

Sleep

Psalm 127

The Psalms (no. 12 in the series)

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Video and audio versions available online:

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This document was prepared by Michael Hanna using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Michael know. Thank you!

Introduction

The band performs "Rat Race," originally performed by the Baja Men as the theme song for the movie. Following the song: a video clip from Rat Race, Paramount Pictures (2001).

That's the start of one of my favorite movies: Rat Race. John Cleese plays an eccentric Las Vegas casino owner, who puts 2 million dollars in a locker in Silver City, New Mexico, and then invites six groups of people to race each other to the locker while he and his rich friends bet on who will win. It's a rat race, and we often think of this world as a rat race, and God is the eccentric casino owner waiting to see who wins.

Well Enrico, played by Mr. Bean [played by Rowan Atkinson], falls asleep for he has narcolepsy. When I first heard about narcolepsy, I remember thinking, "Dang I wish I had narcolepsy."

Well let's pray:

Prayer

Lord God you know that I woke up at 3:30 this morning and thought, "Crap! I'm supposed to preach about sleep and I'm wide awake." Lord God you know my struggle with sleep. But I thank you that you do give sleep and I thank you that your Word is true not depending upon whether or not I believe it—in fact, my believing it is dependent upon your Word. So I pray Lord God that you would implant your Word deeper in our heart this morning and you would cause us to believe the truth. In Jesus' name, amen.

Message

Today I'd like to preach on what has traditionally been my least favorite verse in all the Bible, Psalm 127:2.

**2 It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for [the Lord] gives to his beloved sleep.**

It's that last line that drives me crazy: the Lord gives to his *beloved* sleep.

I can't tell you the number of nights, I've laid awake eating the bread of anxious toil, unable to sleep.

I worry about my house, my family, my city and mostly me and my church. I lie awake filled with anxiety unable to sleep, fully aware that Jesus said "don't be anxious for your life, your psyche..."ⁱ And St. Paul commands us to "have no anxiety about anything."ⁱⁱ

I lie awake worried about all these things, and then worry that I'm worried; I'm so restless because I can't rest... and God commands rest, *Shabbat*.

I anxiously toil, begging God for sleep, and I don't sleep.
And then I remember Psalm 127:2: "[the Lord] gives to his beloved sleep."

Then I think,
"Oh my God... you don't love me!"
"How hard do I have to pedal, to get you to love me?"
"God I'm pedaling as fast as I can!"

About 3 AM, I think,
"What if I stop pedaling?"
"What if I lose? What if I'm last and least?"
"What if we host a conference and no one comes?"
"What if we host a conference and everyone comes but it sucks?"
"What if they all blame me?"
"What if they all reject me, put me on trial and cast me out?"
"What if I can't guard the church from the evil that constantly seeks to destroy it?"
"What if they lay siege to the walls and leave not one stone on top of another?"
"What if they nail me to tree? What if I die?"

I cry out, *"God I'm anxiously toiling at sleep—why won't you give me sleep?"*

I want him to put me to sleep, on demand, like a drug.
I want narcolepsy whenever I choose...

But that's the problem with sleep...

Sleep is the loss of conscious control—it's like choosing to stop choosing, deciding not to decide, or thinking to not think, or striving to rest. Sleep is surrendering control, but you can't surrender control by seizing control—that's the problem with sleep.

Sleep is the loss of conscious control—and sometimes with the illusion that you are in total control, though you're not in control—you're dreaming. Which raises a fascinating question: "How do you know that you're not asleep right now, dreaming that you're in control?"

Well sleep is strange, and that's the problem with sleep. You can't simply choose it, and you don't always know when you have it. You could be dreaming that you're not sleeping.

Well we all want sleep... and yet we don't want sleep.

Enrico, played by Mr. Bean [played by Rowan Atkinson] didn't want sleep, for he knew that if he slept, he wouldn't win the race—that is, the rat race.ⁱⁱⁱ

I find it fascinating that Scripture often refers to physical death as falling asleep.^{iv}

Maybe falling asleep is like practice for death. Death is certainly the loss of conscious control... or what we think is conscious control—because after all, we could be dreaming that we're in control...

Well, maybe falling asleep is like practice for death, and maybe death can actually be waking from the dream that you are in control.

Well enough philosophizing, "The Lord gives to his beloved sleep." And "sleep," at least, means "sleep." And Jesus was really good at sleep... almost as if he was like, "Lord of the sabbath, the Lord of rest." Lord of sleep.

Now, Jesus wasn't always sleepy. He definitely got things done—he wasn't lazy. And he was acquainted with sorrow—he wasn't lost in his own dreams; he was more than willing to suffer.

And yet "anxious toiling," just wasn't his thing. It's hard to imagine him as frazzled or busy or too stressed to sleep. In spite of this entire world of pain, he knew just when to cross the lake and get some rest; he didn't simply know the way—he was the way.

Do you remember when he fell asleep on the boat in the storm? The disciples anxiously toil against this storm, then wake him terrorized that they're all going to die. He appears a little perturbed that they'd wake him, and then he calms the storm.

But what would've happened if they hadn't awakened him? I don't know...maybe Jesus didn't know, he said there were things he didn't know... we don't know what would've been. But whatever would have been, Jesus didn't seem to be at all worried. He wasn't at all afraid to go to sleep, and he was remarkably unafraid to die. And now, speaking as a pastor who for a decade was known as Mr. Church growth and then totally not... this is what truly amazes me about Jesus... and this also explains why in the end, everyone turned against him and nailed him to a tree in a garden.

At one point, Jesus literally had throngs of people chasing him to make him king. He appeared to have everything and everyone under control. He had most all of Jerusalem chanting, "Hosanna to the Son of David."

And yet, he appears to have totally surrendered that control.

- He allowed his house—the house of Israel—to crumble.
- He allowed the city of Jerusalem to be literally obliterated.
- He allowed the temple—the house of the Lord—to be destroyed.
- He allowed his ministry, his church, his movement to crumble. and

- He allowed his enemies to nail him to a tree, because he *thought*...that was what his Father was doing. He said, “I only do what I see my Father doing.”

He was remarkably good at sleep...and dying. Not suicide, because that’s not really dying, but surrender. Delivering up his Spirit. Expiring.

Let’s look at the whole thing.

Psalm 127

A song of ascents.

Scholars think this refers to songs sung by worshipers going up to the temple built by Solomon, Son of David, in the City of David, Jerusalem.

Psalm 127

A song of ascents. Of Solomon.

- 1 **Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.
Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.**

That’s cool, but if the Lord builds the house, why should we build at all? In Ecclesiastes 3, Solomon writes: “Whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it.”^v

If the Lord builds a house, why should we build at all? If the Lord watches over a city, why should we watch at all? And yet, God commands the Israelites to watch Jerusalem and to build a house, even a house for him.

What house is Solomon referring to? You’ve probably never seen the Lord build a house. And yet, you’ve never seen a house that hasn’t been built by the Lord. I mean, the Lord makes the stone, the wood, the workmen and even the will to work.

Maybe Solomon is referring to any and all houses?

Maybe he’s referring to families and in specific children?

- The Hebrew words for build, house, sons and daughters all come from the same Hebrew root.
- And you’ll remember God is always referring to families as houses—the house of Abraham, House of Israel etc.
- In fact, most of the drama of the Bible is all about how to build houses that are also families:
 - Abraham tries to build his house with Hagar, and God builds it with Sarah.
 - Jacob’s wives literally get into a baby making contest, using their maids, even buying and selling Jacob like a gigolo—all in an effort to build the house of Israel. They anxiously toil, but only God can make a baby.

Maybe Solomon is referring to any old house, maybe a family (that’s a house), and maybe God’s house.

- Remember that Solomon, the Son of David, builds God’s house.
- David wanted to build it, but God wouldn’t let him, he informed him that a son of David will build him a house.

- We think that's Solomon, but it's not just Solomon, for his stone temple is destroyed... And the stone replacement temples are destroyed.
- The last one was destroyed forty years after Jesus, Son of David and Prince of Peace says, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up."

We now know that temple is eternal, and that temple is us, his family, his house—His Body and His Bride. And oh yeah, it's also a city: The New Jerusalem. Not the one that David built and the Romans Destroyed, but the one that comes down from God in the Revelation.

And that leads to a fascinating thought: The entire time Israel *anxiously toiled* at building a house and watching over the city, God was building them and watching over them—his house and his city.

Years ago, a friend gave our kids a box turtle named Myrtle and one evening my son Jon and I decided to build myrtle a house and a little city—at turtle pen on the side of our house in Golden. Jon was just a little boy and, frankly, I was quite a bit better at designing and building turtle habitats than Jon, so after a time I pretty much did all the labor and Jon only watched. At one point he said, "Dad, I don't want to build a house for Myrtle anymore. I'm going inside." And I think I heard God whisper, "Peter, I'm not asking you to build a turtle pen, I'm asking you to build a son—by building a turtle pen together."

Well, I'm just saying, God has us build houses and watch over cities, but you are God's house and we are God's city. I have *anxiously toiled* to build me, and you, and watch over us... But maybe all that *anxious toil* is in vain.

Psalm 127

A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.

- 1 Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.
Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.**
- 2 It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep.**

That can also be translated, "for he gives these things—the house, and the city—to his beloved in sleep." I would suppose it means both, for I don't anxiously toil for a house that I already have—I don't toil for it, I fall asleep in it.

- 2 It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,
eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep.**

"His Beloved," that is "Beloved of Yahweh" forms the name Jedidiah, which was also Solomon's name.^{vi} Solomon built the stone temple on the spot where David confessed his anxious toil over building the house of Israel and watching over the city of Jerusalem.^{vii} That spot is also the spot, or at least mountain top, on which Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead, building the temple that is us.

God called Jesus “My Beloved Son.” And Jesus didn’t build his temple with anxious toil. It was more like he built his temple by surrendering our anxious toil. He built the eternal temple by surrendering control—by dying.

So just as God put the first Adam to sleep and created Eve from his bleeding side, perhaps God put the second Adam to sleep and created us from his bleeding side. ^{viii}

Whatever the case, Jesus didn’t create us or his kingdom with anxious toil. He created us with faith in His Father—He is faith in the Father. He gives us himself, that we might lose our lives and find them; that we might choose to die with him and rise with him.

The ability to lie down in a storm and sleep, or the ability to hang on a cross and surrender your spirit is called faith.

Well *Solomon* is the Beloved, *Jesus* is the Beloved, and *I am* the Beloved...and the Lord gives to his beloved sleep. And once in my life God did give me sleep like a drug... it came in the form of knowledge.

It wasn’t knowledge that I took like fruit from a tree, or laws from a book. It was knowledge that was given like a Spirit offered up on a cross... which then filled me like fire once filled the temple.

It happened about 25 years ago—I’ve told you numerous times. It was the day I told God that I was going to stop preaching... I was going to stop pedaling... Because all my pedaling was in vain...

It was that day that God caused me to miraculously confess my hatred for his house and his city—the Church. It was that day that he literally made me stop. He held me down to the floor for about an hour. It was that day that something like a veil was lifted in my mind, and for a time, I saw or knew or perceived that God was absolutely everywhere loving me absolutely, and all the time—I am his beloved. It was then that I heard the Lord speaking in my soul, “*Peter stop being a dork. Stop doubting my love for you.*” It was then that I knew, that he knew me, and he loved me, for he had made me, already made me... I didn’t need to anxiously toil at creating myself.

People ask, “What difference did that experience, that knowledge, make?” I’m not entirely sure. I still basically did what I always did, but I did it with a different energy. I still pedaled, but none of my pedaling was anxious toil...And every night, the moment my head hit the pillow, I fell sound asleep.

That lasted for about three weeks and then it basically wore off.

I’ve asked God to do it again and to do it for everyone at church and, so far, he hasn’t done it, but I feel like he’s told me, “*Peter, it is what I’m always doing.*”

“*This is what I’m doing in the womb of space and time I’m giving birth to faith in you.*”

“*Faith in your Creator and my Word... now preach Faith as my gift of Grace.*”

You know, according to Scripture, Faith is everything God desires in us. Faith is not the result of your anxious toil, but it is the end of all anxious toil. Faith is the one thing Adam lacked in the Garden, and that lack resulted in a lot of anxious toil... for it made Adam susceptible to this lie: You must make yourself Good, like God, with knowledge of the Good, and a lot of anxious toil.

In Hebrew that’s the word “*etseb.*”

It only shows up seven times in Scripture.

The first is in Genesis 3 when the Lord says to the woman, who is a picture of all of us—he says “because you have done this... in *etseb*, in anxious toil, you will bring forth children.”^{ix}

I find that fascinating for a mother who gives birth knows something that the rest of us don’t really know... well. She knows she didn’t make the baby, but she does give birth to the baby. The *anxious toil* didn’t make the baby, but maybe it makes her appreciate the baby. A baby is the gift of life born through her earthen vessel. Birth is anxious toil until she surrenders the life inside her and finds it in her arms, held tight to her breast.

In Proverbs 10 Solomon writes, “The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and he adds no *etseb* with it.” Also translated, “The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and *etseb*, anxious toil, adds nothing to it.”^x

Anxious toil adds nothing to the blessing, except perhaps the knowledge that we can’t make the blessing with our anxious toil. The blessing.

We talk a lot about original sin, but have forgotten about original blessing, which the Bible mentions first.

Gen. 1:27 · God created man in his own image...

Gen. 1:28 · And God blessed them...

On the 7th day all is blessed and good and the 7th day is eternal.

God blessed them, but on the 6th day, in Genesis chapter 2, Adam didn’t know that he was blessed—he couldn’t find his helper—who is the blessing.

Adam means “humanity,” and Scripture teaches that God alone is our Helper and God alone is the Good.^{xi} On the 6th day of creation Adam didn’t have knowledge of the Good. He didn’t know God is Good and didn’t know God had made him good.

And that’s why Adam and Eve, and you and me, are tempted to take knowledge of the Good—the Good that is always given. We’re tempted to take knowledge of the Good to make ourselves good. We’re tempted to justify ourselves with the law in the power of the flesh. We’re tempted to make ourselves Good, which is the revelation of the bad in us, which is our lack of faith in God who is always Good and good to us.

Maybe the bad is trying to take what’s always been given. And faith is the knowledge that everything is given, for God is Good.

And now I can just point to something that we cannot fully comprehend, but something that is in the process of fully comprehending us. It’s a knowledge we cannot take, but a knowledge that is given... it’s fore-given.

That’s the knowledge that not only does God make the house; it’s already been made... it’s fore-given. And not only does God guard the city; it’s already eternal in the Heavens.

Remember what we saw in the Revelation? An eternal Jerusalem that descends from Heaven. God’s house.

Paul writes that this Jerusalem above is our mother (not will be our mother, but is our mother).^{xii} And check this out: that Jerusalem is us—the finished us. We see the New Jerusalem after we watch the old one be destroyed.

In 2 Cor. Paul writes, “For we know that if the earthly tabernacle, which is our earthly home, is destroyed, we *have* a building from God, a house not made with hands—including our hands—eternal in the heavens.”^{xiii} In Ephesians Paul tells us that we are already seated with Christ in the heavenly places.^{xiv}

Genesis 1:37 · “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.”
If you’re a thing God made, you’re very good.
If you’re a thing that you think you made, you are a vain illusion. A bad dream.

Solomon wrote, “Whatever God does endures forever, nothing can be added to it and nothing taken away from it.” In other words, the true you and all the new creation is very good and your anxious toil can add nothing to it or to you. Your anxious toil builds your ego, which is only an illusion. A bad dream.

And yet, through your anxious toil God gives birth to knowledge. Knowledge that he is Good, and he makes you Good. And that knowledge is called faith—faith in Grace.

God has built the house and God has built the city. He is the Good and the Good in everything he has built. And now in the 6th day of Creation, he is creating faith in us, with the revelation of who he is. He is the Good, freely given on a tree in a Garden at the end of the 6th day and the edge of the eternal 7th day—God’s Rest.

What we think we take... has always been given. On the tree he cries, “It is finished.”

And that’s why I can sleep... or perhaps, wake up.

A few days ago, I woke up with this word running through my mind: *Tardemah*. It means “deep sleep” and it appears in the bible seven times. The first time is the first instance of sleep, ever recorded.

Adam, which is humanity, is alone and can’t find his helper, even though his helper is right next to him... As Scripture teaches God alone is our Helper and as Jesus said, “God alone is Good.”

Adam doesn’t know the Good and so he doesn’t trust the Good, His Helper. It’s then, that God says something utterly bizarre—Karl pointed to it last week. We talked about it when we studied Genesis and the Revelation. God says “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you do not eat, for in the day of eating, dying you do die...”^{xv}

So, did Adam eat? God says, he doesn’t eat. But that when he eats, dying he will die... or maybe, sleeping, he will sleep.

So did Adam eat? Did we take the Life of the Good on a tree called the cross? We thought we did; but we cannot take what has always been given. We thought we took his life, but maybe our control was just an illusion.

Jesus even said as much, “No one takes it from me... I lay it down”^{xvi}... I give it. He is our Helper, made fit for us his harlot bride. Made fit by God on a tree.

Well right after God says, “you do not eat,” and the Adam can’t find our Helper, God causes a *tardemah*, a deep sleep, to fall on the Adam, and from the Adam’s side he makes Adam’s bride, and he begins to tell the story of our redemption.

The Bible doesn’t mention God waking humanity from this deep sleep until the seventh and last time *tardemah* is mentioned. That’s Isaiah chapter 29. To Jerusalem—God’s house, God’s temple and God’s bride—Isaiah writes “Suddenly you will be visited by the Lord of hosts (v.6) ... and all that fight against [you] (v.7) will be like a dream, a vision of the night... for the lord has poured out upon you a spirit of *tardemah*.”

Isaiah prophecies that they will dream they are destroyed, and then wake up to the reality that they are the eternal bride of the living God. They are his house, his city, his beloved... and then they won’t know the good like a law in a book, the Good will be a living desire rising in their heart.

See? Sometimes I’ve wondered if all our sin and all our anxious toil is like a bad dream that God allows, so we can wake to the reality that He is Good. We’ve dreamed a dream that’s become a nightmare: that we can take knowledge of Good and make ourselves in the image of God. Yet God reveals that we cannot take his life, for from the foundation of the world, he’s always given his Life. His Life is his Word through whom all that’s made has been made.

I don’t know if I said that correctly, but...God is the Good, and he has made us Good, and at the tree he creates knowledge in us that this is so—that living knowledge is Faith. We wake from the dream of our own control, when we hear him cry, “Father forgive them, they know not...” and then, “it is finished.” We wake, when we realize everything is the Grace of God.

“Awake oh sleeper and arise from the dead and Christ shall give you light.”^{xvii}

Sometimes I have a dream in a dream, and its reality waking me up. The Kingdom of God may seem like a dream, but its reality waking you up.

“We are most deeply asleep at the switch when we fancy we control any switches at all” writes Annie Dillard.^{xviii} “We sleep to time’s hurdy-gurdy.” We wake to the presence of God.

This world is not a rat race, and you are not a rat. This is your father’s world, and you are His beloved.

The house is built, and the city is eternal, and so there is no point to all your anxious toil...

And now your ego will say, “Then why toil, why build at all, why watch at all, why love God at all, why love my neighbor at all, why be good at all, why pedal at all?”

Monday is my day of rest, my Sabbath. And because I sit in my office all week, I like to ride my bike. When my youngest was five, I’d take him with me. We borrowed a bike trailer from friends. It used to scare Susan, but Coleman just loved it. I’d attach it to the back of my mountain bike, and while the other kids were in school, we’d just take off racing down the trails from Morrison to Denver where we’d get hot dogs and nachos.

Because I needed a workout and because it was fun, I would always ride fast and in high gear. And Coleman always had a blast... until one day, when I could tell something was really bothering him. We had stopped somewhere along the path. His eyes no longer shined with the usual faith, hope, and love. He seemed distant and he was no longer having fun.

He said, "Daddy, there's something I have to tell you..."

I said, "OK buddy, what is it?"

He said, "Well, um... there was a place back there where... um, I wasn't pedaling."

He thought I needed him to pedal. He wondered if I'd love him the same if he didn't. He didn't realize that because of the way those bikes were geared, and because I was a grown man and he was a five-year old boy, his pedaling actually accomplished nothing... except his own joy which was my joy. I didn't *need* him to pedal, and yet I *wanted* him to pedal because I *wanted* him to share my joy.^{xix}

I said, "Oh buddy you don't have to pedal, but thanks for whenever you do pedal..." His face lit up and I could tell: now he wanted to pedal. It was no longer anxious toil; It was a taste of heaven. He just enjoyed doing what he saw his father doing and doing it with his father. Nothing to prove, just someone to be—the image and likeness of his Dad.

Communion

On the sixth day of the week Jesus took the bread and broke it saying this is my body given to you—take and eat.

And he took the cup saying this is the eternal covenant in my blood—drink of it all of you.

This is not the bread of anxious toil.

This is the revelation of what God is doing, which is what he's always done.

This is the revelation of who you are and that it is finished.

This is how the Lord gives to his beloved sleep, and this is how he wakes us all from the dead.

Benediction

The idea that we have separated ourselves from God and he no longer loves us is a vain illusion and a bad dream. [Peter holds up the communion bread] But this is not a dream. Or maybe I should say this is God's dream. And God's dream is called reality. This is how God gives his dream to us, so that our dreams become his dreams. This is the Word spoken into the void that creates all things, including you. See, it turns out that we're not the dreamer. We are God's dream. And God's dream is called reality.

Now, there are all sorts of reasons for sleeplessness, but with me I think it usually boils down to the fact that my heart still believes this lie, that I can actually get things done with anxious toil.

The truth is that with anxious toil I can accomplish nothing. But with faith, hope, and love, God accomplishes all things... or has accomplished all things, even some things, through me. As Paul puts it: "Good works which God prepared beforehand that we would walk in them."

I will know the way, because I will want to walk in the way... even if it's hard. I will know it's not the way, when I notice that I'm striving with anxious toil.

At 3AM, I'm beginning to recognize anxious toil. And I'm beginning to believe, "with this we can accomplish nothing." And then I fall asleep.

You cannot build the house of God with anxious toil...And your ego will say, "then why toil at all?" Why pedal at all?

That's a little like saying, "If only God can make a baby, why should I make love to my bride or bridegroom at all!"

Psalms 127 ends with these three verses:

- 3 **Behold, children are [an inheritance] from the LORD,
the fruit of the womb a reward.**
- 4 **Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth.**
- 5 **Blessed is the man
who fills his quiver with them!
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.**

It's counterintuitive, but you can't make a baby with anxious toil. A baby is often born through anxious toil, but a baby is made by the grace of God... only God can make a baby.

You're born of anxious toil, but when you see that it is finished, none of your toil will be anxious, and all your work will be rest. Like riding your bike on the Sabbath...

And that's called the kingdom of Heaven. Jesus said, "It's at hand."

Believe the Gospel and so walk in his Kingdom.

Endnotes

ⁱ Matthew 6:25

ⁱⁱ Philippians 4:4

ⁱⁱⁱ Ironically, or maybe not so ironically, Enrico is the first one to the locker in Silver City and together all the "rats" end up giving the money away at a giant charity fundraiser hosted by Smash Mouth. Everyone is happy—for it's better to give than receive. Someone says, "you're just like the twelve apostles." Everyone is happy, except for those the hotel owner who arranged the rat race and is now forced to give all his money to charity.

^{iv} Scripture often refers to those in Hades as those who sleep in the "dust of death" or the "dust of the earth." Jesus said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him..." then he told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead.'" (Daniel 12:2, Isaiah 26:19, Psalm 22:15, John 11:11-14, 1 Cor. 15:51-54, 1 Thess. 4:14)

^v Ecclesiastes 3:14

^{vi} 2nd Samuel 12:25

vii 2nd Samuel 24, 1 Chronicles 21

viii See Comments by Cristopher Wordsworth and Henry Melville in Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, Psalm 127

ix *etseb* can also be translated “pot or vessel.” So perhaps God is saying that through this earthen vessel you will give birth to Life. Through this body of flesh we give birth to a spiritual body and even Christ himself. It’s the vessel of wrath that give’s birth to the vessel of mercy. It’s the “old man, old adam” that is the theater for the revelation of the “the new man, the last adam, Christ in me.”

x Proverbs 10:22 ESV. The ESV footnote provides the alternate reading. *Etseb* is here translated “sorrow.”

xi About fifteen times the old testament tells us that God is our *ezer* (Helper), but it never refers to a wife or woman as a man’s *ezer*. We are the bride of Christ and God made himself a “helper fit for [us]” on the tree in the garden where we took his life and he gave it. Jesus said none is good but God alone. He is the Good in flesh hanging on a tree and he is “the Life.”

xii Galatians 4:26

xiii 2 Corinthians 5:1

xiv Ephesians 2:6

xv And Jehovah God layeth a charge on the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden eating thou dost eat; and of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou dost not eat of it, for in the day of thine eating of it—dying thou dost die.’ –Genesis 2:6-7 Young’s Literal Translation

xvi John 10:18

xvii Ephesians 5:14 RSV

xviii “We are most deeply asleep at the switch when we fancy we control any switches at all. We sleep to time’s hurdy-gurdy; we wake, if we ever wake, to the silence of God.” -Annie Dillard quoted in Wayne Muller, *Sabbath: Restoring the Sacred Rhythm of Rest* (New York: Bantam Books, 1999), p. 209.

xix Matthew 25:21