

“Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin.” Romans 4:7-8 NLT

lectio // Romans 4:6-13

Paul addresses exactly where I was left yesterday after the snake-on-a-stick story out of Numbers. He's quoting Psalm 32:1 where David totally gets his own sin. This is THE lifeline, the first breath after almost drowning - that our sin is cleared! If you read about God in the Old Testament (snake/stick), then you read about the abundant grace given because of Christ, you begin to see the first through fifth century church's dilemma - this is the same God? They struggled because the Old Covenant was recorded to show the absolute breach of contract we humans continue to flaunt before a holy and perfect God. THEY weren't rebellious sinners, WE ARE selfish sinners - there is no escaping that reality. The New Covenant recognizes our INABILITY to be holy, and to keep a contract of obedience. It also comes with an eternal solution - hide yourself in the one who fulfilled the contract and continually restores the breach between God and human, Jesus Christ. Paul makes the connection that faith was the critical component then (with Abraham) and now as Jews or Gentiles. It took faith and it still takes faith. And yet, surprisingly, we still think we can outwit, outwork, out-perform our sin to get to God, to get to perfection. We can simply bypass the entire (and only way) process of repentance, grace and forgiveness to make it in our own. In doing that willful, stubborn act, we put ourselves BACK under a failed contract where we are again responsible for our own breach. That's insane! The only way I can get away from my stinky, self-absorbed sin is to continually give it to Jesus, the contract keeper.

oratio

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

Dad,

You do not want me carrying my sin or stupidity! You want me to see it, repent of of and LET you forgive me, restore me (continually) and MOVE on. Yes, it feels like it's constant, because it is so regular. However, I do have a choice, I can hang on to it, and feel constant shame and guilt or I can humbly let it go and let you pick me back up again. I'll choose the latter, please.

contemplatio

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