



Lent reflection for April 10, 2025

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Psalm 120: 1-5

*In my distress I cry to the Lord,
that he may answer me:
'Deliver me, O Lord,
from lying lips,
from a deceitful tongue.'
What shall be given to you?
And what more shall be done to you,
you deceitful tongue?
A warrior's sharp arrows,
with glowing coals of the broom tree!*

*Woe is me, that I am an alien in Meshech,
that I must live among the tents of Kedar.
Too long have I had my dwelling
among those who hate peace.
I am for peace;
but when I speak,
they are for war.*

Today's reflection is from Grace Heymsfield:

I may not feel the threat of sharp arrows or a broom tree, but when I take this passage chunk by chunk, I empathize with the psalmist's loneliness and pain, and yearning for like-minded community, especially in these difficult times.

In my distress I cry to the Lord that he may answer me: like the psalmist, I can experience distress and pain AND reach out to God expecting He will respond. The psalmist is experiencing pain from someone else's lies. There's some comfort in that - the psalmist knows these lies are not true. I wonder who the lies are directed to - a personal attack, or lies about who God is, how the world should be? I think of our current moment and how I feel overwhelmed and heartbroken at the insidious lies about who Christians are, what we all believe, and what God wants for our country and the world. Like the Psalmist I say, Deliver me, deliver us, oh God.

What shall be given to you? ... I think of many an angry run when fed up with my loved ones, with someone who requires a little Extra Grace, a difficult boss or a distant person ever looming in the news perpetuating lies. Sharp arrows and glowing coals of the broom tree make me chuckle, and I think of my modern day replacements of,

“they’ll wake up and know just how wrong they are!”, daydreaming about elaborate apologies that will never come, or frankly much less kind ill wishes.

Woe is me, that I am an alien... how many of us feel the sharp loneliness when surrounded by others, of feeling like you’re breathing helium while everyone else is breathing oxygen? I thank God that we are not aliens in Him nor in our church community. The psalmist seems to ache for peace and for community. May we continue to be for peace.



Grace Heymsfield lives with her husband (just married in January!) a few blocks from the church. A Nutrition Researcher at the International Rescue Committee and part time PhD student at the London School, she is spending the spring term in London and eager to be back for Easter.