

“Fear not; you will no longer live in shame. Don't be afraid; there is no more disgrace for you. You will no longer remember the shame of your youth and the sorrows of widowhood.” Isaiah 54:4 NLT

[lectio] // ISAIAH 54:1-8

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

Such powerfully, grace-filled phrases! I know it's not “my covenant, my promise.” I've always know the Old Testament was written for a specific group of people and for the listeners at that time. However, I realize that I speak and write the same way. I tell of hard stories and promises that God gave me. They were mine, but I shared them, not in hope that God would speak or promise the same thing to the reader or hearer, but that they would see a slice of God's grace given to me and the fact that we serve the same gracious God. I often share, “If God has worked in my life this way, if his redemption and promises are real, then he will do the same (in different ways) with you. I am not trying to steal an old promise made to a people long dead. I am trying to see how God's character shows up in good and bad times, sinful and righteous times, crushing defeats and skyward bound victories! When God tells Israel “you will no longer live in shame,” I feel it because I'm human. I identify because I have sinned and experienced the consequences. I have felt grieved, bereaved, alone and abandoned too! My heart grabs onto thoughts of “no more disgrace” and “remembered shame.” I don't see that as my promise, but I do see the same God. And, if he comes to Israel's pain with comfort, maybe he'll come to mine as well. Yes, I'm an individual, not a nation. Yes, it was an old covenant. Yes, I may not be able to “claim” their promises as my own. However, it is a shared story. It is the same God. I can find hope and even truth in an old promise, given to an entire nation. I tell stories to convey hope, and that's what the author and prophet Isaiah has given me - a godly possibility!

[oratio]

pray as responding to the words, phrase, sentence that God has stirred within you

Dad,

I need hope! I need to abandon the shame of stupid decisions to be lured by my own weak desires of greatness or positions of admiration. I need to abandon disgrace where my aspirations blinded me to push and force myself into a place of outcomes to MAKE your will bend to mine. I need to abandon a season where I became a widow of my own choices and walked away from my desire to follow your design and not my own. Isaiah's words prick my heart to realize my shame, disgrace and widowhood came because of my own choices. Please forgive me. I am broken down to dust and waiting for you to breath life into me and a new future for me.

[contemplatio]

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