

Today's devotion was written by Rev. Becki Verbridge, Interim Pastor at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Elyria.

"Listen to my prayer, O Lord, and hear my cry for help! When I am in trouble, don't turn away from me! Listen to me, and answer me quickly when I call!" (Psalm 102:1-2 GNT)

When I was a child, my grandparents lived on the edge of a small town in Western Pennsylvania. A cornfield bordered their back yard. My brother and I used to love to play in the cornfield. It made a great place to hide.

I remember going in there one day towards the end of the summer to hide from my brother. However, over the summer the corn had grown taller. The stalks now towered over me so I could no longer stand up to see where I was in relation to my grandparents' house. The stalks seemed to close in on me.

I had simply wanted to hide from my brother, but got lost and started to panic. I didn't know how to get out. I began calling out for my grandmother who had been hanging laundry on the clothes line in the back yard.

I remember running through the rows, crying out for her. Finally, I heard her voice, so I stopped crying. She was there! She was coming for me! I heard her say, "Becki, keep calling out! I need to hear where you are!" I did and she found me and brought me back to her home.

This story came to my mind when I read the first few verses from today's assigned lection, Psalm 102. There is no doubt that the writer of this psalm was as distressed as I was the day I got lost in the corn field.

What I have come to learn, over the years, is that calling out to God doesn't change anything about where I am at the time, but it does help me to change my response to my circumstances. Whenever I get that lost, panicky feeling, whenever I'm afraid that I can't find my way home, all I have to do is call.

I believe that God is there for me, trying to help me find my way home, no matter what I do. If I remember to pray, it taps into a deep, calm, quiet place inside and stills the panic. Then I am able to find that place where my options can open up before me, even if my only option is just to choose my attitude about where I am. God knows where I am, even when I don't.

God doesn't really need us to call in order to find us, but it is still important that we call. It makes for a conscious connection on our part. God does hear our call and is always coming for us. When we learn to listen for God's presence, like a grandmother who is looking for us, listening for our voice, the connection is strengthened.

That doesn't mean that God will come to solve our problems for us, through no effort of our own. When I was lost in the cornfield and my grandmother found me, I still had to put one foot in front of the other and walk out. One of the first things she did when she found me was to point to the ground beneath my feet. "See the row of earth," she said, "when you get lost like this, just follow it to the end and you will be able to see where you are."

Calling out to God in prayer and listening to God's call in return, grounds us. It shows us the path to take. It is our surest way home.

God continue to keep you safe in body and spirit!

Pastor Becki

https://youtu.be/_vDUpp3XSQ "The Prayer" sung by the Soul Sanctuary Gospel Choir