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Meditation  
*'In Awe of Grace: **Dancing in the Dark**'*

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∴ **PART 1 | Psalm 22** ∴

→ **READING OF PSALM 22:1–11**

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Words from Psalm 22, what a darkness?  
How utterly deep must the darkness,  
the gloom be—to speak these words:

*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me,  
from the words of my groaning?*

*Psalm 22:1*

We have heard the story about Jesus becoming  
the servant.

We have heard the story about Jesus having his  
last supper with his closest friends.

You can get this impression, that step by step  
darkness is closing in on Jesus.

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Jesus showed how grace is right at the heart of his saying and doing—washing feet.

This wondrous sight made the disciples feel awe and wonder. An awe of grace.

*And [then] he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you [...].*

*In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.*

*Lk 22:19–20*

In his last breaking the bread and sharing the cup, he gives proof for the NEW covenant.

The grace of the new covenant, the covenant of eternal life for his disciples and for all people is still at the heart of all his saying and doing.

And we stand in awe and wonder of such grace—as darkness is closing in on Jesus.

*All who see me mock at me;  
they make mouths at me,  
they shake their heads;*

This is, what is to come.

*“O my God, I cry by day,  
but you do not answer;”  
and by night, but find no rest.*

Psalm 22:2

Would we not wish differently—for Jesus?  
Would we not wish differently—  
for all those suffering—near and far  
in our midst and over all the earth  
and for ourselves?

Don't we?

And—as darkness closes in— we pray:

*Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.*

Psalm 22:11

Who do you pray for...  
someone suffering—near or far  
in our midst or somewhere over all the earth?

::: Interlude :::

::: PART 2 | Luke 23:26-43:::

→ READING OF LUKE 23:26–43

Darkness is closing in.

The gloom of death approaches.

Three crosses on that hill called 'Skull'.

Signs of suffering and death.

Jesus' clothes are divided among the soldiers.<sup>i</sup>

He is being mocked:

*"He saved others; let him save himself if he is  
God's Messiah, the Chosen One."<sup>ii</sup>*

He is offered wine vinegar.

He is insulted by one of the criminals:

*"Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"<sup>iii</sup>*

Shouldn't Jesus be in complete darkness now?  
Wouldn't he now have to see that his whole  
mission to bring love and peace to people was  
in vain?

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*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me,  
from the words of my groaning?*

*Psalm 22:1*

But there is this other criminal. Asking for the fear of God.

And as he rebuked his fellow, asking for fear of God, he acknowledges Jesus' divinity.

He doesn't ask for pardon; he doesn't want to be saved. He just wants *not to be forgotten*, wants to be *remembered*; his life not just extinguished as if he never had lived at all.

But Jesus offers much more, a hope for the forsaken criminal—and a hint to all witnesses to the scene.

*“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

*Luke 23:43*

There is a hope, there is a place to dwell, far off death and suffering.

There is a place to sing, to dance, in the world that is open to those who went *through* death and suffering.

How would we wish that the '*going through*' wouldn't need to happen.

But the way of Jesus is not the way of the mocking folks. There is *no easy grace*, no salvation at *no cost*.

The grace of Jesus' cost a life, his life. And he gave it. He gave it to bring salvation beyond the humanly imaginable.

To our eyes it might be the extinguishing candle. We may see the loss, the hopelessness, death.

But there is more, there is this place, called 'Paradise', the place where the dance goes on.

Yes, there is time to grieve and feel the loss, a time of pain and despair.

But if we listen closely to Jesus words, we come to believe, that we are a people who will never be left in the pain and despair.

We are a people who knows—that the dance goes on. Not easily, no.

So let us stand, even kneel down in awe of grace, Jesus' grace, which could not be ceased;

- the grace of the one who became a servant to all,

- who offered the cup of the new covenant to eternal life,

- who took the villain to paradise.

We may not feel like dancing in the dark—as we remember Jesus' death on the cross.

But still, the dance will go on. There is a place where the singing, the laughing, the dancing never ceases.

*I danced on the Sabbath*

*And I cured the lame;*

*The holy people*

*Said it was a shame.*

*They whipped and they stripped*

*And they hung me on high,*

*And they left me there*

*On a Cross to die.*

*I danced on a Friday  
When the sky turned black  
It's hard to dance  
With the devil on your back.  
They buried my body  
And they thought I'd gone,  
But I am the Dance,  
And I still go on.*

*Dance, then, wherever you may be,  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he,  
And I'll lead you all, wherever you may be,  
And I'll lead you all in the Dance, said he.*

As he does, so will we: Dance in the dark... until  
the morning dawns.

::: Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> Ps 22:18.

<sup>ii</sup> Lk 23:35b.

<sup>iii</sup> Lk 23:39.