

IN YOU ALONE

THOUGHTS BY CAPTAIN KRISTEN DOCKERAY

PSALM 119:41,50 (CEV)

"Show me your love and save me, Lord, as you have promised. When I am hurting, I find comfort in your promise that leads to life."

In these weeks and months, that have now amounted to over a year of a worldwide pandemic, it is not a stretch to say that all of us have either sustained real wounds through this season - job loss, isolation, racism, sexism, sickness, and death and the list could go on - or we are just plain tired. There is a brokenness, a sense of longing, and lament that accompanies us as we move through our day.

The question in these times that is always close to my lips echoes the psalmist - How long, O God? How long can we sit in this brokenness, alone and isolated, without becoming bitter and resentful?

In describing his song, *In You Alone*, Dan Bate says that he wrote it as a "personal conversation with God that I often return to when I am struggling for direction and find myself doubting." For Dan, this was a song that was not initially meant to be shared. A private conversation between himself and God. This song, written in solitude and in a place of intimacy between Dan and God, offers us as the listeners the opportunity to hear our own longing echoed in Dan's.

The most beautiful thing about a deep longing is that this longing connects us to the spiritual and the divine that exists within each one of us. It is a reminder that our deepest longings are, at their core, a soul conversation with God. Dan's words remind us that there is a level of honesty, a degree of passionate pleading that must happen to have an honest hope. The sadness, the unknowing, the grief that accompanies us in these days is an invitation to a deeper human experience. This is a hope and a promise, which sees the truth of the world as it is; sees the reality of our lived experience, and still believes the truth and promises of God. This is not a naïve, or dismissive hope, but a hope that acknowledges the darkness and yet claims, "I will put my trust in you alone."

In the biblical text, hope does not emerge from self-aggrandizing acts, or by recounting our successes. Similarly, in the biblical text, hope is not found by ignoring reality. Instead, hope can be understood as the desperate plea for God's intervention that reveals a flickering glimpse of hope. In Psalm 119, through passionate pleading and poetic complexity, the psalmist begs God to "Show me your love and save me, Lord, as you have promised" (v. 41). And God does not leave the psalmist broken, alone, fearful, or empty. Less than ten verses after that plea, the psalmist assuredly proclaims, "When I am hurting, I find comfort in your promise that leads to life" (v. 50). The sovereignty and the promises of God are upheld - despite circumstances that seem to deny the possibility of that.

As you listen, read, sing, or play this song by Dan Bates, the invitation is to explore your own soul conversation with God. To take an honest inventory of your heart, to listen closely to the longing of your heart, to explore your own woundedness from this season, to travel through those dark spaces, to plead, and to passionately beg God to remind you of His promises.

AFTER SITTING WITH JESUS, AFTER ACKNOWLEDGING THE DEPTHS OF YOUR EXHAUSTED SOUL, CAN I INVITE YOU TO TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND HEAR THE REFRAIN IN THE SONG REPEAT, 'I PROMISE, PROMISE NOT TO FORGET' AS GOD'S RESPONSE TO YOU?