

[Day #13] Part 2 (Groaning): An Aria Breaks Forth

Read: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Psalm 86:1-4; 88:1-2;

Out of deepest sorrow can rise a richness and beauty one would never think possible. Timothy Keller tells of a man, Greg, who in the midst of deep brokenness and traumatic loss, likened his deep suffering to an operatic aria. Keller writes, “[Greg] observed how in the middle of many operas there was a crucial aria, a ‘sad and moving solo’ in which the main character turned sorrow into something beautiful. And Greg said, ‘This is my moment to sing the aria. I don’t want to, I don’t want to have this chance, but it’s here now, and what am I going to do about it? Am I going to rise to the occasion?’” (Keller, *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*, pp 164-165)

This aria can be heard and maybe even enjoyed by others, but can only be fully known, understood, and savored by heaven.

We have no doubt sung our share of such arias and have heard others’ as well. It’s that person who cannot stem the flow of tears each week during church. This is an aria.

It’s someone, like my mother in her later years, who cannot get through even the first phrase of a prayer without getting choked up. They are longing for something. This is an aria.

Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus looked out at those mourning their friend. Though He knew they would soon be elated, their profound sadness moved Him. Jesus wept. This was an aria.

Arias are sung from desperate places such as ash heaps, from the belly of a great fish, or from the end of oneself when asked for an excruciating third time, “Peter, do you love me?”

Often those emerging out of deepest sorrow of soul have expressed, with a tinge of sadness, how they already miss the special intimacy they knew with God when He carried them through the darkest times. These are arias.

Like Greg said, no one wants to sing the aria. Sad arias can only be sung by sad people, and nobody wants to be sad, crushed, broken. But when it’s our turn, the unscripted, unrehearsed song can rise, if we let it, on a cue all its own when it can no longer be held back.

Arias weave sadness into something tender and beautiful. When it is our turn, will we sing?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Describe a time when you or someone you know chose to “sing an aria” during suffering instead of giving in to bitterness or anger.

What impact did the sad but beautiful “aria” have on those “hearing” it?

How much, if any, should the knowledge that others are listening and observing us in our grief impact us?

- What could be some negative impacts?
- What could be some positive impacts?