

A Bright Sadness - Week Four

Lamenting Despair

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is despair, let me sow hope.

Gathering and Centering

As you enter this sacred time of reflection and prayer, gather and center yourself physically and mentally, seeking to be as fully present to God as you are able. Settle into a quiet, comfortable space where you can be undisturbed. Consider lighting a candle to symbolize God's presence. Then relax your body, breathe deeply, and begin your time with this prayer:

*Spirit of God,
I welcome you here.
I invite you to silence my distractions,
ease my worry, and calm my fear.
Still my restless spirit as I hold space now
for my bright sadness.*

The Sad ~ Despair

Habbakuk 1:2-4 (Contemporary English Version)

"Our Lord, how long must I beg
for your help
before you listen?
How long before you save us
from all this violence?
Why do you make me watch
such terrible injustice?
Why do you allow violence,
lawlessness, crime, and cruelty
to spread everywhere?
Laws cannot be enforced;
justice is always the loser;
criminals crowd out honest people
and twist the laws around."



The Bright ~ Hope

Isaiah 30:18 (New Life Version)

"So the Lord wants to show you kindness. He waits on high to have loving-pity on you. For the Lord is a God of what is right and fair. And good will come to all those who hope in Him."

Prompts for Prayer and Reflection

~ Slowly read the passage from Habbakuk above three times. What do you feel as you read? What words or phrases cause you to pause? Is there anything you resist or that makes you uncomfortable? Invite the Lord, who "is a God of what is right and fair" to lead you into lament over the pain, injustice, selfishness, and violence that pervades our world.

~Do you believe that God wants to show you kindness? As you reflect on your life, are there moments when you've specifically experienced His love and care? Talk with Him about your experience of His kindness toward you.

~ Even in our belief we can have seasons of discouragement when our hope is dimmed and it takes our strongest effort to cling to God. Perhaps you're in that season now. How might the verse from Isaiah above brighten your soul with hope and encourage a deeper trust in God's goodness?

~ Examine the image above. How do the colors, lines, layers, and textures hold both despair and hope? Consider writing down thoughts, feelings, emotions, or memories stirred by your reflections.

~ How does the obedience of Jesus, through His suffering and death, influence your desire and ability to bring hope to those who are despairing?

