

“You will arise and have mercy on Jerusalem — and now is the time to pity her, now is the time you promised to help. For your people love every stone in her walls and cherish even the dust in her streets.” Psalms 102:13-14 NLT

[lectio] // PSALM 102:1-17

This reflects so much of what a refugee must feel about their homeland, their safety and their family. So much of who we are is tied to our location - a physical place where we belong. We know the streets, the people, the routines of buying and selling goods and services. It's not just comfort, it's normal, it's safe. Israel lost that! Many nations, and people groups have been displaced and have literally LOST home. What do you do when you've lost home? Who are you when you've lost home? You're job, identity and purpose are gone. You become no one, like a wanderer or an "owl in the desert" as the Psalmist writes. Of course they love each stone and even the dirt of their land. They didn't miss it when they lived there, or when the actions of the leaders and neighbors caused an eventual loss, to be taken away and captured as slaves. But now that the stones and dust are gone - they are GREATLY missed. And God's purpose, plan, mercy and justice is behind this whole scenario? Yes, it is. As painful as loss is, as excruciating as it is to be stripped of all possessions and belonging, it is all still TEMPORARY compared to eternity! How difficult it is to live life in the boundaries of time and space when you are an eternal being! We are eternal beings, our souls will not die, our bodies, possessions, homes and even beloved cities are all but a wisp of time. God is eternal and has eternal plans for each human he has created. I don't know how to NOT love my home, city and country! I don't know how to find existence and belonging OUTSIDE of my stuff, my routines, my relationships. I am committed to an ETERNAL God who is beyond all of that. His plans and ways predate my existence, my home, my city. And, He will exist far beyond everything I know to be real, EVERYTHING!

[oratio]

Dad,
Again, time is not my enemy, but it constantly feels like it traps my thinking into a temporary existence. You are outside of this limitation! I reflect on what humanity loses because of sin, greed and selfishness and I see so much of myself. I love living in a specific place where I "belong," I am known. And, I build a life of purpose and establish relationships within this construct called time and place. No wonder it's hard for me (and others) to grasp these concepts of displacement, refugee, slavery and loss. I must remember to see you, know you, trust you and love you in light of eternity.

[contemplatio]

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