

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 9

Psalm 27, I Corinthians 4:8–21

*The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)*

Sometimes it is easy, against all odds, to believe the truth. Before I flew to Liberia for my first missionary term, I was encouraged to memorize this psalm, and I did. Through the first six verses, and the first half of the summer, I was like Peter, striding invincibly across the surface of the waves. One night, while I was walking home, a black snake bit my foot. But as I lay in bed, feeling it swell, with the rain crashing down on my tin roof, I shouted these words and the praises of the Lord against the roaring of both the thunder and the devil.

*Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud;
be gracious to me and answer me! (v 7)*

What has changed? Every time I read this psalm, I find this seventh verse to be the turn, and when I am reading it aloud, my own voice breaks. Weeks after the snake incident, the Muslim elders asked me about Jesus' death and the forgiveness of sins. I answered. They weren't convinced. And somewhere in my heart, false witnesses rose against me, breathing out violence, condemning me, a useless missionary, unworthy of anything except a passing scorn. And I have not yet recovered. But...

*I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord
in the land of the living... wait for the Lord! (v 13 & 14)*

I like to read these final verses in a whisper. In Advent we remember that the goodness and power and love of God was made visible to all—right here in the land of the living. He surely will do it again, for me and for you. Brothers and sisters, whatever your trials may be, will you continue with me to the end?

Cam Jones—Cam lives at the Wilson House in Cambridge, MA and has been attending Park Street since August. He is passionate about poetry and understanding the workings of foreign cultures, both real and imaginary. He is applying for an M.Div. at Gordon Conwell and hopes to become a long-term missionary while also praying for the salvation of his family.