

Lenten Devotional March 29, 2023

Scripture

Psalm 5

*1 Give ear to my words, O LORD;
give heed to my sighing.*

*2 Listen to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
for to you I pray.*

*3 O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice;
in the morning I plead my case to you, and watch.*

*4 For you are not a God who delights in wickedness;
evil will not sojourn with you.*

*5 The boastful will not stand before your eyes;
you hate all evildoers.*

*6 You destroy those who speak lies;
the LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful.*

*7 But I, through the abundance of your steadfast love,
will enter your house,
I will bow down toward your holy temple
in awe of you.*

*8 Lead me, O LORD, in your righteousness
because of my enemies;
make your way straight before me.*

*9 For there is no truth in their mouths;
their hearts are destruction;
their throats are open graves;
they flatter with their tongues.*

*10 Make them bear their guilt, O God;
let them fall by their own counsels;
because of their many transgressions cast them out,
for they have rebelled against you.*

*11 But let all who take refuge in you rejoice;
let them ever sing for joy.
Spread your protection over them,
so that those who love your name may exult in you.*

*12 For you bless the righteous, O LORD;
you cover them with favor as with a shield.*

Devotional

The Rev. Rebecca D. Reeder '19

I notice there is a repetition of phrases relating to speaking, listening, and words. Tied to these phrases are truth or lies, joy or deceit. The NRSV adds the heading, “Trust in God for Deliverance from Enemies.” Oh how often our “enemies”—anyone or anything that is against us in some way—use words to harm us! Maybe it’s the voice of a colleague or boss, a spouse or sibling, or sometimes worst of all, the face in the mirror. I hear the psalmist cry for God to hear what’s really going on inside the psalmist—for God to bring to the surface only that which is true, and cast out the lies that seek to destroy.

There are so many voices in our world telling us who we are or should be, telling us we are not good enough, or fill-in-the-blank enough. And the more we listen to those voices, the more we start to believe what they say. But “there is no truth in their mouths . . . their throats are open graves” (v 9), seeking to swallow us whole. Yet God hears the deeper cries of our hearts, attending to our sighs of heartache, grief, or doubt—sighs of defeat. Into that space God speaks blessing and favor: “You are my beloved child” (Mark 1:11, Matt 3:17, Luke 3:22). As we near the end of Lent, may you rest in those words; take refuge and rejoice in the One who sees and hears the real you; the you that God created and loves and accepts even when the world would tell you otherwise.

Prayer

Listen to my words, O Lord; attend to my sighing. Listen to the sound of my cry, and speak words of truth, words of love. Especially when the world would have me believe differently, remind me again that I am loved, and in Jesus Christ I am accepted just as I am—I do not have to prove myself to you, my God and my Savior. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.