Sometimes It’s Hard to Sing

Every now and then, pain steals something so important to us. External forces or internal conflicts arise and over time, we discover that we have lost our song. How is it possible to sing when our hearts are heavy and our hope wanes?

You lose a friend to cancer. You are unjustly attacked. A child turns his back on you. Your heart is broken by the one person who promised to be with you until death. You lose a job, a dream or a destiny.

If that’s where you’ve been or where you are, allow me to share a little blues from an old songbook called Psalms:

“By the rivers of Babylon– there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion. There we hung up our lyres on the poplar trees… how can we sing in a faraway land.”
Psalm 137:1-2 & 4

It happens.

Our song is gone.

Psalm 137 is a snapshot in the story of God’s people. We see life knocking the wind out of their lungs and now they enter into bondage on the wrong side of Babylon’s rivers. The songwriter asks a question we ask ourselves: “How can you sing in the middle of defeat and loss?”

In the seams of this songbook called Psalms, we hear deep guttural cries of the brokenhearted. We’ve all been there. Maybe it’s a friend, maybe it’s a family member, an accountability partner or a maybe it’s you. We have all experienced a time when we turn off the music because darkness flooded into the cracks of our souls. The Bible is filled with these dark moments. They are not censored out and hidden

obscurely. They are front and center. Why? *Maybe* it's because God wants us to know that in our darkest times, we enter into the fellowship of strugglers. We are not alone. We've never been alone. There's one thing for sure in this life: none of us gets a pass on adversity.

There is nothing more healing during a time of pain and sorrow than to connect with someone you love and hear the words "Me too." It's so simple! To find someone who's willing to admit that they struggle just as you struggle becomes an amazing healing agent. It takes the sting from the pain we face. We often find that our dirges become anthems of grace.

If you've lost your song I want to invite you:

- Sing your way out of it, even if it means singing the blues. (Psalm 30:11)
- Thank God for what you do have and don't focus on scarcity. (Philippians 4:6)
- As much as you'd prefer to climb under a rock, connect with someone who can support you. (Ecclesiastes 4:10-12)
- Don't look for the blame. It's a fool's errand. (Genesis 3:12)
- Rejoice in knowing that this event or circumstance will strengthen your character.
- Trust God's work in you. (Philippians 1:6)
- Do not internalize. Let yourself off the hook. (Romans 1:8)
- Be mindful of your body. Rest, nourish, and breathe deep. (Psalm 46:10)
- Don't just pray for escape, pray for God's glory to be revealed in the midst of it all. (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- Don't get paranoid. There isn't a target on your back. Really. (Romans 8:31)

Finally, I want to challenge all of us on the struggle bus to pray honestly. God hates a fake smile as much as anyone. Speak the truth. Make it plain. Don't hold back. God is not shaken

by your anger or emotions. He’s a God who wrestles.

> *“One bold message in the Book of Job is that you can say anything to God. Throw at him your grief, your anger, your doubt, your disappointment—he can absorb them all.” Phillip Yancey*

In despair, look for a friend and be a friend. A friend who can enter into the sacred space without breathing a word of advice or analysis. Ahh… That is a friend to keep and to be. Chances are you know what to do. You just need someone to walk alongside you as you search for your song.

Sooner or later you’ll find your jam.