



Lent reflection for April 5, 2025

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Psalm 86: 1-10

*Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.
Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you;
save your servant who trusts in you.
You are my God; 3 be gracious to me, O Lord,
for to you do I cry all day long.
Gladden the soul of your servant,
for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.
Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer;
listen to my cry of supplication.
In the day of my trouble I call on you,
for you will answer me.
There is none like you among the gods, O Lord,
nor are there any works like yours.
All the nations you have made shall come
and bow down before you, O Lord,
and shall glorify your name.
For you are great and do wondrous things;
you alone are God.*

Today's reflection is from Stuart Matthewman:

When I first found out that this years lenten readings would be the Psalms of Laments I was a little worried as I've been honestly struggling for a while, trying to relate my own life to the verses written thousands of years ago in a very different culture.

Luckily over the last 2 years I've been able to stay with the monks at The Holy Cross Monastery upstate a few times. Every single day they chant long passages from the psalms at all 5 of their services. They sound so beautiful sung and chanted but I've sometimes struggled with some of the themes of extreme suffering, struggle, doubt, anger, sorrow, fear and feelings of abandonment. How could my privileged life in Brooklyn compare to that?

Of course all around in this modern world there is still plenty sufferings and fears. Wars raging, extreme poverty, disease and dictatorships controlling lives with fear of violence.

But I feel more and more grateful that I'm not personally affected by these horrors, right now. But.. I can't escape seeing and reading about the relentless suffering others are enduring.

Having said that the last few years for me have been very challenging and transformative in many various unexpected ways. My own health, dealing with ones close to me with mental health problems and myself being falsely accused of awful things with people trying to extract money from me and trying to destroy myself and my wife's lives. Yes the same themes that crop up constantly in the psalms.

One of the most profound, life changing events is the reason I am now reading and reflecting on the Psalms today. A few years ago I was gently 'Brought' by my own volition to a service in a small, very old church in the countryside of England. I hadn't been to a church service since I was around 14 and was intrigued to how I would react. I felt surprisingly comfortable and at ease with the gentle service. This was an Anglican service. A month later back in Brooklyn I found virtually the same service in our Church just 5 minutes from where I live!

After 40 years living in NY I am now actually part of a local community .

In this Psalm 86 written by King David, there is no gnashing of teeth, no jackals, enemies, bandits, foes, snares, pits, evil doers or the wicked. Just Davids heartfelt passionate cry for help and guidance, he seems to feel forgotten and abandoned. But he still quietly pleas 'listen to my cry.' Even though he has doubts sometimes that he is actually being listened to.

I'm sure many of us feel like that sometimes..I know I have. But for all his heartache and pleading he is thankful to God and lavishes praises on him and says how he trusts that he will be answered and given mercy simply because he asks for it. He admits he is poor and needy even though He is a King.

Sometimes in prayer just asking for guidance about a particular challenge or problem one can figure it out oneself. Just trusting that someone is listening is all the help one needs..No actual words.

Sometimes the worst events of my life have been the most useful learning experiences that have hopefully transformed me for the better. Every event good or bad carries a lesson for us but we don't always see stat the time.

Instead of 'Why is his happening To me?' 'How is this happening For me'



Stuart Matthewman is an import to Brooklyn from Yorkshire, England. He is a musician and music producer/composer, who now is trying his hand at singing in the choir as well as playing recorder in the church consort. He lives with his wife Syrie and four loony cats in Prospect Park South, and when its not too cold, he can be spotted annoying and scaring the locals, riding way too fast, wearing tight lycra on a bicycle in Prospect Park.