

Wednesday of Holy Week – Psalm 31:9-16

- ⁹ Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress;
my eye is wasted from grief;
my soul and my body also.
- ¹⁰ For my life is spent with sorrow,
and my years with sighing;
my strength fails because of my iniquity,
and my bones waste away.
- ¹¹ Because of all my adversaries I have become a reproach,
especially to my neighbors,
and an object of dread to my acquaintances;
those who see me in the street flee from me.
- ¹² I have been forgotten like one who is dead;
I have become like a broken vessel.
- ¹³ For I hear the whispering of many—
terror on every side!—
as they scheme together against me,
as they plot to take my life.
- ¹⁴ But I trust in you, O LORD;
I say, “You are my God.”
- ¹⁵ My times are in your hand;
rescue me from the hand of my enemies and from my persecutors!
- ¹⁶ Make your face shine on your servant;
save me in your steadfast love!

I visited our church member in the hospital. No one can visit her because of the Covid 19 restrictions. I was allowed to visit her only after she tested negative for the virus. I had to stay six feet away from her. I could not even hold her hand as we prayed.

These words are read in this Holy Week because they speak to Jesus' passion, the fact that his disciples all fled and left him alone, the plot against his life, and so much more. They convey the emotion of Holy Week for Jesus: Terror on every side (vs. 13). As I read them, however, I cannot help but think of our church member in her room alone. Sometimes we watch the news on TV or on our devices and hear numbers of the sick and those who have died. But they are numbers and don't feel like real people. She does not have the Corona virus, but she suffers from it all the same. Indeed, all of us do. I walk my streets and see my neighbors keeping appropriate distances from one another: I have become a reproach, especially to my neighbors...those who see me in the street flee from me (Vs. 11).

Our parishioner in the hospital loves our church family. We say the Lord's Prayer together. I bless her with the benediction she heard in church thousands of times. The psalmist's final verses were Jesus' hope as he came to the bitter hours of trial, crucifixion, and lying in a tomb. And they are our hope as well. I trust in you God because you are my God. My times are in your hand. Rescue me from my enemies and persecutors. Make your face shine upon me and save me in your steadfast love.

I remind myself of these words as I walk out of that room and into the world where I get to live with my wife. Our parishioner's times and all our times are in God's hands. I walk out of that room, but Jesus does not. He does not walk out of your life either. He has experienced the whole of humanity so that his face could shine on you and so that he could save you in his steadfast love.

God be with you until we meet again. In Jesus' love and mercy, Pastor Wulf