

Praying the Psalms

A PRAYER OFFERED AFTER READING PSALM 57
BY SHEILA LUTZ

Gracious God,
let Your glory
be over all
the earth. The
heavens sang
of Your glory
when You sent
Your Son to
this earth.



Your plan of redemption and peace was made flesh. Let us ever remember and see Your glory even when we are in times and places that imprison us. *For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds* (v. 10).

When I am ill or feeble in body, I take refuge in You. A cure or remedy may be slow in coming or not even come at all, and my body confines me when I want to run free, but Your mercy endures forever. My trust is in You. Your mercy will light the darkness of my days. *God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness!* (v. 3b).

When others ridicule me for who I am, my circumstances, or my actions, I feel like I am surrounded by wild beasts whose words are arrows that pierce me to the heart. I feel such shame, and I want to retreat — to build a wall around me. But such a wall not only keeps them away, it keeps me a prisoner. It limits the freedom You died to give me. You are the wings that cover me until these storms of life pass. You are the one who comforts me, encourages me, and lets me know that You have covered me with Your righteousness. I stand before You, God, redeemed and strong. *I will sing and make melody! Awake, my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre!* (vs. 7b, 8a).

I am a sinner, Lord. I love how you work with me to teach me and light my path each day so I can walk with You, turn from sin, and imitate You. But I, like so many, have a pet sin — one that will not let me go (or is it one that I will not let go?). I feel like I've been tangled in a net and have fallen into a pit from which I cannot escape. If I live in guilt and shame, this sin will continue to imprison me. You have forgiven me freely by the blood of Jesus. Because of Your grace, I've nothing to pay. I can recognize my sin, turn from it to You, and live freely as Your forgiven child. Keep working on me, Lord. Keep teaching me. Do not let this guilt or this sin imprison me any longer. *I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations* (v. 9).

I've never been in a prison with bars, Lord, but others have. Thinking about the possibility puts a great weight on my heart, like someone or something is oppressing me. Grant Your peace to those so oppressed. The closest some of us are to prison is this pandemic's shelter-in-place. Through all of this, through any oppression, is my soul joyful each day? Am I looking to You? I am Your servant. Show me how and when and where I should help. May Your joy that You poured onto me overflow to others. *For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds* (v. 10).

Thank You for those who are Your servants and teach us to be the ambassadors for You to the prisoners on this earth. Thank You that our guilt is removed by Jesus' sacrifice for our sins and that we can live a life of freedom with You, even in adversity, and not a life in the darkness of a prison of guilt, shame, anger, hurt, or loneliness. Thank You for loving us and making us Your children. *Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!* (v. 5). Amen. Q