



Lent reflection for March 11, 2025

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Psalm 13:1-6

*How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I bear pain[a] in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?*

*How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?
Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,
and my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed';*

*my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.
But I trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.*

Today's Reflection is from Asa Swain:

I admit I'm taking a break from doomscrolling on social media to write this reflection. Although this scripture was written thousands of years ago, it feels very apt for the time we are living in. I just got back from a church retreat where Sarah and Kimberlee asked us to name all the dark things in our world, and then name all the source of light. It does feel like a dark time and it sometimes it hard to find the points of light. Every time I check the news it seems like something worse has happened. It's tempting to say I can't take it anymore and just zone out, or to consider emigrating to another country. When the psalmist says my enemy will say I have prevailed, my foes will rejoice because I am shaken, it feels like they're talking about social media. Truly, I am tired of all the winning.

But I like trying to put scripture in historical context. I'm a graduate of the EFM class so I'm pretty familiar with my Old Testament. I know the ancient Hebrews went through plenty of hard times too. The Old Testament tells us that worshipping God did not mean the ancient Hebrews always triumphed over their enemies. They were enslaved by the Egyptians and later conquered by the Babylonians and driven into exile. There were many times when the ancient Hebrews cried out with lamentations about their troubles. My point is that being devout and faithful to God didn't mean that God would solve all their problems. It wasn't true then, and it certainly isn't true now.

I think the key to surviving is to persevere. God is promising to be with us, to be steadfast in his love. It may feel like he's hidden himself from us, but I trust that he's still here with us. It's easy to get depressed by dark clouds of current events, but I think it helps to try to keep looking for those points of light. One the last night of the church retreat I came out of the evening service and looked up at the night sky and was astounded by how many stars I could see. I immediately identified several constellations that I haven't seen in years. They were always there, I just wasn't looking. Maybe I was too distracted by my phone, maybe it's the fault of living in the big city.

I'm reminded of that quote by Fred Rogers "When I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." So I'm looking around for examples to follow. I just started reading "How We Learn to Be Brave" by Bishop Mariann Budde. She reminds me that being brave and persevering during hard times isn't easy. But I think it helps to remember that Jews and Christians have been through many difficult times before and have survived. I hope and I pray that we will get through these times too, and someday be able to rejoice just like the psalmist. I want to live in a world of abundance, not a world of scarcity. I want to sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me.



Asa Swain was raised in the Episcopal Church in Newton, Massachusetts, and moved to New York City ten years ago. He lives in Prospect Park South with his wife Alea, and has been attending Holy Apostles since 2018. He is also a member of St. Lydia's, a Lutheran dinner church in Gowanus.