

Wednesday Home Study

Read Psalm 116:1-4, 11-18:

- 1 I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications.
2 Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.
3 The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.
4 Then I called on the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I pray, save my life!"
11 I said in my consternation, "Everyone is a liar."
12 What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?
13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord,
14 I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.
15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful ones.
16 O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant, the child of your serving girl. You have loosed my bonds.
17 I will offer to you a thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the Lord.
18 I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.
(NRSV)

Thanksgiving for Recovery from Illness

The delight and gratitude of the writer of this psalm shines through. He has received an answer to his prayer and recovered from some illness. He now visits the temple to give witness to God's goodness and to offer to God what he had vowed when he was suffering.

This is a psalm that we can all use to find words for public thanksgiving after coming through some distressing time (such as you, or a friend or relative, may be experiencing with the COVID-19 pandemic). Such times are part of life. In our life journey, we may experience phases of barrenness and loss – even feelings of being abandoned - and lost to Sheol.¹

¹ *Sheol* is a place after death, or death like power that invades life.

As well as the social isolation that we are currently experiencing, we are approaching winter, a time when many people struggle even more with illness, and depression.



In winter, deciduous trees take on a skeletal, bare appearance. But new life sleeps waiting for the new birth of Spring. Similarly, God desires new life and renewal in you and me. He nurtures life in us in mind, body and spirit. And he delights in you – receives great joy in you.

This Psalm affirms our relationship to God as cherished and beloved children. It encourages us to:

- call out to God,
- remember that God is with us through it all, and
- remember times of deliverance in the past when God has help you through difficult times into new life.

Take some time to study and reflect upon the following questions:

1. In response to what God has done, what commitments has the psalmist made to God?
2. How many times do you see the phrase "the name of the Lord" in this psalm? In your own words, what definition would you give for this phrase so that it captures as fully as possible all that the psalmist means by it?
3. Based on the evidence you see in this psalm, how would you define love for God?

4. What qualities in God's personality come through strongest in this psalm?
5. What insight does the truth in verse 15 offer about the value of your life to God?
6. How would you compare the message of this psalm with the words of Jesus in Matt 10:28-33?
7. Can you call out to God for help and believe this call is precious to God?
8. How can you act in a way that joyously honours God's saving work?