

ADVENT DEVOTION: DECEMBER 8, 2022
PSALM 126
FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

I believe that this is a moment where I can be completely honest thanks to the anonymity of a computer screen. I am an anxious person. I don't think I'll be alone when I say more often than not, I catastrophize situations. My failures more than my successes keep me awake at night. I spend more analyzing a situation for how I could have been better or done better. I bring this up because a moment from a pastoral care unit really changed my negative perception of my own personal failures.

They had the privilege of working as a chaplain intern at the RMR Core Center in the medical district Chicago, IL for my field site during seminary. This facility's primary function was to provide dignified medical care to people living with HIV/AIDS. I was there for three months before anyone show up to one of the events, I organized for community engagement. That one person did stay, and we talked, shared stories, laughed so hard I ended up crying and then they left.

There was no thank you, no promise that they will come again. Just a good old-fashioned Midwestern 'welp' plus knee slap and they were out of the door. After they left and I had my debrief I honestly told my site coordinator I felt like a failure. I know what you're thinking, and I promise you I was devastated when I recovered a response after what felt like forever. They asked if I wanted them to listen to me or respond—I asked them to respond. I was surprised at first because my site coordinator did not try to console me, in fact they told me it was good I felt like a failure. They said because I already felt like a failure the benchmark for success has been set to a manageable level. That meant from here on out I could rejoice in the little things.

One person was more than none. That was one person reached which was more than yesterday so why not rejoice in the little things God has given you?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What are the small victories that go without rejoicing?
2. In what ways can God use what we deem as "failures" as means for reflection and thanksgiving?

~Quantisha Mason