,
and all the kings of the earth your glory.

16 For the LORD will build up Zion;
he will appear in his glory.

17 He will regard the prayer of the destitute,
and will not despise their prayer.

18 Let this be recorded for a generation to come,
so that a people yet unborn may praise the LORD:

19 that he looked down from his holy height,
from heaven the LORD looked at the earth,
20 to hear the groans of the prisoners,
to set free those who were doomed to die;
21 so that the name of the LORD may be declared in Zion,
and his praise in Jerusalem,
22 when peoples gather together,
and kingdoms, to worship the LORD.

23 He has broken my strength in midcourse;
he has shortened my days.

24 "O my God," I say, "do not take me away
at the mid-point of my life,
you whose years endure
throughout all generations."

25 Long ago you laid the foundation of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your hands.

26 They will perish, but you endure;
they will all wear out like a garment.
You change them like clothing, and they pass away;

27 but you are the same, and your years have no end.

28 The children of your servants shall live secure;
their offspring shall be established in your presence.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Lezley J. Stewart, Vocations and Support Secretary, Ministries Council, Church of Scotland / Edinburgh, Scotland / Reformed Theology Focus

In the dark days of winter and in the midst of everyday life there can be difficult and brooding days. Days when one might feel like a lonely bird on a housetop. In the midst of the Psalmist's longing and despair, there is also a glimmer of hope as he calls to mind the faithfulness of God from generation to generation.

Sometimes in darkness it is hard to discern the light, but gradually and slowly the merest glimmer can spread warmth and hope, pointing to a new beginning. It is often in calling to mind the past that we find the strength to live in the present and

future.

The season of Advent takes us on that journey from past to future, darkness to light, and along the way we begin to see the transforming light of Christ reshaping our future and direction. We become part of what he the Psalmist described as the generation to come— a people yet unborn who praise the Lord.

PRAYER

Open our eyes to your wonder,
Open our hearts to your warmth,
Open our lives to your embrace,
As we hope in the Eternal One. Amen.

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