

“Do not hold us guilty for the sins of our ancestors! Let your compassion quickly meet our needs, for we are on the brink of despair. Help us, O God of our salvation! Help us for the glory of your name. Save us and forgive our sins for the honor of your name. Psalms 79:8-9 NLT

lectio // Psalm 79

I am jealous of the word “us.” Look at the verse just above. How many times do you see “me”? ZERO. How many times do you see “us”, “our” or “we”? Nine times. Why am I jealous of “us”? Because Israel was a nation, a people together. They lived as a community, they functioned as a whole. No one in that era would have even thought about individual rights or privileges, not because they didn’t have them, but because they thought in terms of family units, neighborhoods and nation. Oh, there were the outliers who stole, lied and did harm to others, but they were seen as bringing shame on the entirety of groups. Even revenge was extracted by wiping out whole families because of one individual who did wrong. The Psalmist goes to God for all of them, praying for and asking for forgiveness for their community sins. I know we cannot flip to eastern thinking or become communal in all things, but our American individualism and rights are killing us. It’s all Amer i can! We want restoration and grace to be poured out on all of US, not just me or mine. We want justice and forgiveness to be OURS together. I still believe that our own nation can return to caring and watching out for each other, our neighbors. This pandemic should have taught us that we need to be together, not just thinking of toilet paper and Lysol for ourselves!

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

Dad,

Forgive US. Pour out your grace and mercy on US. Help US think of others and not just ourselves. Help US see our neighbors and care for them just like family. Give US the strength and courage to push back on selfishness and personal rights. Bless our nation - America and restore her once again.

contemplatio

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