



SPRING-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS

Carstairs-Bancroft United Church

May 23, 2023



Photo: Our Daily Bread

YOU ARE HEARD

He turned his ear to me.

Psalm 116:2

READ Psalm 116:1 - 7

In the book *Physics*, Charles Riborg Mann and George Ransom Twiss ask: "When a tree falls in a lonely forest, and no animal is nearby to hear it, does it make a sound?" Over the years, this question has prompted philosophical and scientific discussions about sound, perception, and existence. A definitive answer, however, has yet to emerge.

One night, while feeling lonely and sad about a problem I hadn't shared with anyone, I recalled this question. *When no one hears my cry for help*, I thought, *does God hear?* Facing the threat of death and overcome by distress, the writer of Psalm 116 may have felt abandoned. So, he called out to God—knowing He was listening and would help him. "He heard my voice," the psalmist wrote, "he heard my cry for mercy. . . [He] turned his ear to me" (vv. 1–2). When no one knows our pain, God knows. When no one hears our cries, God hears.

Knowing that God will show us His love and protection (vv. 5–6), we can be at rest in difficult times (v. 7). The Hebrew word translated "rest" (*manoakh*) describes a place of quiet and safety. We can be at peace, strengthened by the assurance of God's presence and help.

The question posed by Mann and Twiss led to numerous answers. But the answer to the question, *Does God hear?* is simply yes.

By Karen Huang

PRAY & REFLECT

Father, thank You for always hearing the cries of my heart. Your help and presence are my rest. Amen

What do you do when you're feeling alone or abandoned? What will you ask God, who hears your every cry and cares for you?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Psalm 116 is one of six praise songs (Psalms 113 - 118) collectively known as the "Egyptian Hallel." The Hebrew root word *halal* means "to praise," and "Egyptian" is a designation that these songs were sung during the Passover remembrance of their deliverance from Egyptian slavery. Psalms 113 - 114 are recited before the Passover meal and Psalms 115 - 118 afterward. The hymn that Jesus and the disciples sang after the Last Supper would probably be one of these psalms (Mark 14:26).

In Psalm 116, the author writes of his near-death experience (vv. 3 - 4) and celebrates his deliverance from the jaws of death (v. 8). In his musing about life and death, the psalmist assures us of God's undying care and love, giving us precious comfort when facing death: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his faithful servants." Or as one translation renders it, "The Lord cares deeply when his loved ones die" (v. 15 NLT). – By **K. T. Sim**

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