

Be near us now O Lord, that as we die in Christ we may also live in him on the day of resurrection.  
Amen.

Oh, if we could only skip over the uncomfortable reality of this day. No doubt many will try. The focus on Sunday is very tempting, but that is because we know what will happen.

The disciples didn't have that luxury. Even with the predictions of Jesus that on the third day he would rise, darkness, death and evil appear to rule the day.

Yet this is a microcosm of what we do in life. We shelter ourselves from the mortality that is our earthly life. Certainly we shelter our children from its bitter harshness.

We come here tonight hearing the words we've thought but may be too fearful to state. "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Consider the gentleman lying in the loneliness of a hospital bed wondering if the doctors will ever find out what is wrong with him, to each letter the unemployed father receives thanking him for the job application but we've decided to go with someone else, to the mother

who is told that the child within her has miscarried; these and many others have felt confronted with the silence of God who seems not to answer our plea. In these and in other circumstances all we see is the immediate moment.

We know what God has done before. The stories of Scripture are full of life that abounds in unexpected places. God rescued the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. God delivered Israel and Judah from exile. God's glorious actions seem so far removed from us.

Yet God is holy. That has not changed. So we wonder if it is us. We feel like the worm. We are treated as one who has not showered for a month. Our doubts increase from the comments of the skeptic or even the well intentioned Christian who bids us to "have more faith."

So it is that we go back and forth in our wondering. We go from wondering where is God to remembering what God has done in the past. From there we remember what God has done for me. He brought me into this life. God has been faithful to me in the past even though now it seems like He is distant.

The reason God may appear so distant is that the dangers of this life are so visible. The image of bulls,

dogs and evil doers surrounding us brings to mind the immediacy of danger. Is there a way out for the lousy treatment I receive for doing the right thing?

In our helplessness, we plea for God's deliverance. "O Lord, come quickly to my aid!" Save me from the evil that is encroaching. Will this chapter end in darkness and death?

As people of faith our hearts turn back to the hope that what we see directly in front of us is not the end. It may end a particular chapter of our life. This story could very well take us to a closed casket or an open grave about to receive its body.

Yet a new chapter is being written. What will be written is the story of God's victory. It is a victory that includes that deliverance we long for; be it a deliverance from sickness, poverty, injustice, abusive relationships, corrupt government, or other sins of flesh and bone.

This is the story of Christ. This is the story of humanity. This is the story of you and me. For these stories are linked to Christ through our baptism. For in him we die, that in him we might live. This is what we are living out now in our worship. It is what we live each day of our life. And in our life, we will

echo the faith of our ancestors, proclaiming God's deliverance to those who will follow us in faith.

“Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, (boldly) saying that he has done it.”