Wednesday: Lament

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Simple Prayer: Father, reveal your willingness to hear my complaint.

Read for Context (What does it say?): Matthew 27:45-49

Read for Insight (What does it mean?):

His Relentless Love: Jesus speaks directly to God three times while on the cross. Two of the times, he cries out, "Father!" Here he does not. At this moment, out of the thickness of an ever-darkening afternoon, Jesus complains.

He did not just pull this phrase out of his head. It is the first line of a Psalm 22. It is shorthand and references the entire psalm. Say aloud this psalm of lament, you'll hear a melody (in a minor key) of anguish punctuated by an unmistakable counterpoint riffing God's sovereignty and redemption.

When we complain to God, instead of offending him, we (in a sort of indirect way) affirm our own mortality. Though counter-intuitive, this admission allows us to recognize God's determined resolve to rescue us. Lament ushers us (through the back door) into an awareness of God's relentlessness love.

Our Response: Jesus gives us permission to protest. As with everything, there is a healthy way to complain. Lament is helpful when we concede that we grumble to a God who is merciful, gracious, caring, present, sovereign, infinitely powerful, extraordinarily kind, eternally wise. Our lament, then, will emulate the complaint of Jesus. We will move from desperation and despair to a deeper appreciation and expectation. Our faith will grow as will our capacity for love.

Read for Application (How should I respond?)

Notes:

Say/write a short prayer of commitment that flows from your final reading.