

# What if I Don't Yearn...

*Oasis: Self-Guided Prayer*

November 4, 2015

*O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh faints for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon You in the sanctuary, beholding Your power and glory. Because Your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise You. So I will bless you as long as I live; in Your name I will lift up my hands.*

Psalm 63:1-4

What happens when we don't feel like this? What happens when we do not yearn for God's presence, earnestly seek Him or are not thirsty? We press on and we press in. In our liturgical year we have celebrations of Jesus' birth, resurrection, and even of saints that have gone before us, but there is this ambiguous time of the liturgical year called *ordinary time*. This is when there are no special festivals or holidays, but we are simply in ordinary time.

As it is with our spiritual life sometimes. Sometimes we have highs of vivid moments with God spilling over with His presence and goodness. He is so close we can almost touch Him. Other times we are low in a valley, desperate and broken. We also have moments that are ordinary. We pray and wonder if God can hear or is near because we can't feel him. We worship Him with our lives wondering if God is even paying any attention at all because everything seems so indifferent. This is a prime moment for our faith to grow. This is when our perseverance is ramped up and we press in. Emile Griffin speaks of these moments and seasons as darkness:

*What if nothing happens when I pray? And what if the nothing that happens is not a very special sort of nothing, one that I could dramatize as a dark night, but instead the completely vacuous and even boring nothing in which I cannot make any headway at all, in which it seems I have taken a wrong turn, or lost the map entirely? What if the clarity of yesterday's prayer now seems like a made-up story and nothing more than delusion? ...It is precisely the nothing happening that is in fact something happening. Something is happening. We are being asked to hold on by faith and to go on praying when we have no sense of progress or momentum at all. The something is that we are being asked to be ordinary in prayer.*

*Clinging, Pages 20-21*

We must remember too that Jesus also walked in this human darkness. There was a moment in Gethsemane in which he asked for a different direction; another path. Jesus understands our darkness and he understands our ordinary time. We must know that God is still here, even in our darkness. God was still with Jesus even though Jesus had to be handed over to his captors. God is still in our lives working, active, and present even though sometimes we cannot see or feel the presence.

So what do we do? Live into this valley. Psalm 23 says *even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death*. This Psalmist does not imply he is running or sprinting through the valley. He is *walking*. We too must walk through our valley and through our darkness. We must walk through the moments we question where God is and lean on the faith of Christ to get us through. Jesus had a faith in God that we can never attain; Jesus had a perfect faith so that we too might have faith through Him.

*Trust and faith are the only companions for darkness, a walk that doesn't feel like a journey because there is no sense of going anywhere.*

*Clinging, Page 25.*

Are you in a season of darkness? Are you ready to walk through the valley and press in? On the kneeling rail up front there are several unlit candles and 3 candles lit in the middle representing Father God, Son and Holy Spirit. Beside these candles are several thin candles. As you feel comfortable come to the lit candles and light a thin candle with the flame of the candles in the middle. Think about the light of Christ. Jesus is always present and always near, never leaving you or forsaking you, even in darkness. Light one of the unlit candles on the kneeling rail.

Take a moment to talk with God, pray over the light Jesus is shining in your life.

If you are in a season of darkness or apathy and are ready to walk forward with Christ in trust and faith, blow out the candle you lit. This is a symbol of your current circumstance that you are ready to walk through the valley and walk with Christ to the other end, by faith and not by sight.

The following are Psalms of trust. This exercise can be done here during your meditation time or at home in your time with Jesus. Read through these Psalms and allow God to navigate you through them. Perhaps you read just one Psalm, or just one word or one line. The goal is not to read through as many as you can. The goal is to listen to the Spirit and where you are being guided with this scripture.

If you need a Bible there is one in your pew, or you can download a Bible App on your phone. Please take all the time you need. Allow the Spirit to guide you to words you need to hear today.

Psalm 11

Psalm 16

Psalm 23

Psalm 27:1-6

Psalm 62

Psalm 63

Psalm 91

Psalm 121

Psalm 125

Psalm 131

God bless you and guide you. The prayer altar is always open for prayer as you feel necessary.