



DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS
Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
January 12, 2024



Photo: Our Daily Bread

RIPE FOR GOD'S RESTORATION

Restore us, God Almighty; . . . that we may be saved.

Psalm 80:7

READ Psalm 80:1, 7-14, 19

The pictures coming from a friend's text stream were stunning! Photos of a surprise gift for his wife revealed a restored 1965 Ford Mustang: brilliant, dark blue exterior; sparkling chrome rims; reupholstered black interior; and a motor to match the other upgrades. There were also "before" pictures of the same vehicle—a dull, worn, unimpressive yellow version. While it may be difficult to envision, it's likely that when the vehicle rolled off the assembly line, it was also an eye-catcher. But time, wear and tear, and other factors had made it ripe for restoration.

Ripe for restoration! Such was the condition of God's people in Psalm 80 and thus the repeated prayer: "Restore us, O God; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved" (v. 3; see vv. 7, 19). Though their history had included rescue from Egypt and being planted in a land of plenty (vv. 8–11), the good times had come and gone. Because of rebellion, they were experiencing the hand of God's judgment (vv. 12–13). Thus, their plea: "Return to us, God Almighty! Look down from heaven and see!" (v. 14).

Do you ever feel dull, distant, or disconnected from God? Is joyful soul-satisfaction missing? Is it because alignment with Jesus and His purposes is missing? God hears our prayers for restoration (v. 1). What's keeping you from asking?

By **Arthur Jackson**

PRAY & REFLECT

Father, I long for Your restoration. Help me to see my need for it and to receive it. Amen

When have you experienced the restorative, reviving work of God? What areas of your life need restoration now?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

Understanding the imagery used in Psalm 80 helps us understand the psalm as well as the One to whom the psalmist appealed. Two different images of the leader of God's people are wedded together in verse 1: "Hear us, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock. You who sit enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth." Stunningly, the One who can restore both cares like a shepherd and occupies heaven's throne! The prayer chorus included in the psalm is repeated three times (vv. 3, 7, 19) and asks the One who commands and controls the universe to "restore us . . . make your face shine on us, that we may be saved." The petition echoes the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:25: "The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. — By **Arthur Jackson**

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