

“You don’t let me sleep. I am too distressed even to pray! I think of the good old days, long since ended, when my nights were filled with joyful songs. I search my soul and ponder the difference now. Has the Lord rejected me forever? Will he never again be kind to me? Is his unfailing love gone forever? Have his promises permanently failed? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he slammed the door on his compassion? Interlude”

lectio Psalm 77

I don’t know who Jeduthan is, but I’m glad his words are recorded in this collection of Psalms. Along with David, king of Israel, he is offering his thoughts and prayers in times of doubt and struggle. I am not writing about this because I am currently there in that sleepless, doubtful moments. I am writing because I have been there, and furthermore, I know friends who LIVE in this constant state of miserable doubt with pain, depression and a sense of hopelessness. This line, “I think of the good old days, long since ended,” really gets me. Of course there WERE days of simplicity and joy in the past. It also came with its own sense of ache and curiosity for the future! Isn’t it hard to BE in the PRESENT. We grab good moments of the past or we fantasize about good moments ahead, but NOW, HERE is hard. I want to be thankful for now. I had a crummy day yesterday, a day I wish would disappear, but even in that day, there was grace! I love reading about these authentic moments, but I don’t want to live in them. I want to get up and keep moving forward. Even Jed doesn’t stay in those tortured moments, later in the Psalm, he reflects and remembers that God has been with him “But then I recall all you have done, O Lord; I remember your wonderful deeds of long ago. They are constantly in my thoughts. I cannot stop thinking about your mighty works.”

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Dad,

I am thankful for the past, not just as a way to think on “good times” but also a way to process the pain of where I was and see your grace at work not to leave me there. I am also thankful for the present, just to be alive, to experience the beauty and wonder of all you’ve created and the mystery of how and where I fit into your plans. I look to the future for completion, for wholeness, for finality of justice and the joy of community with you.

contemplatio

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