



306: Okay

I'm Emily P. Freeman, and welcome to The Next Right Thing. You're listening to Episode 306. I'm an author, a spiritual director and an occasional workshop leader. I live in the Piedmont of North Carolina with my family. And through my work, I've helped thousands of spiritually-thoughtful people overcome decision fatigue so that they can discern their next right thing in faith, in work and in life. Today, I need to slow down for just a few minutes to take a breath, to take a beat here in the middle of December. And so I want to offer you a four minute and 38-second meditation for being okay. It's from one of the Advent collections in the Quiet Collection app called Compassion. It's track 8, named simply Okay.

As you listen, if it seems the music was written just for these words, it's because it was. Caleb Peavy sat down at his piano, listened to my voice, and wrote music in real time. It's an unbelievable gift, and he did that for every track in all of the advent collections. What you're about to hear is one of the simpler ones, like I said, just four and a half minutes long, but it's one I personally return to over and over again. Listen in.

Is there any place I can go to avoid your spirit, to be out of your sight? If I climb to the sky, you're there. If I go underground, you're there. If I flew on morning's wings to the far Western horizon, you'd find me in a minute. You're already there waiting. Then I said to myself, "Oh, he even sees me in the dark. At night, I'm immersed in the light." It's fact. Darkness isn't dark to you. Night and day, darkness and light, they're all the same to you. Psalm 139:7-12, thanks be to God.

As we roll down the hill of December, the only place to land is in a new year. Beneath our grownup, questions about the bills and rebuilding, about 401(k)s and future expenses, about vocation and social justice, and family dynamics, and taking care of children and grandchildren, and all the questions we're responsible to at least hold if not to solve, we're also asking a simpler question we can't solve on our own, like are we going to be okay? It's a childlike question that runs like a quiet river in our souls beneath the terrain of our everyday lives. Sometimes it feels like everything has to be okay and there's no room left for our pain.

Other times, it seems like nothing will ever be okay and there's no room left for our hope. What if we welcomed this tiny revolutionary idea of being okay just for now? In this right now, right here, moment of listening, of stillness, of waiting for the light right now, just here, we are okay.

Okay. What if Advent isn't just about waiting for Jesus to be born later, but waiting in the silence for how Christ lives now, and now, and now? Even when I'm not okay, in this moment of waiting and listening, I am okay. The longer we pause, the longer it's true. If I flew on morning's wings to the far western horizon, you'd find me in a minute. You're already there waiting.

Thanks for listening to Episode 306 of The Next Right Thing. If you want access to this and 29 other original reflections for Advent, you can download the Quiet Collection app on your iOS or Android device. The app itself is free to download. And once you have it, there's some free content immediately available inside. Once you're there, you can purchase all three Advent Collections at a discount, or you can get just one of them. Again, today's reflection is from Compassion, and there are two other collections available as well, Hope and Love. We make it easy to listen all in one place, and we also now have a one-stop shop way to send one or all of these collections as a gift right inside the app.

So if you're wondering what to give that person who has everything one week before Christmas, all you have to do is have your recipient's name and email address, and we'll do the rest by sending them an email from us with instructions and a special code for them to redeem the collection that you choose for them. Visit thequietcollection.com to have all your questions answered, and pay particular attention to the bottom of the page where there's some FAQs. And you can get started today. With just one week left until Christmas, if you get the Advent collection bundle that has all three collections included, then you'll have a reflection to listen to morning, noon, and night every day until Christmas. I'll be back next week to share what worked in 2023, always an informative episode every year. But until then, I hope you have a life-giving week. Thanks for listening, and I'll see you next time.