

**Devotion: July 7, 2020**

**Psalm 119**

<sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path.  
<sup>106</sup> I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,  
to observe your righteous ordinances.  
<sup>107</sup> I am severely afflicted;  
give me life, O Lord, according to your word.  
<sup>108</sup> Accept my offerings of praise, O Lord,  
and teach me your ordinances.  
<sup>109</sup> I hold my life in my hand continually,  
but I do not forget your law.  
<sup>110</sup> The wicked have laid a snare for me,  
but I do not stray from your precepts.  
<sup>111</sup> Your decrees are my heritage for ever;  
they are the joy of my heart.  
<sup>112</sup> I incline my heart to perform your statutes  
for ever, to the end.

Came across this. And felt the need to share:

*The problem is this: when, despite all my best efforts, the lights have gone off in my life (literally or figuratively, take your pick), plunging me into the kind of darkness that turns my knees to water, nonetheless I have not died. The monsters have not dragged me out of bed and taken me back to their lair. The witches have not turned me into a bat. Instead, I have learned things in the dark that I could never have learned in the light, things that have saved my life over and over again, so that there is really only one logical conclusion. I need darkness as much as I need light. ...*

*I wish I could turn to the church for help, but so many congregations are preoccupied with keeping the lights on right now that the last thing they want to talk about is how to befriend the dark. ...*

*If you have ever belonged to such a community, however, you may have discovered that the trouble starts when darkness falls on your life, which can happen in any number of unsurprising ways: you lose your job, your marriage falls apart, your child acts out in some attention-getting way, you pray hard for something that does not happen, you begin to doubt some of the things you have been taught about what the Bible says. The first time you speak of these things in a full solar church, you can usually get a hearing. Continue to speak of them and you may be reminded that God will not let you be tested beyond your strength. All that is required of you is to have faith. If you still do not get the message, sooner or later it will be made explicit for you: the darkness is your own fault, because you do not have enough faith. ...*

*There are days when I would give anything to share their vision of the world and their ability to navigate it safely, but my spiritual gifts do not seem to include the gift of solar spirituality. Instead, I have been given the gift of lunar spirituality, in which the divine light available to me waxes and wanes with the season. When I go out on my porch at night, the moon never looks the same way twice. Some nights it is as round and bright as a headlight; other nights it is thinner than the sickle hanging in my garage. Some nights it is high in the sky, and other nights low over the mountains. Some nights it is altogether gone, leaving a vast web of stars that are brighter in its absence. All in all, the moon is a truer mirror for my soul than the sun that looks the same way every day.*

—Barbara Brown Taylor

Let us pray:

Come awake! The light of God is breaking through the darkness.  
We bless the light, an unyielding sign of hope in times of trouble.  
Do not fear! The love of Christ opens up a space of respite and peace for us.  
Delight in the gifts of the Spirit, who sets a table of welcome for all.  
Surely goodness and mercy have found us here with the God of abounding love.