



SHADOWS: A TENEBRAE SERVICE

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THIS IS AN ADAPTATION OF THE TENEBRAE (TÉN-EH-BRAY) SERVICE WITH BOTH WORLDLY AND SACRED READINGS THAT TELL THE STORY OF OUR BROKENNESS. THE SERVICE WILL MOVE FROM LIGHT TO DARKNESS, IT IS CONTEMPLATIVE AND DESIGNED FOR REFLECTION.

IF YOU HAVE 7 CANDLES AND CAN EXTINGUISH ONE WITH EACH READING DO SO. OR YOU CAN HAVE 7 STONES (OR OBJECTS) AND A JAR AND TAKE ONE AWAY AND DROP IT IN WITH EACH SHADOW.

FIRST SHADOW

With you, O Lord, is the well of life:

and in your light we see light.

O LORD How priceless is your love, O God!

Your people take refuge under the shadow of your wings.

For with you is the well of life: and in your light we see light.

Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you:

and your favor to those who are true of heart.

With you, O Lord, is the well of life: and in your light we see light.

Psalm 36: 7, 9– 10

Here is my servant, the one I uphold; my chosen, who brings me delight. I've put my spirit upon him; he will bring justice to the nations. He won't cry out or shout aloud or make his voice heard in public. He won't break a bruised reed; he won't extinguish a faint wick, but he will surely bring justice. He won't be extinguished or broken until he has established justice in the land.

Isaiah 42 1-4

With you, O Lord, is the well of life: and in your light we see light.

Courage is a hard thing to figure. You can have courage based on a dumb idea or mistake, but you're not supposed to question adults, or your coach or your teacher, because they make the rules. Maybe they know best, but maybe they don't. It all depends on who you are, where you come from. Didn't at least one of the six hundred guys think about giving up, and joining with the other side? I mean, valley of death that's pretty salty stuff. That's why courage it's tricky. Should you always do what others tell you to do? Sometimes you might not even know why you're doing something. I mean any fool can have courage. But honor, that's the real reason for you either do something or you don't. It's who you are and maybe who you want to be. If you die trying for something important, then you have both honor and courage, and that's pretty good. I think that's what the writer was saying, that you should hope for courage and try for honor. And maybe even pray that the people telling you what to do have some, too.

Michael Lewis, The Blind Side

Silence for Reflection:

How are honor and courage so tricky? How do we dwell in the shadows because we fail to show courage and honor?

On the mount of Olives Jesus prayed to the Father: Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

Watch and pray, that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. While we sat in darkness, Lord Jesus Christ, you interrupted us with your life. Make us, your people, a holy interruption so that by your Spirit's power we may live as a light to the nations,

even as we stumble through this world's dark night. Amen.

First Candles are Extinguished

SECOND SHADOW

Arise, O God, maintain your cause:

defend the poor for your name's sake.

Remember, O Lord, how the enemy scoffed:

how a foolish people despised your name.

Do not hand over the life of your dove to wild beasts:

never forget the lives of your poor.

Look upon your covenant:

the dark places of the earth are haunts of violence.

Psalm 74: 17– 19

God the LORD says-- the one who created the heavens, the one who stretched them out, the one who spread out the earth and its offspring, the one who gave breath to its people and life to those who walk on it— I, the LORD, have called you for a good reason. I will grasp your hand and guard you, and give you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to lead the prisoners from prison, and those who sit in darkness from the dungeon.

Isaiah 42 5-7

Arise, O God, maintain your cause: defend the poor for your name's sake.

“Here you stand, upright, hands in your pockets.” He gestured toward the other students. “See how they hunch? How they cling to the wall?” He was right. A few were venturing onto the ridge but they did so cautiously, taking the same ungainly side steps. Dr. Kerry had, tipping and swaying in the wind; everyone else was holding tightly to the stone parapet, knees bent, backs arched, as if unsure whether to walk or crawl.

I raised my hand and gripped the wall.

“You don’t need to do that,” he said. “It’s not a criticism.”

He paused, as if unsure he should say more. “Everyone has undergone a change,” he said. “the other students were relaxed until we came to this height. Now they are uncomfortable, on edge. You seem to have made the opposite journey. This is the first time I’ve seen you at home in yourself. It’s in the way you move: it’s as if you’ve been on this roof all your life.”

A gust of wind swept over the parapet and Dr. Kerry teetered, clutching the wall. I stepped up onto the ridge so he could flatten himself against the buttress. He stared at me, waiting for an explanation.

“I’ve roofed my share of hay sheds,” I said finally.

“So your legs are stronger? Is that why you can stand in this wind?”

I had to think before I could answer. “I can stand in this wind because I’m not trying to stand in it,” I said. “the wind is just wind. You could withstand these gusts on the ground, so you can withstand them in the air. There is no difference. Except the difference you make in your head.” He stared at me blankly. He hadn’t understood.

“I’m just standing, you are all trying to compensate, to get your bodies lower because the height scares you. But the crouching and the sidestepping are not natural. You have made yourselves vulnerable. If you could just control your panic, this wind would be nothing.”

Educated, Tara Westover

Silence for Reflection:

Where has panic led to weakness in our life together?

My soul is very sorrowful, even to the point of death; remain here, and watch with me. Now you shall see the crowd who will surround me; you will flee, and I will go to be offered up for you.

Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

You will flee, and I will go to be offered up for you. Lord, in our efforts to serve, help us be true to who we are in you. Make us see and understand the gifts and talents you have given us, **and give us courage to use them for the building up of your kingdom. Amen.**

Second Candles are Extinguished

THIRD SHADOW

Save us, Lord, but not us alone:

redeem your whole creation.

In you, O Lord, have I taken refuge:

let me never be ashamed.

In your righteousness, deliver me and set me free:

incline your ear to me and save me.

Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe:

you are my crag and my stronghold.

Do not cast me off in my old age:

forsake me not when my strength fails.

Psalm 71: 1– 3

All you beasts of the field, come and eat, all you beasts of the forest! The lookouts are blind; they all lack sense. They are all mute dogs that can't bark, dreamers, loungers, loving to sleep. But the dogs have monstrous appetites. They never have enough. They are shepherds who don't understand. All of them have turned to their own ways, every last one greedy for profit.

Isaiah 56.9-11

Save us, Lord, but not us alone: redeem your whole creation.

They had a struggle to get out of the thicket. The thorns and briars were as tough as wire and as clinging as claws. Their cloaks were rent and tattered before they broke free at last. ‘Now down we go, Sam,’ Frodo whispered. ‘Down into the valley quick, and then turn northward, as soon as ever we can.’

Day was coming again in the world outside, and far beyond the glooms of Mordor the sun was climbing over the eastern rim of Middle-earth; but here all was still dark as night. The mountain smoldered and its fires went out. The glare faded from the cliffs. The easterly wind that had been blowing ever since they left Ithilien now seemed dead. Slowly and painfully they clambered down, groping, stumbling, scrambling among the rock and briar and dead wood in the blind shadows, down and down until they could go no further.

J.R.R. Tolkien

Silence for Reflection: How is it that gloom, thorns and cruelty are so dominant in a beloved creation?

Lo, we have seen him without beauty or majesty, with no looks to attract our eyes. He bore our sins and grieved for us, he was wounded for our transgressions, and by his scourging we are healed.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows:

And by his scourging we are healed. Savior of the world, save us from our sin, our sadness, and our self-deception.

Give us courage to live in a world we cannot fix with the trust that it has already been redeemed. Amen.

Third Candles are Extinguished

FOURTH SHADOW

Unless a seed falls into the ground and dies:

it cannot bear fruit or bless others' lives.

Incline my heart to your decrees: and **not to unjust gain.**

Turn my eyes from watching what is worthless:

give me life in your ways.

Unless a seed falls into the ground and dies:

it cannot bear fruit or bless others' lives.

Psalm 119: 34, 37

Look to the west as far as the shores of Cyprus and to the east as far as the land of Kedar. Ask anyone there: Has anything this odd ever taken place? Has a nation switched gods, though they aren't really gods at all? Yet my people have exchanged their glory for what has no value. Be stunned at such a thing, you heavens; shudder and quake, declares the Lord. My people have committed two crimes: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water. And they have dug wells, broken wells that can't hold water.

Jeremiah 2.10-13

Unless a seed falls into the ground and dies: it cannot bear fruit or bless others' lives.

This is where they fought the battle of Gettysburg. Fifty thousand men died right here on this field, fighting the same fight that we are still fighting among ourselves today. This green field right here, painted red, bubblin' with the blood of young boys. Smoke and hot lead pouring right through their bodies. Listen to their souls, men. I killed my brother with malice in my heart. Hatred destroyed my family. You listen, and you take a lesson from the dead. If we don't come together right now on this hallowed ground, we too will be destroyed, just like they were. I don't care if you like each other or not, but you will respect each other. And maybe... I don't know, maybe we'll learn to play this game like men.

Remember the Titans

Silence for reflection: What parts of our malice and selfishness is damaging our communities?

See how the righteous one perishes, and no one takes it to heart. The righteous are taken away, and no one understands. From the face of evil the righteous one is taken away, and his memory shall be in peace.

Like a sheep before its shearers is mute, so he opened not his mouth.

By oppression and judgment he was taken away: And his memory shall be in peace. Lord, we know the world will kill your prophets.

Nevertheless, give us words to convict, to heal, to raise up others for justice, and to offer forgiveness for those who harm us. Amen.

Fourth Candles are extinguished.

FIFTH SHADOW

Freedom, how long have we sought you:

dying, we now may behold you.

We have heard with our ears, O God, our forefathers have told us:

the deeds you did in their days, in the days of old.

You have made us fall back before our adversary:

and our enemies have plundered us.

Indeed, for your sake we are killed all the day long:

we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

Freedom, how long have we sought you: dying, we now may behold you.

Psalm 44: 1, 10, 22

Once great among nations, she has become like a widow. Once a queen over provinces, she has become a slave. She weeps bitterly in the night, her tears on her cheek. None of her lovers comfort her. All her friends lied to her; they have become her enemies. Judah was exiled after suffering and hard service. She lives among the nations; she finds no rest. All who were chasing her caught her—right in the middle of her distress. Zion's roads are in mourning; no one comes to the festivals. All her gates are deserted. Her priests are groaning, her young women grieving. She is bitter. Her adversaries have become rulers; her enemies relax. Certainly the LORD caused her grief because of her many wrong acts. Her children have gone away, captive before the enemy.

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1.2 -5

Freedom, how long have we sought you: dying, we now may behold you.

"I'd rather you shot at tin cans in the backyard, but I know you'll go after birds. Shoot all the blue jays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird." That was the only time I ever heard Atticus say it was a sin to do something, and I asked Miss Maudie about it. "Your father's right," she said. "Mockingbirds don't do one thing except make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corn cribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird

Silence for reflection: Where do we cause God grief in our acts and attitudes?

I was like a trusting lamb led to the slaughter. I did not know it was against me that they devised schemes, saying,

Let us destroy the tree with its fruit; let us cut him off from the land of the living.

All my enemies whispered together against me, and devised evil against me, saying:

Let us destroy the tree with its fruit; let us cut him off from the land of the living.

Lord, reveal to us all that makes itself an enemy to the life you want for us. Help us hunger so deeply for the freedom of all your people that we risk walking among enemies who pervert justice.

Reveal to us when we ourselves act as enemies to your kingdom of justice and peace. Amen.

Fifth candles ARE extinguished

He who hung the earth upon the waters:

he is hung upon the cross.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

and are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress?

O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer:

by night as well, but I find no rest.

Be not far from me, for trouble is near: and there is none to help.

He who hung the earth upon the waters: today he is hung upon the cross.

Psalm 22: 1 – 2, 11

Daughter Zion lost all her glory. Her officials are like deer that can't find pasture. They have gone away, frail, before the hunter. While suffering and homeless, Jerusalem remembers all her treasures from days long past. When her people fell by the enemy's hand, there was no one to help her. Enemies saw her, laughed at her defeat. Jerusalem has sinned greatly; therefore, she's become a joke. The uncleanness shows on her clothing; she didn't consider what would happen to her. She's gone down shockingly; she has no comforter. "Lord, look at my suffering—the enemy has definitely triumphed!"

Lamentations of Jeremiah 1: 6-9

He who hung the earth upon the waters: today he is hung upon the cross.

"His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other little boys began to shake and sob too. And in the middle of them, with filthy body, matted hair, and unwiped nose, Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy."

William Golding, Lord of the Flies

Silence for reflection: What deep dark inclinations and shadows do we let defeat us?

Darkness covered the whole land when Jesus had been crucified; and about the ninth hour he cried with a loud voice: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And he bowed his head and handed over his spirit.

Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.

And he bowed his head and handed over his spirit. While we were still your enemies, Lord Jesus Christ, you suffered and died for us, winning the victory over death for our sakes.

Give us grace to lift you up as we follow the way of your cross so that all people may be drawn unto you.
Amen.

SIXTH candles are extinguished



SEVENTH SHADOW

Remember me in your mercy,

Lord: and unite us by your cross.

How long, O Lord?

Will you forget me for ever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long shall I have perplexity in my mind,

and grief in my heart, day after day?

How long shall my enemy triumph over me?

Remember me in your mercy, Lord: and unite us by your cross.

Psalm 13

I thought, I must depart in the prime of my life; I have been relegated to the gates of the underworld for the rest of my life. I thought, I won't see the LORD. The LORD is in the land of the living. I won't look upon humans again or be with the inhabitants of the world. My lifetime is plucked up and taken from me like a shepherd's tent. My life is shriveled like woven cloth; God cuts me off from the loom. Between daybreak and nightfall you carry out your verdict against me.

Portion of the Song of Hezekiah from Isaiah 38.10-12

“But they were not living, thought Harry: They were gone. The empty words could not disguise the fact that his parents' moldering remains lay beneath snow and stone, indifferent, unknowing. And tears came before he could stop them, boiling hot then instantly freezing on his face, and what was the point in wiping them off or pretending? He let them fall, his lips pressed hard together, looking down at the thick snow hiding from his eyes the place where the last of Lily and James lay, bones now, surely, or dust, not knowing or caring that their living son stood so near, his heart still beating, alive because of their sacrifice and close to wishing, at this moment, that he was sleeping under the snow with them.”

J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows

Silence for reflection. How do you comprehend the sorrow that God feels for creation?

The veil of the temple was torn in two, and the earth shook, and the thief from the cross cried out, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

The rocks were split, the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who slept were raised:

And the earth shook, and the thief from the cross cried out, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Sometimes we don't realize the intensity of the things for which we pray, Lord.

Keep us courageously mindful that your way is laden with tears on the way to resurrection. Amen.

All except one candle are extinguished.

Christ for us became obedient unto death,

even death on a cross;

therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him

the Name which is above every name.

A silence is observed

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family,

for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed,

and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross.

NOTHING FURTHER IS SAID; BUT A NOISE IS MADE.

PEOPLE DEPART IN SILENCE.

SOURCES

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