

**Devotion:** Tuesday, April 28, 2020

*Psalm 79*

***A psalm of Asaph.***

- <sup>1</sup> *O God, the nations have invaded your inheritance;  
they have defiled your holy temple,  
they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble.*
- <sup>2</sup> *They have left the dead bodies of your servants  
as food for the birds of the sky,  
the flesh of your own people for the animals of the wild.*
- <sup>3</sup> *They have poured out blood like water  
all around Jerusalem,  
and there is no one to bury the dead.*
- <sup>4</sup> *We are objects of contempt to our neighbors,  
of scorn and derision to those around us.*
- <sup>5</sup> *How long, Lord? Will you be angry forever?  
How long will your jealousy burn like fire?*
- <sup>6</sup> *Pour out your wrath on the nations  
that do not acknowledge you,  
on the kingdoms  
that do not call on your name;*
- <sup>7</sup> *for they have devoured Jacob  
and devastated his homeland.*
- <sup>8</sup> *Do not hold against us the sins of past generations;  
may your mercy come quickly to meet us,  
for we are in desperate need.*
- <sup>9</sup> *Help us, God our Savior,  
for the glory of your name;  
deliver us and forgive our sins  
for your name's sake.*
- <sup>10</sup> *Why should the nations say,  
"Where is their God?"*

Is God on your emergency contact list?

That would freak out any ambulance driver.

But really, think of it.

God's help only a tap away. All you need to do is to tap a button and a message is sent to your emergency contacts.

After all, isn't that what God is there for? To save us? To be there for us? To leap to our rescue whenever needed?

Like, right now.

All we would have to do is send out to God a call in which we acknowledge that we might be weak, that the force that's about to be applied to our patience just might be too much, that it's possible we're going to buckle under the pressure. It's like we're asking God to be on standby for an emergency rescue, for an infusion or transfusion of *something*, of grace, wisdom, power, self-control of deliverance from evil or all of the above.

But the psalmist received no such deliverance.

The Babylonian armies under Nebuchadnezzar hit the kingdom of Judah in three invasions, and after the third (in 586 B.C.), the country and Jerusalem were in ruins.

It would be years before any of the captives would be allowed to return, and most never did, preferring to remain in the life they'd created in their new host country. After all, had this not been the advice of the prophet? Was this not the word of God to them? "*Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ... Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare*" (Jeremiah 29:5, 7).

Really? They probably didn't see that coming! This was an answer to their prayers they didn't expect.

What's often frustrating is that God doesn't seem to work too hard on a particular response time. It's not like paramedics whose goal is to arrive on a scene within minutes of getting the call.

Sometimes, when we call upon the Lord, we get an instant response.

Sometimes, we get a delayed response. Listen to the cry of the psalmist in Psalm 13. You can hear the pain in his voice:

*How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?*

*How long will you hide your face from me?*

*How long must I bear pain in my soul and  
have sorrow in my heart all day long?*

*How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?*

Sometimes, the response comes to us in ways we did not expect.

Sometimes, we get no response at all — or so it seems.

But through it all, we learn to trust the One into whose hands we place our lives. Perhaps, when we do this, we can say as did the prophet Habakkuk:

*Though the fig tree does not blossom,  
and no fruit is on the vines;  
though the produce of the olive fails  
and the fields yield no food;  
though the flock is cut off from the fold  
and there is no herd in the stalls,  
yet I will rejoice in the Lord;  
I will exult in the God of my salvation.  
God, the Lord, is my strength;  
he makes my feet like the feet of a deer,  
and makes me tread upon the heights.Amen.*

(Habakkuk 3:17-19).

I pray that you all are safe.

Pastor Jack