



Living Lent | April 4

Praising All The Day Long

*In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge;
let me never be ashamed.
In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free;
incline your ear to me and save me.
Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe;
you are my crag and my stronghold.
Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the clutches of the evildoer and the oppressor.
For you are my hope, O Lord God,
my confidence since I was young.
I have been sustained by you ever since I was born;
from my mother's womb you have been my strength;
my praise shall be always of you.
I have become a portent to many;
but you are my refuge and my strength.
Let my mouth be full of your praise
and your glory all the day long.
Do not cast me off in my old age;
forsake me not when my strength fails.
For my enemies are talking against me,
and those who lie in wait for my life take counsel together.
They say, "God has forsaken him;
go after him and seize him;
because there is none who will save."
O God, be not far from me;
come quickly to help me, O my God.
Let those who set themselves against me be put to shame and be disgraced;
let those who seek to do me evil be covered with scorn and reproach.
But I shall always wait in patience,*

and shall praise you more and more.

Psalm 71: 1-14 (NRSV)

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

Have you ever had a cavity in your mouth? I can remember my younger brother coming out of the dentist's smiling ear to ear. He told us very gleefully, "I got a cavity!" He was so proud of himself. We were confused as to why he thought this was a good thing. He proudly told us, "I am going to get a gold tooth now."

The confusion from my little brother was very cute and sweet. He did not understand that is not how cavity fillings work. He had recalled a conversation with a gold tooth stranger a few weeks ago and assumed that cavities are the way to get those beautiful gold teeth.

In Psalm 71:8 the psalmist says, "Let my mouth be full of your praise and your glory all the day long." In a similar way as a child pondering a gold tooth we must ask, "How is it possible for our mouth to be full of praise all day long?" For most Christians we can produce sincere praise to God at moments. Yet, the psalmist raises the bar and requests for the praise to be all the day long. How is this possible? Well, by worldly standards it is not. However, with God all things are possible.

As Christians, we have faith that God can change us. Even in this very moment, God can change you. This is not a devotion about trying harder to praise God. This is about knowing God is the one to change us into the praising machines. God will be the one to give us the vision to see the many blessings in our view.

At the close of the Psalm in verse 14 the author says, "But I shall always wait in patience, and shall praise you more and more." If we are to embody this type of patience and praise, we must remember it is not possible on our own but only possible through God.

Today, let us not be confused like a child thinking cavities means gold teeth are on the way. Let us also remember our own effort does not lead to more praise. Let's let our openness to God's Holy Spirit lead us into becoming even better at lifting up continual praise.

Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ

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