

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL APRIL 4, 2015

Written by Dr. Karen Bowden Cooper, curator of the Museum and lecturer in Hebrew, and brought to you by the Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archaeology at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 43

- 1 Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
against an ungodly people;
from those who are deceitful and unjust
deliver me!
- 2 For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
why have you cast me off?
Why must I walk about mournfully
because of the oppression of the enemy?
- 3 O send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling.
- 4 Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy;
and I will praise you with the harp,
O God, my God.
- 5 Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.

DEVOTIONAL

For the disciples of Jesus this was a day of grief, isolation, and fear. In the shadow of the cross, they are vulnerable, now threatened with the scorn and mistreatment suffered by their beloved teacher. For us it is a day to confront death and to recall the desolation of those who experience violence and who are left to mourn in its wake.

The psalm expresses the conflicting emotions of one who has known God's protection but who now is beset by enemies. He demands justice and accuses God of casting him off, but his wavering soul is steadied as if by the prayer itself. In "O send out your light and your truth, let them lead me," the psalmist entrusts himself to God and opens his still unquiet heart to hope.

PRAYER

Loving and gracious God, we thank you for Jesus, and the hope that his life brings even in the darkness. Help us to witness that hope in the world. Amen.

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