

TUESDAY – April 21st

CENTERING BREATH PRAYER: O, Lord, hear me...when I call.

O Lord, I stand before you waiting to hear your call and daring to promise to answer as you have been faithful to answer me when I call. Use these moments we have together to work in my heart, setting me apart for your service. Your Son has given me life I do not deserve and I would give myself in return, knowing that I can never repay the debt I owe. In your faithful name, I pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 4

KEY VERSE: Psalm 4:3:

“But know that the Lord has set apart the faithful for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him” (NRSV).

How often have we felt like the Lord did not hear us when we called? Our Psalmist today reminds us that God has set the faithful apart from the unbelievers. If we have faith in the Christ, we are part of the faithful and can expect the Lord to hear us when we call to him. Does that mean that we should expect the Lord to cater to our whims and desires? Of course not! God hears us when we call. God answers us. But sometimes the answer is no, or not yet. The Psalmist speaks of times of distress and having his honor suffering shame. Yet, he knows that no matter what the circumstances, God hears the faithful when they call. Even when we feel like the Lord is not answering our calls, we can have the assurance that they are heard.

Later in this Psalm we hear of the gladness in the Psalmist's heart from the Lord which is greater than that given from grain or wine. How much we enjoy our meals and our parties where the food abounds and the drinks flow freely! Our Psalmist reminds us that our Lord can bring us more joy and pleasure than any of these things. How open are we to the joy the Lord can offer? And what about the peaceful sleep which the Lord offers us? We have all these gifts because our faith has set us aside for the Lord. And just why have we been set aside? It's not just so that we can feel good, have the joy of the Lord and sleep peacefully. These are nice benefits, but there is a reason for the gifts. We are called to be witnesses. Yes, we have a Lord who listens when we call. Yes, we have the joy of the continued presence of the Lord in our lives. And, yes, we have peace beyond anything the world can give us. But, that only makes it more imperative that we listen when the Lord calls us.

Everything we do and everything that we say bears witness, either for the faith we profess, or in contradiction to the faith we profess. So often we talk about being witnesses and think that we have a choice about being witnesses. This is a misconception. If we profess to believe, there are people all around us who are watching to see how we act and speak. Every word out of our mouths and every action we do is seen and heard by those who may not know the Lord. If we profess to be believers in Christ and do not act in accordance to what they think we believe, they receive a witness against our Christ. That is important for us to think about. I remember a young blind girl coming to see my roommate (who was also blind) and myself to talk about becoming a Christian. She told us that she had never been able to make a confession of faith in Christ because of the many hypocrites she had observed in her short life. She told us that she was ready to accept Christ because she had observed our

actions and words and that we lived the way we said we believed. I can think of no greater encouragement for either of us that the witness of our lives was consistent with our faith. But, whether we like it or not, we are always on display and our witness is present at all times.

The Psalmist calls upon the Lord and desires answers. We can sympathize with this. We are prone to do the same. We also call upon the Lord and have the assurance that we are heard. But, we too, have been called, called to witness and make disciples. As this Easter season advances let us consider how our witness is received. Are we like the hypocrites our young blind friend had observed to Christ's detriment? Or are we consistent in our witness so that those who see and hear find reason to come to faith? Often we think of witnessing as the words we speak about Christ. St. Francis is credited with the statement: "Preach the gospel at all time and when necessary, use words." There are times when we must speak out about the Lord with our testimony. But, we must always try to live according to the faith we profess. As the Psalmist said, "*the Lord has set aside the faithful for himself.*" As a people set aside for the Lord, let us be faithful witnesses to the risen Savior. Hallelujah! Christ is risen!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND/OR JOURNALING:

1. How have I been set aside for the Lord?
2. How do I see my role as a witness for or against the Lord?
3. Do I live in the joy of the Lord and rest in his peace?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION:

Look for ways to improve your consistency between your profession of faith and your lifestyle. Remember, the world is watching you.

Dearest Lord, thank you for being available to me when I call upon you. Help me to be available to you when you call me. Please be with me as I live my life before the world. May my life witness be consistent with my profession of faith. As I continue to celebrate your resurrection, may I be ever vigilant for opportunities to share your love with others both by word and by action. In your listening name, I pray. Amen.