

“Laughter can conceal a heavy heart, but when the laughter ends, the grief remains.” Proverbs 14:13 NLT

## lectio // Proverbs 14:12-17

A quick “heart” check in brought to you by the wisdom team at Solomon’s palace. A friend of mine, Jeff Juhala, said something in regard to covid that I hadn’t thought about too much. He said there is a certain percentage of people that are extroverts and they are absolutely struggling with the pandemic, lock downs and social distancing. To them this is a prison sentence. But to the introverts out there, and there are certainly more of these, they are thriving in captivity. Is it true that you don’t really know who you are until you find yourself ALONE with no one and nothing but your own thoughts? Heart check! Can you be alone to stop the constant noise of news, office chatter, and ever changing problems in our human existence? Does that scare you, bother you? I am NOT saying it is good to be isolated, self consumed or behaving like a monk with vows of silence. However, I am asking, “are you good with yourself?” I think a consistent roar of, say laughter, or busyness can mask the moments where you can sit and process your thoughts, evaluate your life and take stock of truly who you are. I know it sounds counter intuitive, but grief can be a gift when it is allowed to fully stop the craziness in your life and cause you to think and feel deeply. Laughter can CONCEAL loss, but embracing those time-frozen moments where everything is blurry and former priorities and “plate-spinning” drop from your life can be helpful and even healthy if you do not get stuck there. Grief is grounding! It is tethered to a reality, a finality that we seldom take time to recognize. Are you okay with you? Don’t be afraid to sit in moments of silence and even grief. It can pass if you allow yourself to experience it, ponder on what is causing it and listen to the voice of God who is there to both comfort and teach you deep lessons in the dark. The early church leaders gave a name to these times, they called it “dark night of the soul.” Oftentimes God would call them, lead them into those moments where their soul is heavy, everything is silent and time seems to cease. Maybe God is asking you to stop and listen, just sitting in grief, loss or pandemic silence. Maybe you just experienced a prolonged, trauma and need some time to process that. Either way, God has NOT left you. God is there with you in the dark, surreal moments.

Dad,

The painful silent moments of my past were traumatic, but you were there. I had to trust, I had to wait, I had to listen. When I heard about these “dark night of the soul” moments, I couldn’t imagine what they would feel like, let alone see myself being INVITED into them. Then, it happened, and it was really terrifying. I remember the first thing it taught me as I sat it that place of zero control over my life. My heart was tenderized towards the grief and pain of others. That moment in Carl’s Jr. when I watched a family come in for a quick lunch while their mother was dying from a brain tumor. I was so MOVED, I could feel their pain and was drawn to them to pray and bring comfort like I had never experienced before. Then I met with a young man who hopelessly felt like taking his own life and I was instantly filled with that same overwhelming sense of grief, again praying and talking to him over a Rubio’s taco. My own dark moments revealed a world where others have to live. It was creepy and amazing at the same time. I never wanted to forget those moments, but like Proverbs says, “laughter” can conceal. I can choose to ignore that pain, that grief in me and around me OR I can listen and be invited in for the sake of others.

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