

MEDITATION 14, Psalms 27 & 28: “This I Have Asked From The LORD.”

“One thing I have asked from the LORD, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD and to meditate in His temple... Teach me Your ways O LORD, and lead me in a level path... Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You for help, when I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary... Save Your people and bless Your inheritance; be their shepherd also, and carry them forever. 27:4; 27:11; 28:2; 28:9

The above Scriptures are wonderful, positive expressions of the writer's desire to live obediently in the presence of God. But read the entirety of both Psalms. There is another tale to be told, one of hurt, anger and desire for vengeance upon enemies. Like highly reactive Twitterers of our own day, the Psalmists let everything hang out. No self-censorship, no cover up of even the ugliest emotions. Messy human feelings spilled out all over the place.

The good feelings we read in the Psalms we know what to do with, but what are we to make of the negative emotional stuff that is also there? Are these emotions sin, something to be rebuked? I don't think so. Anger and other negative emotions are not in themselves sin. Rather, they are indicators that something is not right. Some type of pain has been experienced. Perhaps real or perceived injustice, disappointed expectations and hope denied preceded those negative emotions.

The danger of negative emotions is they can be followed by negative actions that lead to an increase of pain in the world. The Psalmist recognized that danger and stopped at the level of speech – he gave his pain, anger and desire for vengeance to God. Seeking spiritual life, he pulled back from the brink; evil actions did not follow his negative emotions. After crying out to the LORD in his pain, he gave it all to God, asking only that the LORD save His people and be their shepherd.

Prayer: “Dear LORD, sometimes I feel hurt and angry about things. I want to do SOMETHING violent to make the pain go away. But that's your job, not mine. Lord, help me to live in your presence and follow the path of goodness and mercy. Save your people. Amen. “