



Lent reflection for March 27, 2025

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Psalm 54: 1-7

*Save me, O God, by your name,
and vindicate me by your might.
Hear my prayer, O God;
give ear to the words of my mouth.*

*For the insolent have risen against me,
the ruthless seek my life;
they do not set God before them. Selah*

*But surely, God is my helper;
the Lord is the upholder of [a](#) my life.
We will repay my enemies for their evil.
In your faithfulness, put an end to them.
With a freewill-offering I will sacrifice to you;
I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good.
For he has delivered me from every trouble,
and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.*

Today's reflection if from Emily Newland:

It's going to sound ungrateful, but when I think of a time in my life when I wished for vindication, it was my 20s, when I waged a war of independence from my parents. I remember a late battle, when, at the age of 27 (!) I was planning a solo trip to Mexico City. Of course there are risks when traveling alone, especially as a woman, and especially if the destination is neither a resort nor a well-developed country, but I had been on my own for some time and had learned how to travel safely. My parents had their stereotypes and some horror stories, tied to a version of me that would walk naively into danger. To dismantle this trip, they tried a tactic different from our previous skirmishes, since those had devolved into tears and shouting: they asked that I would talk to their friend, who had traveled many times in Mexico. Interesting - an actual resource! I

thought, and made the phone call. But it was a trap! The friend, a complete stranger to me, bombarded me with stories about kidnappings and thugs and warned me in no uncertain terms that I was a fool to move forward with my plans.

So, I went on my trip. I am having a lot of cherished memories as I write this, of the amazing anthropology museum, a piano concert near the Zocalo, making a great friend at a hostel, traveling on an overnight bus to Chiapas, a very magical cathedral carpeted with pine branches, and all of the wonderful things that can happen to a solo traveler. Needless to say, there was no hostage situation.

I felt vindicated in my heart, but I never indulged my “I told you so,” and more importantly (surprise!), there was never a repentance on the part of my parents. Instead, this situation probably added another layer to the callus in our hearts. We do love each other, but I imagine we each nurture our quiet vindications, leading to more self-righteousness, and, in turn, more topics we don’t discuss. Our polarization has deepened in step with the rest of the country’s.

One thing that distinguishes my craving for vindication from the Psalmist’s is that he turns his plea to God. Sometimes the instincts expressed by the Psalmists seem base or immature – very relatable! But the Psalmists know that only God can deliver a satisfying end to a petition for vengeance, because God has a bigger picture in mind. God has God’s own glory as the end goal, so while our private victories over an adversary may feel good, they mean little if they can’t be claimed as part of a holy narrative.

Although I wouldn’t take back that trip, I would like to know if things would be different if I had given my laments to God, instead of letting my desire to prove my parents wrong fester into arrogance. And more importantly, is it too late?



Emily Newland relocated to Brooklyn in 2013 from the Midwest. She works in the language industry and lives in Park Slope with her husband Warren and daughter Maple, where they enjoy Brooklyn treasures - the Park, the Nitehawk, and Holy Apostles. They have attended Holy Apostles since 2019.