

Theresa Lungu:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Theresa Lungu:

And welcome to morning prayers at Memorial Church. Please rise, as you are able, and join me in the responsive reading number 40 in the black Appleton Psalter book. "I waited patiently for you, oh God. You stooped to me and heard my cry."

Congregation:

"You lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the mire and clay. You set my feet upon a high cliff and made my footing sure."

Theresa Lungu:

"You put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God."

Congregation:

"Many shall see and stand in awe, and put their trust in you."

Theresa Lungu:

"In sacrifice and offering, you take no pleasure. You have given me ears to hear you."

Congregation:

"Burnt-offering and sin-offering you have not required, and so I said, 'Behold, I come'."

Theresa Lungu:

"In the roll of the book, it is written concerning me, 'I love to do your will, oh my God. Your law is deep in my heart'."

Congregation:

"I proclaimed righteousness in the great congregation. Behold, I did not restrain my lips, and that O God you know."

Theresa Lungu:

"Your righteousness have I not hidden in my heart. I have spoken of your faithfulness and your deliverance. I have not concealed your love and faithfulness from the great congregation."

Congregation:

"You are the Holy One. Do not withhold your compassion from me. Let your love and your faithfulness keep me safe forever."

Choir:
(Singing)

Khalil Abdur-Rashid:
Good morning.

Congregation:
Good morning.

Khalil Abdur-Rashid:

May the peace and blessings of God be with all of us. We praise God. We thank Him for His love, mercy, and compassion. We show appreciation and gratitude for the blessings of health, food, loved ones. We pray for not only those in need. We pray for those who have lost, those who are lost, and we pray that every one of us and them shall be found and welcomed into the kingdom of God. This is a very sacred time for many people in the world. Particularly, it's also a very solemn time, tragic time for many in the world as we recognize and our hearts and minds and prayers go out to the families of thousands of people who have been lost in the earthquake in Turkey and Syria.

We are reminded through this tragedy and the mourning that we engage in that perhaps we should have renewed commitment to serving others. One month or so later, the month of Ramadan will be upon those in the Muslim community globally, and it's a spiritual time where people think about their relationship with the divine. And it's also a time where we understand and we reflect on the idea that cultivating a more deeper relationship with the divine is not only about your own personal journey, but it's about how many others you can help along the way. Therefore, service to others becomes a core fundamental aspect of spiritual cultivation as well.

To that effect, I would like to remind myself and share with all of you a piece of scripture from the Islamic tradition that echoes this point of the importance of service to others as a means, as an integral tool of spiritual cultivation. These are the words of advice that the prophet Mohammad passed along to the next generation when he advised them about the proper conduct, the proper requirements for what it meant to be a good person in the eyes of God.

"Whoever removes a worldly grief from a person, God will remove from that person a grief that they have. Whoever alleviates the lot of a needy person, God will alleviate their lot in this world and in the next world. Whoever shields and protects a person, God will shield them in this world and in the next. God will always aid a servant, so long as that servant of God aids their fellow human being. Whoever follows a path to seek knowledge therein, God will make easy for that person the path to heaven. No people gather together one of the houses of God, reciting the scripture of God, studying it amongst themselves except that tranquility descends upon them."

"Mercy envelops them, angels surround them and God makes mention of them amongst those who are near to God. Whoever is slowed down on the path to heaven on account of their own actions will not be hastened forward on the path to heaven on account of their own lineage. Be mindful of God and you will find God before you, protecting you. Get to know God in times of prosperity and God will get to know you in times of adversity. Know that what has passed you was not going to befall you, and that what has befallen you was not going to pass you by. And know that success comes with perseverance, relief comes after affliction, and that with every difficulty comes ease."

Theresa Lungu:

Please rise as you are able and join me in the Lord's prayer.

Congregation:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those we trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is a kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Theresa Lungu:

And please let us sing the hymn, My Soul Awake and Render, number 36 in the crimson Hymnal.

Congregation/Choir:

As we go forth unto this day, may we show love to one another as we work for equality for all races in education, housing, public services, and employment opportunity.