

“Don’t tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is merciful and compassionate...” Joel 2:13 NLT

[lectio] // JOEL 2:12-13

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

[meditatio]

reflect on – what word, words, phrase, or sentence speaks to you from the text, then write them down

As humans, it seems, we are ready to have an outward display of remorse and response. However, God sees the motive behind our behaviors, he sees the heart. He sees the construction of barriers and excuses that do not allow real change, real repentance. It’s as if we try to fool God by saying “I’m turning around, I’m going the other way” as we fake a spin and exaggerated footsteps going in the opposite direction. And God watches the whole charade, knowing that our heart had no intention of following through. Are we that good at misdirection? Are we master magicians when God knows all the tricks? How are we so good at hiding? What is it about sin that makes us good at subterfuge?

[oratio]

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

Dad,

What if I wanted to be more transparent, more honest? It feels like self betrayal! It’s in my nature to hide, not expose? I don’t want to really be seen, that’s far too painful and embarrassing. Exposure screams, “I’m not good,” “I’m not perfect.” Even though my soul knows the truth - I AM NOT GOOD OR PERFECT. It is a lousy game I must play to be a good human or a imperfect human. I must live a life on constant betrayal to expose my failures, weakness and sin. This is why it is never easy to tear more than just my clothes to say, “I’m sorry.” This is why it’s hard to tear my heart and follow through with change. Honestly, I want to stay on the road of self and try to prove that there is nothing wrong with my path or my decisions. I am desperately wicked!

[contemplatio]

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