

“I look for someone to come and help me, but no one gives me a passing thought! No one will help me; no one cares a bit what happens to me. Then I pray to you, O Lord. I say, “You are my place of refuge. You are all I really want in life. Hear my cry, for I am very low. Rescue me from my persecutors, for they are too strong for me.” Psalms 142:4-6 NLT

[lectio] // PSALM 142

listen to the text by reading out loud slowly and repeat up to 3x if desired

Is it good to read or hear that someone is feeling alone or struggling with fear and anxiety? Does it help that someone, other than myself, expresses those thoughts? The Psalmist is really good at honest, gritty, even angry expressions of loneliness, fear, sense of dread and utter isolation. He also remembers to turn to God for help, strength and comfort. Here he admits, “you are my refuge,” and “you are all I really want.” For being such a fierce warrior and leader, making lots of snap decisions and taking incredible risks and retributions - in his private world, David shares and bares all. He is totally vulnerable, exposed and honest. Is this a secret to his leadership? Strong when leading and facing down enemies and massive decisions, yet transparently weak and humble before God? This pattern often shows up in the Psalms. David was in no way perfect and had a lot of self described, recorded flaws, but it also shows his inner thoughts and prayers. A place where he struggled and eventually turned his thoughts and emotions to trusting God. He does a lot of 360° prayers - starting with honest angsts and ending in complete trust in God.

[oratio]

Dad,

My very first experience in the Psalms was when I was sixteen and felt my whole teenage world collapse. I had been betrayed by the girl that I loved. I had been humiliated and frustrated by a lack of understanding in my very first love triangle. I remember being so crushed, so devastated, so angry when I arrived in my room after the disaster. My head and heart was spinning out of control and I didn't know how to stop it. I grabbed my Bible and found myself reading from Psalms. I read passage after passage of David's hurts, pains, confusion and disappointment. As my emotions mirrored his, I also remember taking the turn of hope right along with him as I read. He eventually turned his heart towards you. He reflected on your goodness, faithfulness and complete ability to hold his feelings and protect him. As read along, I found myself doing the same thing - allowing my heart and mind to feel your love, your comfort. As I did, my heart and head quit spinning and began to settle. My circumstances did NOT change in those moments as I sat in the passenger seat of David's roller-coaster ride of emotions. But my attitude shifted, just as his did. Does it help to listen or read of someone else's pain, frustration and despair? YES, but only if they can lead you out of it like David did. Only if they can turn from their pain and perspective to see you. Only if they resolve their struggle by accepting your grace by entrusting their heart and future to you. Then and only then is it helpful.

[contemplatio]

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root