

Lent
Series
2025



Glory to the
Living
GOD!



April 14, 2025

BRIGHT SADNESS: REMEMBERING THE DARKNESS

Lent invites us to remember the darkness of Jesus' crucifixion. While traditional practices like praying and fasting are most common, it's also crucial to reflect on the darker aspects of Jesus's journey to the cross and sit in sackcloth and ashes. His steadfast faith in the midst of deep suffering reveals the profound depth of His sacrifice and unwavering love for humanity. And still the darkness was real.

In Gethsemane, He pleaded with God for hours, expressing His deep sorrow: "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death," and asked for the cup to be passed from Him (Matthew 24:36-44). "Could you not stay awake with me for an hour?" It seemed simple. It led to a long and arduous struggle in Gethsemane that ushered in the darkness on the cross.

Soong Chan Rah's Prophetic Lament advises us to not rush through suffering critiquing the Western Church for neglecting lament. While we sing "Oh, victory in Jesus, my Savior forever," we ignore "He sought me and he bought me, with his redeeming blood." Forgetting the darkness Jesus overcame dismisses Him as Savior.

In Walter Brueggemann's Prophetic Imagination the call is to merge criticality with hope. As described by Marshall Ganz, prophetic imagination is feeling both the pain and the possibilities of the world. They might seem contradictory, yet there is value in facing darkness without losing hope.

"Bright sadness" is a phrase I recently learned. It is used within the Orthodox Church to explain the paradoxical spiritual state where joy and grief coexist to enrich even the darkest spiritual journey. Acknowledging both allows us to fully appreciate Lent's transformative power.

During this season of Lent, may we enter a state of 'bright sadness'—remembering the darkness Jesus endured, remembering your own darkness, and allowing those remembrances to inspire hope and compassion for those surrounded by darkness today. Amen.

Brueggemann, Walter. The Prophetic Imagination. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001.
Ganz, Marshall. Leading Change: Leadership, Organization, and Social Movements. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
Rah, Soong-Chan. Prophetic Lament: A Call for Justice in Troubled Times. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2015.

Rev. Dr. Joanne Solis-Walker is Associate Dean of La Mesa Academy for Theological Studies at Candler School of Theology, Emory University and Professor in the Practice of Leadership.



#WeAreAETH

Learn more → aeth.org | [f](#) [@](#) [X](#) [▶](#) [aeth_org](#)