

Sydney Dvorak: January 7, 2020
An Anxious Amen

The first time I remember feeling it was in third grade PE class. We walked into the gym as a class, single file, and found a series of gymnastics equipment spread out across the gym. Our PE teacher explained it was an obstacle course, one in which we would all participate one at a time while he timed us and the rest of the class watched. I was nervous when anyone from my class looked at me on the most normal of occasions. But this? I thought I was going to pass out when I heard that. I told myself I wasn't afraid. I say that a lot, for someone who is constantly afraid.

Living with mental illness can mean a lot of different things to a lot of different people. For me, it means finding small and simple tasks unrealistically anxiety inducing. It means panic and fear and seemingly unrelenting worry. It means swinging between deep depression and high anxiety. It feels big and dark and endless.

If I am shaking at the thought of filling the car up with gas, then how am I supposed to go fearlessly into my future? Sometimes I feel so heavy, the worries multiply under my skin and weigh me down. Sometimes it feels like the only thing keeping me from sinking to the bottom is God.

In all honesty, I have felt abandoned by God. Do I not pray hard enough? When my mind is spinning out of control, how can God possibly be there?

But maybe all these questions and tears are prayer too. Even if I don't know if God is listening, amen. Even when I don't know if I can hold all of the feelings inside of me, amen. Even when all I have is tears, amen. Even when I am lost, amen. Even when I am angry at God, amen. So be it.

For all my worries and wrestlings, when all is darkness, the only thing that feels bigger than my mental illness is God. As endless as it feels, I know God goes further. As much as my worries multiply, God's perfect peace multiplies even more.

Psalm 13

How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall. But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.

Amen. So be it.

