

“Then the Lord’s anger was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him dead because of this. So Uzzah died right there beside the Ark of God. David was angry because the Lord’s anger had burst out against Uzzah. He named that place Perez-uzzah (which means “to burst out against Uzzah”), as it is still called today. David was now afraid of the Lord, and he asked, “How can I ever bring the Ark of the Lord back into my care?” 2 Samuel 6:7-9 NLT

lectio // 2 Samuel 6:6-15

I’m sure that this guy, Uzzah, became infamous for this highly emotional story in Samuel. I get it, the Ark had very specific, detailed ways God had instructed the priests to care for it. It was a symbol of the very tangible presence of God. It’s not like God was being carried around in a box, but this box was a living object lesson of God’s holiness. And, like other things God had instructed Israel about the seriousness of these things, they were not to be taken lightly. God always had plenty of warnings of DEATH when it came to objects or boundaries that he set up. There is a little note in most translations that help (a little) with this scene of Uzzah “simply” reaching out to steady the ark. One note said, because of his “irreverence.” We don’t have enough of the backstory to justify killing Uzzah on the spot, so we just assume it was some flash-outburst of anger on God’s part and we judge this as “bad form,” or “unfair.” We forget two things: we do NOT know the hearts of humans and God is ALWAYS right, true and just. So IF we were to fill in the blanks in this story, it would be best to think, Uzzah did something necessitating this response (maybe “deserving” is the wrong word) and God used this as a teaching moment for ALL involved. We have a hard time seeing instant DEATH as right or even merciful because we are broken and we have a horrible grasp on eternity. Maybe this WAS Uzzah’s moment of grace? And David, well we don’t know if this was just an emotional overreaction or truly a wise thing to let God kinda cool-off at Obed-edom’s place? Oh brother! That’s ridiculous! David’s little fear tantrum didn’t seem to bother God, so he blessed Obed’s house like crazy. I love David’s emotional responses to God, “How can I ever trust you again?” And, later, a massive display of literal overkill, sacrificing and a bull and a calf every six steps and wearing the Priest clothes while he does this. Oh please! Most interpret this as worship and extravagant displays of David’s love, I just see it as a little overdone drama.

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Dad,

I know you are serious about holiness and what is best for us. Oftentimes, I feel that I take advantage of your grace, when in my head, I know that’s not right and it’s not even possible. From what I understand, the full wrath, full righteous anger of perfection was totally and completely POURED out of Jesus on the cross. You know this because you created us - not everyone is thrilled with being broken by sin, dragged and drawn to the worse part of who we are. Oh, I know I did this, we did this. There is no blame in this. However, I despise my shortcomings, failures and sin. I am not for one second proud of it. And, I certainly NEVER want to flaunt it in your face or anyone else’s face. It is a shame and embarrassment to live with these weaknesses! I just thought I would tell you. I might have been the arrogantly awkward guy to reach out and think I needed to steady the symbolic box of the almighty God!

contemplatio

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