

## Revive Us Again

The Psalm for the Third Sunday in Advent is Psalm 85. Possibly written soon after the return of the exiles from Babylon.

**LORD, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob. <sup>2</sup> You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin. *Selah* <sup>3</sup> You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger. <sup>4</sup> Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us! <sup>5</sup> Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations? <sup>6</sup> Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you? <sup>7</sup> Show us your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation. <sup>8</sup> Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly. <sup>9</sup> Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. <sup>10</sup> Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other. <sup>11</sup> Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky. <sup>12</sup> Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase. <sup>13</sup> Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way.**

This psalm expresses the psalmist's feelings of distress and exposure to danger such as the opposition to rebuilding Jerusalem's walls after the return.

The psalmist begins his prayer by appealing to the Lord's past mercies, recalling how he has forgiven and restored them before (perhaps a reference to the restoration from exile). The psalmist recognized that Israel's past troubles had been a result of their sin. Their restoration, therefore, was an assurance that their sins had been forgiven.

When the psalmist cries out: *Will you be angry with us forever*, he is lamenting the fact that they had long endured God's wrath and were desperate for it to end. The psalmist follows that up with this request *show us your steadfast love*. The Hebrew for this phrase denotes befriending. It is an appeal to God's "(unfailing) love, kindness, mercy." It is frequently found in the OT since it summarizes all that the Lord covenanted to show to Israel.

Verses 8-13 are noteworthy for their picturesque language. The blessings the Lord provides are portrayed as people who meet with a kiss and as crops which spring up and flourish. Although this promise was fulfilled in a limited way when God restored Israel from captivity, this section is best understood as a description of the blessings of the Messianic era.

Through His steadfast love, God gives us faith and makes us righteous so we may live in peace. God forgives our iniquity and covers our sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He also destroys our enemies of sin, death, and hell. Having defeated these great enemies for us, He will surely protect us from all other enemies.

Prayer: Help me, Lord, in the midst of my fears, to trust solely in you. Amen. (TLSB)