



Lent reflection for March 20, 2025

Click [here](#) to listen to the podcast!

**Psalm 38: 1-15**

*O Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger,  
or discipline me in your wrath.  
For your arrows have sunk into me,  
and your hand has come down on me.*

*There is no soundness in my flesh  
because of your indignation;  
there is no health in my bones  
because of my sin.  
For my iniquities have gone over my head;  
they weigh like a burden too heavy for me.  
My wounds grow foul and fester  
because of my foolishness;  
I am utterly bowed down and prostrate;  
all day long I go around mourning.  
For my loins are filled with burning,  
and there is no soundness in my flesh.  
I am utterly spent and crushed;  
I groan because of the tumult of my heart.*

*O Lord, all my longing is known to you;  
my sighing is not hidden from you.  
My heart throbs, my strength fails me;  
as for the light of my eyes—it also has gone from me.  
My friends and companions stand aloof from my affliction,  
and my neighbours stand far off.*

*Those who seek my life lay their snares;  
those who seek to hurt me speak of ruin,  
and meditate treachery all day long.*

*But I am like the deaf, I do not hear;  
like the mute, who cannot speak.  
Truly, I am like one who does not hear,  
and in whose mouth is no retort.*

*But it is for you, O Lord, that I wait;  
it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer.*

---

### Today's reflection if from Cara Webber:

Reading this psalm through, I despaired of being able to say anything about it that might prove even a little useful or helpful to anyone else. The speaker's experience seems so completely foreign to me. Not only is God specifically, personally, angry with the speaker, but God has punished the speaker in a specific, personal way: He has sunk His arrows into the speaker, He has destroyed the speaker's bodily strength because of His indignation.

I guess I have probably wondered if God were mad at me, especially as a child, but the idea that God could be so displeased with my actions — me! one of billions! — to respond, to me specifically, in such a targeted, deliberate way seems incredible. How could I matter so much to God?

And maybe that is one thing I can learn from this psalm.

As he enumerates his suffering, the speaker clearly accepts that it stems from his own fault: "there is no health in my bones / because of my sin. / For my iniquities have gone over my head; / They weigh like a burden too heavy for me." Yet his sinfulness has not made him a stranger to God. On the contrary: God is an immediate, intimate presence, effecting retribution but also standing with the speaker, offering companionship in the speaker's suffering: "O Lord, all my longing is known to you; / my sighing is not hidden from you."

I marvel at the speaker's unshakable conviction in a God who knows him absolutely, who knows — and hates — all his sins but also stays with him in each and every pang of agony. The speaker's profound personal relationship with God also offers hope: "it is for you, O Lord, that I wait; / it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer."

We don't know what the speaker has done wrong, what sins he has committed against God and his neighbors, but I think it's safe to assume they are pretty serious. Having acknowledged his sins before God, the speaker then, miraculously, seems to let them go! "It is for you, O Lord, that I wait; / it is you, O Lord my God, who will answer." The speaker is not scrambling to find a solution, or a way to redress his wrongdoings, but he turns to God and waits.

For an answer? For direction? I don't think God wants us to simply walk away from our wrongdoing toward others, blithely trusting that God will somehow make it right. But the psalmist's faith that God will show him the way forward is so striking: what faith! What *rest*. To number your sins and sufferings before God and *know* that He will never leave your side, and He will help you find your way.

I think we've all been told that the point of focusing on our sins during Lent is not to make us feel bad, but rather, to clear the way for a closer relationship with God. If we can't admit our wrongdoings, how can we trust God to forgive them? Let us take heart from this psalmist's faith that there is *nothing* we can do that will cause God to abandon us. Whatever the enormity of our fault, if we turn to Him, His love will claim us as His own.



Cara Weber lives in Kensington with her husband Vivek and son Ashwin. She has been attending Holy Apostles for about 2 years. She holds a PhD in literature and loved teaching in the collegiate classroom, but alas, the job market had other ideas! She now works as a software engineer while trying to discern what to do with the rest of her life.