

Hello Gobin Family!

Today on our Christmas Feast calendar we take a unique but needed moment as we slow down and check in with ALL of ourselves.

By this time in the Winter Solstice most of the Celts had returned to usual work as the Festival neared its end. To mark the day, you were SUPPOSED to take time to grumble and grouse.

This might seem strange at first, but the Celts show a wise understanding of human nature. Even while we look forward to the beauty of the future, we MUST take time to process the things we have lost along the way. The ways we have been let down AND the ways we have let others down.

This day is about embracing these deepest places of loss and disappointment and bringing them to high art and spiritual practice.

For those of us in the western world words like lament and wailing don't feel very appealing, particularly in our religious spaces. Many of us have been taught to believe Church should be the happiest place in town at all times! In fact after a sermon on the topic of lament, I once heard a conference goer say, "wow, that was a real downer. I only come to church to feel good and happy." This person is not alone in their approach and expectation for a worship gathering.

However, Jesus tell us in the Beatitudes if we do not make space for lament we will not be able to enjoy the beauty of comfort.

Friends, I pray you find permission in this statement, faith is not the absence of fear, doubt, and grief; but rather faith is the willingness to acknowledge their existence in you! This allows these feelings to transform into the compost that empowers you to continue to grow into new life.

Lament, often called wailing, holds in tension all the suffering that seems to make no sense with a determination to believe God is just. Lament draws us near to God when we are tempted to turn away. Lament enables us to keep moving forward with perseverance in our calling to love and justice; it is a way to remain deeply connected to the God who loves us and loves justice even when injustice makes us ask the hardest questions of God.

This posture of lament comes from a deep place, often called the "Real Real." It is an acknowledgment of the complexity of life as well as the complexity of you as a human being. If we don't learn how to weep over the broken parts of our lives and the brokenness of the world, we will further break our lives and the world.

Dr. Cornel West brilliantly juxtaposes wailing and whining saying, "Understand the genius of Bob Marley," West said. "He called his group the Wailers, not the whiners. The Wailers were persons who cry for help but against the context of catastrophe. When Wall Street cried out for help, they got billions of dollars. Working people, poor people are crying for help. Whining is a cry of self-pity, of a sentimental disposition. That's not what's happening when we cry out from our deepest self ... that's not whining, that's not complaining, that's legitimate critiques and legitimate grievances out of a genuine grief."

January 3, 2021

The Feast of Grief and Wailing

Maybe today you can take a space of time to lament, to grieve, even to wail if need be so that you might give voice to this place deep within.

As you do this, remember you are not grieving alone. You are not lamenting alone. You have never wailed alone. God has wept with you every time.

And those that mourn will be comforted.

Grace and Peace,
Joel Everson