



Praying the Psalms in Advent: honest prayers for when life is hard PART 2

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Psalm 77

I cry aloud to God,
aloud to God, that he may hear me.
2 In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;
in the night my hand is stretched out without
wearying;
my soul refuses to be comforted.
3 I think of God, and I moan;
I meditate, and my spirit faints.
4 You keep my eyelids from closing;
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
5 I consider the days of old,
and remember the years of long ago.
6 I commune with my heart in the night;
I meditate and search my spirit:
7 "Will the Lord spurn forever,
and never again be favorable?
8 Has his steadfast love ceased forever?
Are his promises at an end for all time?
9 Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has he in anger shut up his compassion?"
10 And I say, "It is my grief
that the right hand of the Most High has
changed."
11 I will call to mind the deeds of the LORD;
I will remember your wonders of old.

12 I will meditate on all your work,
and muse on your mighty deeds.
13 Your way, O God, is holy.
What god is so great as our God?
14 You are the God who works wonders;
you have displayed your might among the
peoples.
15 With your strong arm you redeemed your
people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.
16 When the waters saw you, O God,
when the waters saw you, they were afraid;
the very deep trembled.
17 The clouds poured out water;
the skies thundered;
your arrows flashed on every side.
18 The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind;
your lightnings lit up the world;
the earth trembled and shook.
19 Your way was through the sea,
your path, through the mighty waters;
yet your footprints were unseen.
20 You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.



The movement in Psalm 77

- An external crisis that leads to a crisis of faith
 - From the shipwreck of a confident and certain faith, through disillusionment with God, toward a place of deeper faith that knows less but trusts more.
 - 'the turn from the self to God'
- 'Nothing has been resolved, but everything has been recontextualised.'

~ Walter Brueggemann



Psalm 131

- ¹ O LORD, my heart is not lifted up,
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvelous for me.
- ² But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
my soul is like the weaned child that is with me.
- ³ O Israel, hope in the LORD
from this time on and forevermore.



The moment reflected in Psalm 131



- A Psalm of Ascents (Psalms 120-134)
 - Pilgrimage Psalm – songs for the journey
- Statement of Confidence
- Captures a mood
 - After the storm
 - Resting in God
- An individual prayer with the community in view
 - The power of testimony



To think about

- Can you bring doubt and disappointment into prayer?
- What image captures how you feel now? Could that be the start of a prayer?

What have you discovered in the psalms to enrich your own prayer?

