

Remember not against us the iniquities of the past; may your compassion embrace us.

Psalm 79:8

“Can you let this not be about you?” the pastor asked as Jane tried to explain her resistance and guilt. Evening darkened the small office just outside the tumultuous emergency department. There had been a building collapse and Jane's mother had been nearly crushed. Jane was the only relative, a long-alienated daughter. “But I've wanted to be reconciled,” she wept. “I just never had the courage to face her. Now it may be too late.”

Over several hours, the chaplain patiently encouraged Jane along a path of self-awareness, helping her realize that it was herself she needed to face. Her mother's situation, while tragic, offered Jane a catalyst to confront the years of excuses and denials that had paralyzed her. Slowly, the hope of reconciliation washed over her.

When her mother finally stabilized, Jane leaned close to her battered face. Her mother summoned the strength to whisper, “I have never stopped loving you.” That forgiving whisper breathed a vital courage into both women. Each would survive a particular kind of death that day.

Despite our best hopes and intentions, life can collapse around us. Broken promises, unfulfilled dreams and soured relationships can litter our landscapes. We may even lose God in the rubble. This week, Isaiah offers us God's forgiving invitation, “Come now, let us set things right,” says the Lord. “Though your sins be like scarlet, they will become white as snow.”

God will never stop loving us and longs to embrace our repentant hearts. Let us listen to and believe this whisper.