

March 10, 2024
Fourth Sunday of Lent

Let my tongue cling to my mouth if I do not remember you (Psalm 137)

The Israelites sang this mournful psalm during their captivity in Babylon because they were unable to have fun. Just as Egypt had been to them at the beginning, the land of Babylon was now a house of bondage. The recollection deepened their grief as they remembered the comforts they had experienced in Zion, the city of their solemnities. We must be deeply touched by the concerns of the church and our families when we sing this psalm, especially the suffering parts, since we hold the sorrows of God's people close to our hearts and finding solace in the hope that the church will be delivered.

The Israelites sat in solitude by those bitter waters, exhausted and broken-hearted, having been driven from their homeland and stripped of all comforts and conveniences. They are now in a strange nation surrounded by idolaters. They sobbed at the loss of so many dear ones and everything they had as well as the passing of such a wonderful and fortunate history. They cried over Jerusalem's great temple and ruined city. The pain of being forced to march from Judea to Babylon broke their hearts. The brutality of their captors caused them to cry. They sobbed at the hopelessness of their future. They sobbed because of their transgression that provoked God's wrath. The Israelites pondered, "How can we sing the song of the LORD in a foreign land when we are so sorrowful?" "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill," each of them decided at that moment. Nothing could have calmed their courageous spirits, but remembering their God's temple, their king's palace, and the heart of their country's activities destroyed them. When we consider God's goodness, we are inspired to respond to the world with hope rather than fear. It also encourages us to act and strengthens our affection for other people.

We should respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves. We may put our ideals into practice by helping families and children who are in need because numerous individuals both locally and globally are dealing with serious challenges and adversity. As Christians, our love for Jesus motivates us to react compassionately. The bible is full of instances of commands of "remember" that we need to follow. For instance, at the last supper, "when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body which is for you.'" [1 Cor 11.24] "Do this in my memory." Jesus paid a heavy price on the cross to atone for our sins, and as a result, we remember this every time we partake in the Lord's Supper. Moreover, Moses told the Israelites "Watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live" and to "teach them to your children" (Dt 4.9). Therefore, God's truth must be intentionally remembered and passed on to future generations, and care must be taken to ensure that it is never forgotten. Many of us will relate our conversion story to others and describe how we have personally witnessed God at work in our lives. For sure, "If I forget you Jerusalem, let my hands wither!"