"So I have reason to be enthusiastic about all Christ Jesus has done through me in my service to God. Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them." Romans 15:17-18 NLT

[lectio] // ROMANS 15:14-21

Paul, in this chapter, writes about his specific calling. He's called to preach Christ where his name has not been heard, not to preach to the churches already established. There are very few people like Paul who have accomplished so much with their life. Here Paul says he has reason to be excited because he is seeing results of his labor. Of course, it is BECAUSE of Christ's work through him, but he identifies two sureties: 1. He brought the message to the gentiles and 2. the WAY he worked among them. Paul was accepted and listened to among non-believers for a reason. Yes, he was full of the Spirit, but he also worked hard, spoke truth and loved them deeply. His effectiveness was evident to all those who came across his path. At 58, I am asking about effectiveness. Maybe it's true that you'll never know how well someone has done until they are no longer there. But how should I look at my effectiveness to calling and consistency like Paul did. Oh, I'm not comparing to his accomplishments, but rather his process of evaluating it. What have I done with my life and calling that is worthy of heaven, that is measured in eternity?

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

Dad,
This brings up some interesting questions for quarter-life, mid-life or even late-in-life crisis - reflection points. Paul looked back and saw where he had been and what he had been faithful to do. What does that look like in my life? Good question. This is a ponder point. I often look through the trash of my failures, sin and choices, but what lens can I use to view effectiveness? Something must have happened over the past 43 years since I said YES to your offer. I wonder...

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