

Monday, 1 July 2019 Psalms 61:4-5

Let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings. Selah For you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

We have a new dog, a seven-year-old, very mixed terrier, rescued from a possible abuse situation and somewhat skittish around large human males. I have not been able to get him to sit on my lap despite treats and other blandishments. A disappointment. Earlier this afternoon, he was sitting on a couch near me as I worked, and I quickly sat down beside him. Before he could scoot, I grabbed him and began to scratch his ears. A few minutes and he began to lean into me. Progress!

I began to think as we sat there, how analogous the relationship between Lucky and me reflected the course of the relationship between the LORD, God, the Almighty, and me. He has been reaching out for years. Telling me of His love and care for me, but it was all overshadowed by my fear (terror) of the living God. Now my fear has been transformed from terror to awe and thanksgiving.

Tuesday, 2 July 2019 Psalms 64:1-4a

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint; preserve my life from dread of the enemy. Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, from the throng of evildoers, who whet their tongues like swords, who aim bitter words like arrows, shooting from ambush at the blameless, shooting at him suddenly and without fear.

If King David, a man after God's own heart, was able to acknowledge his dread of the enemy and seek a hedge of protection, what makes me think I do not, even should not seek the same protection? Whom am I to claim that I am master of my fate, captain of my soul? Hogwash and poppycock!

Wednesday, 3 July 2019 Psalms 64:1-4a

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. Hear my voice, O God, in my complaint; preserve my life from dread of the enemy. Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked, from the throng of evildoers, who whet their tongues like swords, who aim bitter words like arrows, shooting from ambush at the blameless, shooting at him suddenly and without fear.

William Ernest Henley shook his fist at the LORD, God, the Almighty, "It matters not how strait the gate/ How charged with punishments the scroll/ I am the master of my fate/I am the captain of my soul."
(Invictus) Far, far better to follow David's example and throw myself upon God's mercy and grace.

The choice is stark: to either shout my rejection or praise Him for His love and forgiveness.

Thursday, 4 July 2019 Psalms 64:9-10

Then all mankind fears; they tell what God has brought about and ponder

what he has done. Let the righteous one rejoice in the LORD and take refuge in him! Let all the upright in heart exult!

David realized, centuries before Paul wrote to the saints at Phillippi, that the day will come when every knee will bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. (Philippians 2:9-11) How can I, or William Henley, mere specks in the LORD, God the Almighty's grand plan for His creation, spew our ignorant defiance?

Far better to throw myself on my knees and confess that He is my Lord, my Master, and my Savior. Far better to become one of those who rejoice in His sacrifice and seek the leading of the Holy Spirit in Kingdom living in the here and now.

Friday, 5 July 2019 Psalms 66:16-20

Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!

This is a powerful passage that leads me into a proper understanding of the fear of the LORD, God, the Almighty. I am called to live in a state of praise and avoidance of iniquity. Praise and obedience cannot exist in a heart that is dedicated to self-will and disobedience.

Compare John 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments and Proverbs 28:9 If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

I must not expect the LORD, God, the Almighty to be a giant Santa Claus, showering me with answers to my every whim. No, the Living God is the being who created me in His image and desires only my good. I am called to obey, praise, and trust Him.

Saturday, 6 July 2019

Psalms 67:1-7 To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song. May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, Selah, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for you, judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Selah. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

There is no doubt in my mind that this Psalm encapsulates all the aspects of the fear of the LORD, God, the Almighty. If you read that first sentence up to the Selah, it appears to be another gimmie, very spiritual to be sure, but still self-centered. But the last half straightens everything out. All are intended to demonstrate His ways and saving power to the entire world. I am pleading with Him to be the vehicle, the messenger of the Good News. The Psalm goes on seeking all peoples to praise the LORD so that all will fear the LORD.

Lord's Day, 7 July 2019 Psalm 119:44-45

I will keep your law continually, forever and ever, and I shall walk in a wide place, for I have sought your precepts.

An interesting thought, Lord, that obedience to Your word widens my path. I don't think in the sense that I have more latitude, but that a wide way implies an increased sense of satisfaction with my life, that pervasive sense of well-being that is the joy of the Kingdom. Thank You and praise You, my Lord, and Master.

Voices Together is available as two annual volumes of meditations based on Psalm 1 through 75 and Psalm 76 through 150. A companion book, *The Love Story*, is a 22 week series of meditations based on Psalm 119. They are available through the Fellowship of Ailbe book store at www.ailbe.org/bookstore/christian-discipline

VOICES TOGETHER

Daily Meditations from the Scriptures



July 1-7, 2019

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: Romans 15:30-33

I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. Pray that I may be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea and that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there, so that by God's will I may come to you with joy and together with you be refreshed. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, we come to you as a small band of saints, joined in common struggle to bring an understanding of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of Heaven to those who claim to know You, but don't and to those who deny You. We pray that our ministries will be protected from attacks by unbelievers and by the misalignment of the established church.

Lord, we also pray that each of us will find great encouragement and joy in Your service; that our hearts will be filled with an outpouring of praise and thanksgiving as we revel in the righteousness, peace and joy that is life in Your Kingdom. Amen

To fear or not to fear, that is the question.

The fear of the Lord, an expression that occurs many times in Scripture, 142 in the ESV in various forms, is not well understood in the Church today. For many, the phrase represents a weak and flabby description of an overly saccharine spiritual being of some sort. It certainly does not include the concept of the LORD, God the Almighty who spoke all things into being and who controls all things.

Join with me in examining the fear of the LORD and seeking an understanding of life in the Kingdom of Heaven in the here and now as guided by that fear.

Voices Together is published daily on the website of the Fellowship of Ailbe, www.ailbe.org; along with material by other writers to encourage and assist in our walks as disciples of Jesus Christ. All Scripture is from the ESV unless otherwise noted. These messages can also be received as daily emails or in a monthly printed version by sending a request to:

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