

Hello everyone! And welcome to our Wednesday Word devotion for today, August 19, 2020. Thank you so much for tuning in and taking this time out of your day to focus on God and focus on your faith.

Today's psalm is one that I find so beautiful and reassuring. It outlines the way that God shows up for us, and encourages us with a holy peace and power when we worship and lean on God. These words of praise, of God's love and action in our world provide me with a connection to the Spirit that really empowers and lifts me up - I hope that this psalm provides that sense of empowerment and being uplifted to you too. For truly with God, and through God's steadfast love, all things are possible.

So here is today's psalm, Psalm 138.

- I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;  
before the gods I sing your praise;  
2 I bow down toward your holy temple  
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness;  
for you have exalted your name and your word  
above everything.[a]  
3 On the day I called, you answered me,  
you increased my strength of soul.[b]
- 4 All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord,  
for they have heard the words of your mouth.  
5 They shall sing of the ways of the Lord,  
for great is the glory of the Lord.  
6 For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly;  
but the haughty he perceives from far away.
- 7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble,  
you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies;  
you stretch out your hand,  
and your right hand delivers me.  
8 The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;  
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.  
Do not forsake the work of your hands.

The Word of the Lord.

And now please join me in a word of prayer:

*Lord God, your gift of steadfast love sustains us through all things, and for your faithfulness, we give you thanks. For all the ways you show up for us, for all the ways you live out your promise*

*to never abandon or forsake us, we praise you, God of all creation. Your creation is hurting in many ways, O Lord, and we pray for your holy power, the work of your hands to hold us closely. Help us to lean on you, to be guided by your Holy Spirit and your desire for the goodness of creation to shine forth in all we do. Help us to see that innate goodness throughout your creation. We pray that by your holy strengthening, we may repent from wasteful ways and be better stewards of your earth. We pray that through your grace and mercy, we may learn and forgive people and situations that have hurt us deeply. We pray that as we encounter neighbors that are different from us, that we may be reminded of our unity in Christ, our common humanity, before we are irritated or frustrated by our differences or disagreements. Give us holy strength, O Lord, to be the loving neighbors you call us to be - to actively work to keep our neighbors alive and well as we would hope our neighbors would do for us. Help us to be continually reminded of the commandment of your Son Jesus, that we may love our neighbors as ourselves, and act in love towards these neighbors, not focus only on ourselves or our gain or benefit. Help us when we fall short, to love and serve one another and your creation in your holy and loving name.*

*God we lift to you all the challenges we face due to this global pandemic. We pray for healthcare workers in all capacities, in gratitude for the skills and gifts they provide in these life-saving capacities. We pray too, O Lord, that they may find sufficient and holy rest, that they may be renewed in their spirits in the ways that bring them joy, that they may have the tangible necessities to provide for themselves and their families, and that by your Holy Spirit, they may have the strength to carry on. God we pray for all people involved in academia, for teachers, administrators, and all school staff that have to make impossible choices for this upcoming academic year. May they too find holy and sufficient rest, have the ability to keep themselves and their families healthy and as close to thriving as possible, and the strength to carry on in the midst of the unknown and downright scary situations they often face. Lord we pray for students of all kinds, that their curiosity and desire to know more may be satisfied in ways that keep them healthy and fulfilled. You deliver us in the midst of trouble, O Lord, and we call upon that deliverance for all of us in the midst of this pandemic crisis. We know you are faithful and steadfast in your love, O Lord, and may that faithfulness continue to bring us joy and comfort in the midst of all this trouble.*

*In your Son Jesus' name, we lift to you these prayers and all the prayers that continue in our hearts and bodies and minds. Praise to you, O God. Amen.*