



230: Psalm Summer: A Series

I'm Emily P. Freeman and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to episode 230.

This is a podcast about making decisions, but also about making a life. If you struggle with decision fatigue, chronic hesitation, or if you just need a few minutes away from the constant stream of information and the sometimes delightful, but also distracting hum of entertainment, well, you're in the right place, for discerning your next right thing. For the next several weeks. I want to try something a little bit different, something I need, and maybe you too. Listen in.

Y'all, we're carrying a lot right now. It's a phrase that feels particular to now, after the goings on of the last several months, after the heartbreak and tragedy of shootings of innocent grocery shoppers, because they were Black, after the devastating school shooting that killed children and teachers during the last week of school, after a celebrity televised trial, and a public hearing in Washington, and wars all over the world. Mix all of that in with all of the regular May and June things that have carried on, thanks be unto God. Weddings and wedding showers, seasonal travel, new babies, neighborhood pool visits, end-of-school awards days, field days, graduation days and birthdays. And then of course there are the personal heartbreaks, physical exhaustion, goodbyes and hellos, packing for the trips, waiting for results, fitting full-time grownup work into part-time summer hours. There's the divorce to navigate, the engagement to plan, the school decisions that have to be made before the fall.

There's that friendship that seems to be fading. The relationship that might be blossoming. And the family member, you can never please. Maybe in the midst of all that you're carrying, your faith community is a refuge, or maybe they're the source of your angst. Either way, we're navigating the truth about God, not just the form we've inherited God in and are accustomed to, but the true, mysterious, majestic, personal God who is all love, all goodness, beauty, wisdom, compassion and hope. The God who hides, stays silent, waits too long, offends us, surprises us, and doesn't always speak the way we expect. The God who's making all things new. The Jesus who is a friend to those in the margins. The spirit who mothers and comforts her loved ones. We're looking for God in the cracks of our lives, in the wide open spaces of our joys, and the painful fissures of our brokenness.

And so to say, "We're carrying a lot right now, feels particular to now, but the reality is, it isn't particular. Any day of the year, we could pull out that phrase and it would be true. As I sit in discernment and honestly ask the question, "What do we need right now?" I'm met with silence. Given time, my simple answer is rest. And collectively, we need that too. Rest for our bodies to know we're safe. Rest for our minds running into the future. Rest for our hearts to believe we have what it takes. Rest for our creative selves, so that we can be renewed to create again.

And so I have a plan, I'll admit it's not fancy, but in an attempt to create a little space for your soul to

breathe and mine too, I'm going to take some time off from creating new content for the podcast for the next four weeks, but I'm not going to leave you with nothing. Instead, I'd love to read you some Psalms here in the podcast feed. I asked for recommendations on Instagram last week. Listen, if you don't follow me there on Instagram, you're really missing out on the opportunity to vote for some content every now and then. But when I asked, many of you also recommended, which I loved, that I read poetry or book chapters and other things. And I would love to do that. I'm a little hesitant to read large portions of other people's work here on the podcast, frankly, because I'm afraid it gets into copyright issues. I haven't really looked into it, but I'm happy to read the words of the Psalmist. Maybe these ancient scriptures will bring some hope or healing your way.

The Psalms don't always do that, if we're honest. Sometimes, they enrage, confuse, stir up or paint a picture of God and also of humans, that's unsettling or offensive. Sometimes that's scary for me, but for now it settles me. Because look at us, still being human, just like our ancestors, still feeling anger and fear, wishing harm to our enemies on our worst days and sending praise to God on our best. Look at how we still need to grieve and dance, sing and lament, look at how they model the art form.

So for the next four Tuesdays, I'll read a Psalm for us and at least two different versions of scripture. That way you can hear some various interpretations of the words. That way if one version is overly familiar, perhaps hearing it in a different version, will bring a fresh word your way. That's my plan. I hope this, my next right thing, sings well with your next right thing. Let's move forward in listening and in love.

Thanks for listening to episode 230 of The Next Right Thing. I hope this simple practice of considering the Psalms, can be just one more rung on the trellis upon which your rhythm of life can continue to grow, because while it's true, this is a podcast about making decisions, the bigger truth is our daily decisions are actually making our lives.

As always, as I said before, you can find me on Instagram @emilypfreeman, where I often put up polls in question boxes to hear more from you, and then I use a lot of what you share with me, not your words personally, but I use a lot of your ideas or your questions or your suggestions here in the podcast. You can also find a transcript of this episode and every episode at emilypfreeman.com, just click on podcast in the upper right hand corner. Another thing to note about these Psalm episodes for the next several weeks, what I'm affectionately calling Psalm Summer Series, say that 10 times fast, is that I won't have an intro or an outro in those episodes.

And that's extremely intentional, as you can imagine. The idea is so that you can go to those particular episodes next week, the week after, or a year from now. And when you hit play on those episodes, all you'll get is Scripture. You'll get that message from that Psalm. And you won't have to fast forward through anything I'm saying by way of introduction or conclusion, so I hope that helps to serve as just another resource for you to return to.

You'll be familiar with this form. We've done it before. I have recorded Psalm 139, Psalm 46, Psalm 22. So there are several episodes where we've already done this and perhaps that will be helpful. We'll try to link to those in the show notes. This series of Psalm readings, week after week, over the next several weeks, can hopefully just add to the collection of resources for you to use as you do your next right thing.

Well, in closing, I wanted to read you just a couple of lines from a song by Storyhill called, Love Will Find You. I've heard this song for years and years, it's one that I have on a couple of different playlists. But today, the lyric struck me more deeply and maybe in a different way. And I wanted to offer it here to you.

You may have lost what little faith you have. You may believe with all your heart. You may be pulling yourself together again. You may be falling apart. One of you sees that loves a long lost friend. One of you can't recognize her face. One of you runs to her with open arms. One of you falls down in disgrace. No matter what you do, love will find you. May it be so, in us and among us.

Thanks for listening and I'll see you next time.