

## Psalm 86: "Supplication for Help against Enemies"

Psalm 86 can be categorized as an individual lament and listed as a Psalm of Disorientation. Disorientation is a personal lament where frustration or guilt is shared, seeking God's comfort, and ultimately giving praise towards God. **A lament expresses deep sorrow, grief, or regret and is either a poem or hymn expressing human struggles. Laments are bombarded with real emotion towards God and can be linked to our thoughts today.**

The Psalm appears in the Lectionary under Year A during the 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. The only verses used are 1-10 & 16-17. Being United Methodist, Psalm 86 isn't listed as a Psalter section of the United Methodist Hymnal. The psalmist is dealing with an issue rising against him and seeking to dethrone his life. There is undoubtedly hatred for him and God because of the terrifying way he addresses God as he says that he cries out to God all day.

We are unsure precisely what is being prayed for, but we do know that there isn't asking to destroy any foes or for neither God to strike down what is after the psalmist. The noteworthy illustration that this Psalm brings is the prayer to God for transformation. Whatever caused the ill between the psalmist and this enemy, the psalmist prays that God will transform that they see it and be transformed too. The seeking vengeance attitude has left the part of the psalmist. **It's like how Jesus teaches us to love our enemies. We don't seek revenge but live into the command from Christ that has been given to us. In the sense of torment, the psalmist turns to God. God is our only source when we are in trouble too. God has the power to rescue us.**

The psalmist finds a renewal of hope where hope is found in God alone. The psalmist asks for God's forgiveness for whatever sin has caused any enemies through a confession. The deliberate notion of prayer in praise of the uniqueness of God that God will change the psalmist by teaching God's ways to walk in God's truth with an undivided heart for the sake of the world. **Like ourselves, we should resist hatred and give in to the lure of knowing God's grace through a time of prayer and discernment. Often, we will request God to change our enemies instead of petitioning God to change ourselves first.**

Here in Psalm 86, the psalmist requests patience, steadfast love, forgiveness, and a renewed concentration to resist sin and focus on God's teaching and learning to stay afresh in God's redeeming ways. Psalm 86 is a compelling example of the process in which humanity must submit to God's understanding of our need for transformation in which God searches our hearts and minds.

**Do we truly appreciate the things that cause us to draw closer to God and reach out for God's assistance? Do we have confidence in the goodness of God – that God longs to make glad our souls?**

**"Show me a sign of your favor, so that those who hate me may see it and be put to shame, because you, Lord, have helped me and comforted me." -Psalm 86:17 (NRSV)**

+Pastor Ben