

Psalm 33/34:17-22

¹⁷When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and rescues them from all their troubles. ¹⁸The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. ¹⁹Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD rescues them from them all. ²⁰He keeps all their bones; not one of them will be broken. ²¹Evil brings death to the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. ²²The LORD redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

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Hope is linked to truth and justice

Véronique Albanel

Reading Psalm 34 can reassure us; it can also terrify us.

What reassures us is knowing that God is good and fights against evil alongside us. The psalm affirms this: God is not only present in our lives; God watches over us and draws close to those with broken hearts. God hears our cries of anguish, responds to them, delivers us, and saves us from misfortune. God is therefore clearly on the side of truth and justice, here and now.

Yet it is impossible to ignore verse 19: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," and this verse can petrify us, cause us to revolt us against God himself, following Job or Jesus who prayed the psalms and pleaded: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" The figure of the righteous person "crushed by suffering" runs throughout the Bible: we have only to remember the song of the Servant of the prophet Isaiah, which includes these words "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb led to the slaughter, like a sheep silent before its shearers, he did not open his mouth. Arrested, then judged, he was put to death. Who then cared about his fate? He was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the rebellion of his people" (Isaiah 53:7-8).

Today as yesterday, innocent people continue to die, and entire peoples are struck down in tragic ways! Some of you already know this from personal experience, having felt it in your flesh, your heart, or your soul: misfortune strikes unjustly; it befalls the wicked, but also the righteous. Of course we are faced here with the mystery of evil, but we must admit that this tragic reality can shake our confidence in the truth and justice promised by God.

From then on, the temptation to flee, to become desensitized, or to withdraw into oneself is strong. However, as the letter "Hope Beyond All Hope" reminds us: "Nurturing hope requires facing reality as it is, and seeing it in the light of God's promises." For what would remain of truth and justice if the defeated of history were not honored, consoled, and justified?

So let us not abandon our desire for justice and truth; let us keep it intact, and remember the promises made to us: "God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, and there will be no more mourning, crying, or pain" (Revelation 21:4).

Questions for Sharing

- x Have I ever been confronted by the misfortune of good people? What was my reaction?*
- x How do I manage to keep hope alive while facing reality?*
- x Is my desire for justice and truth still alive? Do I share it with others?*