



Lent reflection for March 17, 2025

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Psalm 27: 1-9 & 13-14

*The Lord is my light and my salvation;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid?*

*When evildoers assail me
to devour my flesh—
my adversaries and foes—
they shall stumble and fall.*

*Though an army encamp against me,
my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me,
yet I will be confident.*

*One thing I asked of the Lord,
that will I seek after:
to live in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to inquire in his temple.*

*For he will hide me in his shelter
in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;
he will set me high on a rock.*

*Now my head is lifted up
above my enemies all around me,
and I will offer in his tent
sacrifices with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make melody to the Lord.*

*Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud,
be gracious to me and answer me!
'Come,' my heart says, 'seek his face!'
Your face, Lord, do I seek.
Do not hide your face from me.
Do not turn your servant away in anger,
you who have been my help.
Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,
O God of my salvation!*

*I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord;
be strong, and let your heart take courage;
wait for the Lord!*

Today's reflection if from Asa Kurtz:

This psalm is about fear and what to do in the face of it, and I can't quite figure out if it's unrealistic or just hopeful. It seems acutely aware of how fear works sometimes, how it turns into desperation. "Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help." All that just sounds like "don't leave me, don't leave me!" which is in fact what it often sounds like to be afraid.

At the same time, the writer of the psalm seems fairly sure that God is there somewhere, listening and deliberating. The doubt is whether God is going to help (or cares enough to help?), not whether God is there at all. I guess I feel a similar way. Most people aren't constantly encountering burning bushes on a daily basis or being visited by angels bringing good news, or one of those other undeniable Signs (capital S Signs). We have to squint to see God, at least most days.

For me, God is sort of like a force humming under everything, not usually overpowering or distracting, but certainly there. I'm wondering about this psalm and thinking about what it is like to ask for help when you are afraid. It's difficult enough to ask another person, but I don't even know how to approach the idea of asking for help from God. What does help from God look like? This is a very deserty psalm, so there is an oncoming army of foes and a godly tent in which to take shelter, but how does it literally appear in a person's life when God lends help? I'm not all that sure, because this psalm is not about the help, it's about the asking.



Asa Kurtz has attended Holy Apostles for about 3 years, and acolytes pretty often. He's a senior in high school and likes building things, reading, and his dog, Daisy.