

“Can those in the grave declare your unfailing love? Can they proclaim your faithfulness in the place of destruction? Can the darkness speak of your wonderful deeds? Can anyone in the land of forgetfulness talk about your righteousness?” Psalms 88:11-12 NLT

lectio // Psalm 88

This Psalm, brought to you by Heman, the Ezrahite. Heman is a descendant of Korah and this psalm is SUNG to the tune of “my achy breaky heart.” No, just kidding. It’s to the tune of “The Suffering for the Affliction.” This song hit the top ten songs for endless days of agony and made its way around the country. Ol Heman asks God a great question. If you grind me into dust, supposing God was responsible, then how can I be of any good for anyone? He makes a great point. Life, or God, or enemies can make you feel like you’re going to die or wish you were dead. Heman writes, “You have driven my friends away by making me repulsive to them. I am in a trap with no way of escape. My eyes are blinded by my tears. Each day I beg for your help, O Lord; I lift my hands to you for mercy. Are your wonderful deeds of any use to the dead? Do the dead rise up and praise you?” Some days, or months, maybe years may seem like you are going down and the ONLY solution seems to be the evil whispers of death itself, thinking that will END the suffering, the pain, the screaming voices in your head. But, what if it DOES NOT end? What if there is more? What if there is worse? Heman doesn’t say it outright, but he’s asking God to change his circumstances so he CAN be effective, can LIVE a life of purpose - rising out of the ashes and WIN. No one comes back from the dead and talks about righteousness? Except for Christ! And, Jesus says there is life NOW and life THEN. Jesus will JUDGE the living and the dead. God is not trying to KILL YOU, he’s trying to SAVE you from yourself, and from death! Then, you can speak of his unfailing love, his faithfulness, his wonderful deeds and righteousness. When you LIVE you declare your intentions to not quit, ever. Though he slay me, Job says, yet will I hope in him! Job 13:15.

oratio

Dad,

I had determined long ago in my youth, I will never give up. I may fall and even wallow in the gutters of life, but I will rise. I will not stay down. My life is a declaration of hope! No one who knew me thought I would make it - but you. None of my family held out hope for me, only pity and shame - but you held out hope as my way out. My life would serve no purpose in death. Only living in the face of adversity and past pain will I yet serve you to my fullest, my best. I have set my hope in you and you will determine my path.

contemplatio

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