

the **QUIET** collection



for Christmas

Day 7: Homesick

Our friend Jesus knows what it means to walk as a foreigner because there was a real day when he became a real baby born in a real cave from a real woman. He was a real human and the real King who came to bring real life. But he came in an unexpected way to an unlikely couple in an unspectacular town. He was one of us, but also other than us. Fully human, fully God. Metaphorically speaking, maybe your town is unspectacular too. Maybe you find yourself in an unexpected place, your path leading to an unlikely conclusion. Maybe home feels like a memory. It's a weird thing to say in a year where many of us have been home for more consecutive days than perhaps ever. But the truth is, even as you sit on your own sofa, stand in your own kitchen or sleep in your own bed, it's possible to feel homesick even when you're home.

It's because home is about more than a place where we live. It's about a place where we belong. The four walls that we live in are a part of that, but they aren't the whole part. We long to be rooted in community, grounded in our identity and settled with God. I know that it's possible to be rooted even if we're in motion, just as it's possible to be scattered even if we're staying in one place. I know that having doubts and questions about what you want to do and where you want to live and who you most deeply are, does not mean you don't have a home. I know that finding where we belong is not a one-time decision and uncovering your place in the kingdom can be slow, important work. Even though it goes against everything we've learned about plants, roots are something we can take with us wherever we go. Because home isn't something we have to wait for. Home is a place we can make.

Jesus made a home on earth, even though it wasn't his true home. He lived and then he died and now he lives again so that we might have life. Not just life forever with him, but life on this real day, in this real room, in the midst of our real pain and our real joy. So no matter how bad things get, no matter how heavy the sorrow, life will continue to move and hope is always an option. Because Jesus made his temporary home among us so that he could have a permanent home within us. He makes his home in us. We have our home in him. Just as there is no shadow without a light, there is no homesickness without a home.

We long for home because we have one. We just don't always see it, feel it or experience it in the dim light of our everyday lives or even in the twinkle lights of Christmas. As we look around the room, we might see home all over the place, the fruit bowl half full on the quiet table, the bike left out in the yard, the quilt on your guest room bed, the mirror with you staring back. Your reflection hasn't always felt like home, but maybe it will today. Because we are made in the image of a faithful God who had to come so that he could heal what is broken and then had to leave so that his spirit would come to be with us.

So let's do the things of making home, light the taper candles, pour the maple syrup into a glass jar, fold that cloth napkin, toss the cable knit throw across the sofa. Home may not look or sound or feel the way we thought it would by now, but Christ has made his home in us. How might Jesus be born in you today with all of your joy and grief, all of your lack and longing? In this year, which is not the year we wanted but is the year we have, how has God inviting the homesick home? Glory be to the father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be. Amen.