

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL MARCH 17, 2015

Written by BJ Woodworth '07, lead pastor of the Open Door, and brought to you by the **Church Planting Initiative** at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 34

- 1 I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.
- 2 My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.
- 3 O magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together.
- 4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me,
and delivered me from all my fears.
- 5 Look to him, and be radiant;
so your faces shall never be ashamed.
- 6 This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD,
and was saved from every trouble.
- 7 The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him, and delivers them.
- 8 O taste and see that the LORD is good;
happy are those who take refuge in him.
- 9 O fear the LORD, you his holy ones,
for those who fear him have no want.
- 10 The young lions suffer want and hunger,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.
- 11 Come, O children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
- 12 Which of you desires life,
and covets many days to enjoy good?
- 13 Keep your tongue from evil,
and your lips from speaking deceit.
- 14 Depart from evil, and do good;
seek peace, and pursue it.
- 15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their cry.
- 16 The face of the LORD is against evildoers,
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
- 17 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears,
and rescues them from all their troubles.
- 18 The LORD is near to the brokenhearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit.

- 19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the LORD rescues them from them all.
- 20 He keeps all their bones;
not one of them will be broken.
- 21 Evil brings death to the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.
- 22 The LORD redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

DEVOTIONAL

I have found one of the greatest promises in all of scripture in Psalm 34:4-5: "I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame." Brené Brown, in her **March 2012 TED talk**, said, shame is the intensely personal feeling that we are unworthy of love and belonging [and] an unspoken epidemic, the secret behind many forms of broken behavior. In the season of Lent as we seek the Lord we are assured that we will find deliverance from our fears. Our fears are often rooted in shame, fears of not being worthy, loveable, or belonging. But the Psalmist promises if we gaze upon the Lord, the brilliance and radiance of the favor and glory of God will overcome the dullness and disgrace of our shame.

So, I want to invite you into embodied prayer mediation.

When Ezra saw the sin of the Israelites he said, "O my God, I am too ashamed and disgraced to lift up my face to you, my God, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens."

Think over the past week. Did you ask the Holy Spirit to guide you? Is there anything you did or said or did not say or do that you are ashamed of? As a sign of humility and repentance cover your face with your hands speak openly and seek forgiveness from the Lord when you are ready. Stand and look to the Lord, for those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.

We all, who with unveiled faces reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor 3:17-18).

PRAYER

O God, there are things before our eyes with which we are ashamed. Grant us the strength to open ourselves to humility and repentance, the courage to accept forgiveness, and the readiness to stand before your glory and be transformed. Amen.

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