

## May 14, 2020 Daily Devotional

Our Psalm today is arguably more of an “evening” Psalm, so I invite you to save this for tonight—for a time of devotion at bedtime or even in the middle of the night.

The jacket notes for Barbara Brown Taylor’s book *Learning to Walk in the Dark* say, “Taylor is our guide through a spirituality of the nighttime....” I suspect many of us will find her reflections at the beginning of her fourth chapter familiar:

*“While no one’s personal history of darkness is exactly like anyone else’s, beds are something we all have in common. They are where most of us spend the night hours. They are where we sleep and dream. They are also where some of us wake at inconvenient hours to think about things we would rather not think about, which is why our bedside tables are littered with remedies for getting back to sleep....*

*What is it about beds at night? During the daytime a bed seems harmless enough. You can take a nap in one on a Saturday afternoon without waking up wondering how much longer you have to live. You can work a crossword puzzle in one while you are getting over a bad cold without worrying about who will take care of you when you live past all sense and usefulness. But wake up in bed in the middle of the night, unable to go back to sleep, and you can be in for a real workout.*

*When I wake up like that, things go all right for a moment or two. The dream was just a dream. I did not really miss the only flight to France or forget to attend math class all semester. The bed is familiar. The house is quiet. Everything is all right. But then I remember that I am awake when I am supposed to be sleeping and how hard it can be to get back to sleep again, especially when I start thinking about all the things I do not want to think about, which I am beginning to think about right now. That is when I can feel the dark angel come into the room and sit down on my bed.”*

I tend to be a restless sleeper, and when it comes to remedies, I reach for my phone, reading the news, a stroll around the house...not the Psalms.

But tonight, I’ll set the 4th Psalm on the pile of remedies by my bed:

## **Psalm 4**

1 Answer me when I call, O God of my right! You gave me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer.

2 How long, you people, shall my honor suffer shame? How long will you love vain words, and seek after lies?

3 But know that the Lord has set apart the faithful for himself; the Lord hears when I call to him.

4 When you are disturbed, do not sin; ponder it on your beds, and be silent.

5 Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord.

6 There are many who say, "O that we might see some good! Let the light of your face shine on us, O Lord!"

7 You have put gladness in my heart more than when their grain and wine abound.

8 I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety.

Let's pray some childhood words that speak of God's care in the nighttime:

Now I lay me down to sleep,

I pray the Lord my soul to keep,

Guide me safely through the night,

and wake me with the morning light.

Amen.