



Grain

“Right is right, even if everyone is against it, and wrong is wrong, even if everyone is for it.” –William Penn

Submitted by Vernita Kennen, Roseville, MN

Field

1 Hear a just cause, O Lord; attend to my cry; give ear to my prayer from lips free of deceit. 2 From you let my vindication come; let your eyes see the right. 3 If you try my heart, if you visit me by night, if you test me, you will find no wickedness in me; my mouth does not transgress. 4 As for what others do, by the word of your lips I have avoided the ways of the violent. 5 My steps have held fast to your paths; my feet have not slipped. 6 I call upon you, for you will answer me, O God; incline your ear to me, hear my words. 7 Wondrously show your steadfast love, O savior of those who seek refuge from their adversaries at your right hand. 8 Guard me as the apple of the eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings, 9 from the wicked who despoil me, my deadly enemies who surround me. Psalm 17:1-9

Thoughts

One of the reasons I like to avoid scandals is because of how disorienting they are. Interpretations of what happened fly around the room or an entire community. Information and misinformation sift together. And yet, sometimes our faith may seem most vital when stones are being thrown at us for holding on to the truth, if we know what it is. During those times we are in dialogue with God in a way that is more primal.

The writer of Psalm 17 is in some kind of trouble. He is praying with his whole being as though to say, “Please listen God. A lot of people are going to be talking trash about me. Can I count on you to believe the truth? This is why you should help me...” The Psalmist is hanging on to the reality of who he is as a child of God while life around him is crumbling. He is trying to convince God to get involved. No dismissive rendering of prayer as in the contemporary “thoughts and prayers” here.

Walter Brueggemann divides the Psalms into interesting categories: orientation, disorientation and reorientation. They reveal a whole range of human responses to our creator: being in wonder of God and at peace, struggling to know God’s involvement in one’s life and the world and trying to influence God, and experiencing God as a rescuer. In Psalm 17 we feel the disorientation. Psalms like these “lead us into dangerous acknowledgement of how life really is. They lead us into the presence of God where everything is not polite and civil.”

Hopefully we are not disorientation queens looking for drama, but we also don’t want to avoid it at all costs. The Psalms can offer us encouragement to speak necessary truths that may lead to disorientation for a time, knowing that is not where God ends with us. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Cindy