

Sermon for March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

READINGS

Exodus 8:16-24

**16** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Say to Aaron, ‘Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the earth, so that it may become gnats in all the land of Egypt.’” **17** And they did so. Aaron stretched out his hand with his staff and struck the dust of the earth, and there were gnats on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. **18** The magicians tried by their secret arts to produce gnats, but they could not. So there were gnats on man and beast. **19** Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, “This is the finger of God.” But Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not listen to them, as the LORD had said.

**20** Then the LORD said to Moses, “Rise up early in the morning and present yourself to Pharaoh, as he goes out to the water, and say to him, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Let my people go, that they may serve me. **21** Or else, if you will not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms of flies on you and your servants and your people, and into your houses. And the houses of the Egyptians shall be filled with swarms of flies, and also the ground on which they stand. **22** But on that day I will set apart the land of Goshen, where my people dwell, so that no swarms of flies shall be there, that you may know that I am the LORD in the midst of the earth. **23** Thus I will put a division between my people and your people. Tomorrow this sign shall happen.’”” **24** And the LORD did so. There came great swarms of flies into the house of Pharaoh and into his servants' houses. Throughout all the land of Egypt the land was ruined by the swarms of flies.

Psalm 4

- 1** Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!  
You have given me relief when I was in distress.  
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!
- 2** O men, how long shall my honor be turned into shame?  
How long will you love vain words and seek after lies? *Selah*
- 3** But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself;  
the LORD hears when I call to him.
- 4** Be angry, and do not sin;  
ponder in your own hearts on your beds, and be silent. *Selah*
- 5** Offer right sacrifices,  
and put your trust in the LORD.
- 6** There are many who say, “Who will show us some good?  
Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!”
- 7** You have put more joy in my heart  
than they have when their grain and wine abound.
- 8** In peace I will both lie down and sleep;  
for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

Ephesians 5:1-14

**1** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. **2** And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

**3** But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. **4** Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. **5** For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. **6** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. **7** Therefore do not become partners with them; **8** for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light **9** (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), **10** and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. **11** Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. **12** For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. **13** But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, **14** for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

“Awake, O sleeper,  
and arise from the dead,  
and Christ will shine on you.”

Luke 11:14-28

**14** Now he was casting out a demon that was mute. When the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke, and the people marveled. **15** But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons,” **16** while others, to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven. **17** But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. **18** And if Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. **19** And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. **20** But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. **21** When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe; **22** but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil. **23** Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

**24** “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ **25** And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order. **26** Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first.”

**27** As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!” **28** But he said, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

Our text for meditation this Third Sunday in Lent is on our Psalm.<sup>1</sup>

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> Note to all Lay Leaders, Deacons and Chaplains. On account of a number of our Catacomb Synod congregations doing Wednesday night services (and me providing audio messages for them), the Lenten sermons will be focused on the Psalms and shorter than usual. If that does not suit your congregation, I recommend utilizing the previous year's Lenten homilies of the Lenten devotional homily from this past Wednesday.

## Introduction

Is it OK to yell at God? I know that sounds like a stupid question, nobody thinks you can just...*yell* at Him...can you? Our instincts say no, of course not. Heaven forbid we should raise our voices at the King of Kings...right? We could never do such a thing like that, even though Job and David and Moses and Asaph and Jeremiah and so many others appear to have done it. You know, those men who all yelled at God and begged to know what He was doing in their lives who were rewarded and blessed by God.

Oh wait.

My friends I have a hard truth to tell you. It is not a bitter truth, but one that many people have a hard time accepting because they have confused politeness with piety. You see, there are times when God wants you to yell at Him. Whenever we are aware of our stresses, pressures, and tragedies, we are to go straight to God about it and not mince words. Of course we are not permitted to be *angry* with God, nor can we *accuse* Him of doing something bad; God is perfect in every way, and neither wills nor does evil. But He wants us expressing our heartaches and frustrations *to* Him, showing Him exactly how we feel. And if that means shouting your pain in His direction, then this what God wants you to do my friends.

## Calling on God

In our Psalm, King David understands that calling out to God is his only option. And he does not make some small, sheepish request to our Lord. Rather, he *explodes* at God. He does not stutter, mince words, or mumble. We can almost hear him yelling the first verse.

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness!  
You have given me relief when I was in distress.  
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer!

Or to put it another way, “God, answer me! You did that before, do it again, I need you!” That sounds *almost* blasphemous, doesn't it? Who does David think he is, launching what sounds like demands at our Lord? But in all reality, David is doing the *right* thing here.

We do not know the exact problem he was facing, but from the second verse we see that it involved men slandering him. But whatever it was, David was aware that it was catastrophic, and he could not take it lying down. He did not ignore what was happening, especially as ignoring the problem would not stop the shaming or the lies being spread about him. He did not try to fix it himself, because he knew that he *couldn't* undo that damage, at least not instantly. And he did not sit there and suffer; that would have been absolutely pointless. So instead he calls upon the Lord, pouring his very soul into his complaint.

## The Results of Calling

After the first two verses, we see a change happen. David reminds himself and us (as he turns his attention to us!) that God has “set apart the godly for Himself,” and what does that mean? It means that whoever belongs to God can in harmony with David say “The Lord hears when I call to Him.” So for anyone who does what David does, he exhorts us to then lay down, be silent, and think about all of it. Here, my friend, you are to ponder what sort of God you have, what sort of request you just made, remind yourself that He wanted you to call out to Him this way. Then get up and do your best for Him once more.

So King David yells at God, makes his complaint, lies down and meditates on it, and then gets up and does his best to serve God from a willing heart. Because of this, God answers his prayer. Soon after, over all the people who sneer at him saying “who will show us some good?” David's prayers are

answered and he is full of unspeakable joy. He boasts that his joy in the Lord is greater than the mockers, scoffers and slanderers who attacked him. He has a greater joy than they have when they have all their needs met, or even when they are feasting. While he does not say exactly how this situation was solved, he expresses to us that God answered his prayers and thus can answer out prayers as well.

## Conclusion

So why did our Lord answer David's complaint? What made the difference between his and all the unanswered prayers out there? Rest assured, it is not about volume as though God were hard of hearing. Rather, it is that the *heartfelt* prayers of the saints are heard from on high. David's prayer was bold, and God wants people who have a bold faith in Him. The very first of the Ten Commandments, "You shall have no other gods before Me," includes in it a command to expect good to come from God. As Luther explains in the Large Catechism, to even have a god in the first place means having that someone "from which we are to expect all good and to which we are to take refuge in all distress."<sup>2</sup> We are not simply to *hope* for good from God, but to *expect* good from Him. We must believe that He is gracious toward us and earnestly seeks to bless us with everything we need and tons of the things that we want. David had this bold faith that God is looking for in men, the kind He looks for in *us*.

Though we must all fear God, and though we must be careful to avoid ever accusing Him of wrongdoing, God appreciates prayers that are heartfelt – whether they are from quiet words spoken between tears or from loud shouts bemoaning our circumstances. We have this confidence to approach the Throne of God with boldness<sup>3</sup> on account of our faith in Christ. We need not shrink away from prayer, even honest prayer, because believers are covered in the righteousness of the One who died for all of our sins. So let us then, like David, go to our Lord for every need, meditate on His goodness and graciousness, and then live our lives every day for Him.

Now the Peace of our Lord, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://bookofconcord.org/large-catechism/ten-commandments/>

<sup>3</sup> Hebrews 4:16