

Psalm 142

Evening Prayer I Sunday Week 1

This is an intense plea. The psalmist is blocked. He cannot go forward. There is no going back because of those pursuing him (verse 6) and there is no help to right or to left. Help can come only from above. Note the lack of any plea that enemies be punished. The title reads: 'A Maskil* of David. When he was in the cave. A Prayer.' See 1 Samuel 23:4ff and Psalm 57.

**¹With a loud cry I make
my urgent plea to YHWH*;
with a loud cry I plead with
YHWH.**

**²I pour out my anguish
before him, proclaiming the
trouble I am in.**

**³My spirit* is faint, but you
know my way. In the path
where I walk they have hid-
den a trap for me.**

**⁴Look on my right hand and
see – there is no one who
takes notice of me; no ref-
uge remains to me; no one
cares for me.**

**⁵Urgently I cry to you,
YHWH; I say, 'You are my
refuge, my portion in the
land of the living.'**

**⁶Give heed to my cry, for I
am brought very low. Save
me from my persecutors, for
they are too strong for me.**

**⁷Bring me out of prison, so
that I may give thanks to
your name. The righteous
will gather round me when
you accord to me your fa-
vour.**

The verb in verse 2 translated here as 'proclaim' is normally followed by 'the wonders of YHWH'. Here it is followed by 'trouble'. The psalmist is experiencing the absence of God.

Like Jesus on the cross, the psalmist is exhausted. Yet he still cries out to God in a loud voice. The 'you' in verse 3 is emphatic. Jesus calls himself 'the way' (John 14:6).

Mortal human beings whose portion in life is in this world.

– Psalm 117:14

Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain life that are given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life.

– Ecclesiastes 9:9

YHWH is Levi's inheritance.

– Deuteronomy 10:9 (see Joshua 13:33)

I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no holding in Israel; I am their holding.

– Ezekiel 44:28

Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.

– Luke 10:42

The corruption surrounding him is like a prison.