

Friday, March 8, 2024 - Day 21 of Lent

Open in Prayer:

Holy, Holy, Holy, are you, Lord Jesus! Let your Word move through our bodies today. May your Word stir within our heart and soul a creativity to worship you through song, through reflection, through study, and through silence. May our lives today be a jubilant melody for the world around us to hear, as we point them to you!

Read Psalm 43 (NIV)

Vindicate me, my God, and plead my cause against an unfaithful nation. Rescue me from those who are deceitful and wicked. You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy? Send me your light and your faithful care, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior, and my God.

Today's devotional is from my friend in ministry, Brian Dykema, who serves as the chaplain to Community Hospice of Saratoga County, New York. I hope it touches you as it did me.

I would dare say I am not alone when I share that lately I have struggled with feelings of doubt and discouragement. At times, deceitfulness and wickedness are widespread and just keep getting worse. Our nation claims to fear God, but behind all the speeches exist actions and decisions that contradict the teachings and commands of God by choosing a path that looks more like oppression and unfaithfulness.

This country is still my home, and yet my heart mourns over how far we have wandered from God. And still, as the psalmist says, there is always hope and a way back. "Send me your light and your faithful care, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell" (v. 3). My mother has a saying: "Keep looking up." God is faithful and that is what truly matters. God will not fail, and I believe God's love is still stronger than all the evil in the universe. God's unconditional love can move the stars, change the world, and heal the human heart. There is always a way back home where rejection ends, and God is ready with an embrace.

During this Lenten season, I pray we will choose to look up to God and ask the Spirit to dwell within us to help us believe the world can change. It begins with love, or like it says on the stone in the story "The Old Turtle and the Broken

Truth,” “You are loved and so are they.” Dear friends, take heart. God is still on his throne, and his kingdom will not fail. Peace be upon you, and to God be the glory now and forever.

Close in Prayer

Almighty God, to You who is able to keep me from stumbling and to present me before Your glorious presence without fault and with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

(from Chaplain Brian Dykema)