

Monday, December 2019 Psalm 80:3, 7, 19

Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

Lord, as this verse is repeated three times in this psalm, We are reminded that You have saved us, a completed feat, not to be repeated in us. Then We are reminded of the many ways that you are saving us, those many and varied ways in which Your Holy Spirit moves to strip the old man from us. And in the final repetition, You hold out the hope, an awareness of the certainty of the life to come, life in Your presence, fulfilling Your purpose for us, a purpose set by You before we were formed. Praise You, LORD God Almighty!

Tuesday, 17 December 2019 Psalm 80:1-3

To the choirmaster: according to Lilies. A Testimony. Of Asaph, a Psalm. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock! You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth. Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might and come to save us! Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

Lord, Your church is moribund, ineffectual, and otiose. It would rather assimilate the culture than engage it. Oh, there is a weakly glowing ember here, a spark and a flash there, but by and large, submission to the demands of secularism to not allow its voice to be raised in the marketplace of society. Come to us, Holy Spirit, with the flame of Pentecost that we once again may blaze with Your glory.

Wednesday, 18 December 2019 Psalm 80:4-7

O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers? You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure. You make us an object of contention for our neighbors, and our enemies laugh among themselves. Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine, that we may be saved!

Repentance, Lord, repentance. That the Holy Spirit would come to us as to Moses and cause us to throw ourselves face down in the dirt, weeping, fasting, and repenting for the sins of the church. Have we so turned our ears from hearing Your word that our prayers have become an abomination to You? Restore us, Lord, that we may hear Your word, repent of our indifference, and seek Your face.

Thursday, 19 December 2019 Psalm 80:8-13

You brought a vine out of Egypt; you drove out the nations and planted it. You cleared the ground for it; it took deep root and filled the land.

(The mountains were covered with its shade, the mighty cedars with its branches. It sent out its branches to the sea and its shoots to the River. Why then have you broken down its walls, so that all who pass along the way pluck its fruit? The boar from the forest ravages it, and all that move in the field feed on it.

What happened, Lord, Your church was vibrant, speaking in full voice to the needs and emptiness of the world, bringing the message of mercy, grace, and transformation to all? Where did we begin to drift from our calling to make disciples of all the world? We became flaccid and weak, wrapped in our rituals and self-absorbency, no longer caring that the world around us recognizes that we are impotent and sterile.

Friday, 20 December 2019 Psalm 80: 14-19

Turn again, O God of hosts! Look down from heaven, and see; have regard for this vine, the stock that your right hand planted, and for the son whom you made strong for yourself. They have burned it with fire; they have cut it down; may they perish at the rebuke of your face! But let your hand be on the man of your right hand, the son of man whom you have made strong for yourself! Then we shall not turn back from you; give us life, and we will call upon your name! Restore us, O LORD God of hosts! Let your face shine, that we may be saved!

We, even we in our weakened state, are Your church, we are the vine You planted, we are the flock of Your pasture, we are the people for whom You died. Restore us, oh Lord, return us to that live and vibrant voice carrying once again, a message of reconciliation into the darkest reaches of the culture. Let Your face shine, that we may be saved.

Saturday, 21 December 2019 Psalm 119:126

It is time for the LORD to act, for your law has been broken.

We are surrounded by the strong bulls of Bashan, snorting, trampling Your good creation. Lord, bring revival to those who profess Your Name but do not walk in Your Way. Bring repentance and remorse to those who sing empty praises on Sunday morning but follow the gods of the age during the week. Let those praises turn to bitter ashes in their mouths until they awaken to Your call to repent and turn to You.

Lord's Day, 22 December 2019 Exodus 20:1-2, 15

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ... You shall not steal."

James 3:5-6

So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

How often is the tongue used thoughtlessly and carelessly to steal the Shalom of a community or to break the joy of a relationship? It burglarizes joy, peace, contentment, justice, and righteousness from among Your people. Teach us, Lord, to always make our tongues submissive to the oversight of the Holy Spirit.

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



December 16-22, 2019

Prayer of the week, based on Paul's prayer in: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

May the LORD, God the Almighty, the God who signifies peace, grace, mercy and joy, cleanse us and bring us into a state of complete sanctification as we wait on the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Praise You, LORD, for You are faithful and will do this. 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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