

“The Lord is slow to get angry, but his power is great, and he never lets the guilty go unpunished. He displays his power in the whirlwind and the storm. The billowing clouds are the dust beneath his feet.”
Nahum 1:3 NLT

lectio // Nahum 1:1-13

Nahum has a dream about Nineveh and Israel escaping the strangle hold from the Assyrians. But here's what is constant in the prophets, God is aware, in control and holds nations accountable. I see and hear so much about atheism or agnosticism and their mockery of a belief in God. God is not intimidated by unbelief. Call it a boundary, a tether or even a leash, but it only goes so far. And, by the looks of sociopathic leaders over the span of history - they all believe they are gods and can beat the odds. The very best of brutal, manipulating, power-hungry men and women take on their creator and they are all dead, buried and mostly forgotten. It never works, it never will. So where does that leave then non-homicidal, normal humans? We may not have visions of gruesome grandeur, but we would still like to control, mostly others. Whether people believe in God or not, the truth eventually comes around - he is real, gracious and true, but never lets the guilty go unpunished. Nahum, and other prophets, record God using nature as natural consequences of injustice or brutality. A disaster, a plague, a pandemic... to disrupt or disassemble power structures. Did God cause or allow Covid-19? Is this virus a judgment on us, on the world? I have no idea! It's the same old question that paralyzes many, did God do this, did the devil do this or did humans do this? I've been thinking about a quote I heard, "When you invent the ship, you also invent the shipwreck; when you invent the plane you also invent the plane crash; and when you invent electricity, you invent electrocution... Every technology carries its own negativity, which is invented at the same time as technical progress." - Paul Virilio. Maybe our free will has invented both CRISPR (gene editing) and the Corona viruses.

Dad,
I would like to be on the "slow to anger" side of your nature. I don't like my sin, my selfishness or self serving behaviors either, but I have to live with the confines and consequences of great grandpa Adam, but more so of my own choices. I don't see myself as a maniacal leader, but nonetheless my actions have consequences. I benefit from your mercy that's new every morning. I live and breath in the beauty of your grace. Today, I look for ways to move with you and not against you, to be good and gracious, kind and thoughtful.

contemplatio

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