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Lent Day 14: The Appeal

3-4 minutes

Psalm 109:21-31 (ESV)

*But you, O God my Lord,
deal on my behalf for your name's sake;
because your steadfast love is good, deliver me!
For I am poor and needy,
and my heart is stricken within me.
I am gone like a shadow at evening;
I am shaken off like a locust.
My knees are weak through fasting;
my body has become gaunt, with no fat.
I am an object of scorn to my accusers;
when they see me, they wag their heads.
Help me, O Lord my God!
Save me according to your steadfast love!
Let them know that this is your hand;
you, O Lord, have done it!
Let them curse, but you will bless!
They arise and are put to shame, but your servant will be glad!
May my accusers be clothed with dishonor;
may they be wrapped in their own shame as in a cloak!
With my mouth I will give great thanks to the Lord;*

*I will praise him in the midst of the throng.
For he stands at the right hand of the needy one,
to save him from those who condemn his soul to death.*

In a world that is broken, the psalmist appeals to God to deal with his false accusers. The idea of such a plea (“May my accusers be clothed with dishonor”) can be uncomfortable to those of us who are not exposed to the injustices of war, genocide and sex trafficking as others throughout the world are. And yet, at some point we have all chosen to repay evil for evil. But instead of addressing injustice on his own, the psalmist takes this injustice to God and appeals to him to act on his behalf. He chooses to allow a just and holy God to deal with those who have wronged him instead of seeking retribution himself.

If God were only forgiving but not just, there would be nowhere for us to go when we are sinned against. But God’s holiness will not tolerate injustice. As comforting as that sounds at first, we also are unjust, so unless there is some remedy for us, we will be judged with the same judgment as our oppressors. The only reason the psalmist (or we) can appeal to God is because Christ has already spoken on our behalf. When Christ cried out to God from the cross, he was rejected and scorned because he was taking the place of a sinful humanity. Now we can appeal to God because he looks at us through the sinless Christ who spoke on our behalf.

Prayer

God, our Father, we praise you for sending Christ to cover our own acts of injustice towards you so that we can have a relationship with you, who are perfect in holiness. We thank you that you listen to our appeals when we have been wronged and that you will hear

us in your compassion and mercy. Help us to bring our pleas to you instead of seeking our retribution when we are sinned against. In Christ's Name, Amen.

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