

## God Understands

"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weakness, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are- yet he did not sin." - Hebrews 4:15

Maybe it is what I recently heard someone describe as "covid brain" but I feel like I have been on an emotional roller coaster lately. I feel like there are times when I am deeply grateful for all of the good things in my life- and for the God who is the giver of all good things; and other times I am lamenting how bad things are and questioning if God even knows or cares. I can swing from one extreme to another very quickly. I find myself wondering about these shifts and all too often blaming it on the uncertainties so prevalent in our world.

Is feeling like this really just a result of covid? Maybe in part, but I turn to my Bible and read this: "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun." - Ecclesiastes 1:9. In other words, people have always had things that made life difficult and things that give them joy. Nothing is new except perhaps the details.

As I have been more acutely aware of "ups and downs" lately, it has led to me spending more time in the Book of Psalms. You want to talk about a book that swings from joy to anguish and back again! Look at Psalm 22, the Psalm Jesus quoted on the cross - "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me" - Psalm 22:1 to the very next chapter, Psalm 23 which boldly states, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me, your rod and staff comfort me." Talk about a tone change from one chapter to the next! The whole book of Psalms is like that- grief then joy, agony then praise.

I share that so I can say this- God understands. For all of the time since creation, he has loved people as they have gone back and forth from obedience to disobedience, joy to anger. He knows his creation. He is the source of all joy and can take it when we blame him for the things that frustrate or grieve us. As we are reminded in the verse from Hebrews listed above and paraphrased here now- He has been there. We have a God who rejoices and grieves with us. In the afterglow of our Easter celebration, I pray we remember that it is because of our imperfections that Jesus went to the cross and that our shame, anger and fear in this world is only for a time. The time is coming when we will be with Jesus forever in paradise and we will stop our emotional swinging. Living with Jesus in joy is forever! Amen!

~ Eric Gerken | Director of Family & Youth Ministry

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