**I Guess This is My Life Now By Noah Diestelkamp**

When I am feeling uncomfortable, I find it difficult to remember how it felt to be comfortable. Perhaps some examples from my own life will sound familiar to you. By day three of a head cold, I can no longer remember what it feels like to breathe through my nose. At this point, I am tempted to think, “I’m sure it was nice breathing through my nose, but I guess this is my life now.” When I am eating tortilla chips or popcorn, something gets stuck among my teeth and gums and no matter how skilled I am with toothpick or floss—it holds fast. The ache is still there the next day, and again I think to myself, “Eating was fun while it lasted, but now every bite hurts. I guess this is my life now!” By this point in my life, I’ve experienced this phenomenon time and time again, so I ought to know that these discomforts don’t last forever; but in the moment, it feels quite permanent. “I guess this is my life now.”

I have experienced the same phenomenon in my spiritual life. Weeks full of discouragement can go by. Whether it is caused by my friends, by my community, or by my own attitude, I sense the same idea creeping in – “I guess this is my life now.” A month into a breakneck schedule of work, travel, activities, and evening plans, I begin to wonder what life must have been like when I had time to pray, meditate on God’s Word, and invest in my family. “Time must have been nice while I had it, but I guess this is my life now.” As my head hangs in shame after I became impatient or angry for the fifth (or fiftieth) time that day, a heavy fog settles in my mind, saying “I never will escape this sin. I guess this is my life now.”

But in saying this, I have accepted a lie. Yes, we experience troughs and valleys in all kinds of areas; but this does *not* mean we have to stay there! We are not meant to “settle in” to the valleys. When we find ourselves in a valley, we are meant to appeal to God for the path back up the mountain! When we are trapped in sin, we can confess it to God, confident that He is faithful to forgive us (1 John 1:9). When we are distracted, we can heed the instruction given to the church in Ephesus: “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first” (Revelation 2:5). When we are discouraged, we can find rest and hope in God because his steadfast love never ceases and he is our portion (Lamentations 3:22-24)!

I do not deny the difficulty of life’s valleys, nor do I want to downplay just how “stuck” we can feel in the moment. However, when we find ourselves there, we must fight the urge to shrug our shoulders and say, “I guess this is my life now.” Imagine how different the Luke 15 story of the Prodigal Son would be if—when he was at his lowest, sitting with the pigs and wishing he could eat their food—he had said, “I guess this is my life now.” Instead, we see he remembered the one person who could save him from the wretched situation he had brought upon himself – his father.

Friend, whether you’re discouraged, distracted, or trapped in sin, look to your Father. Through Jesus, he continually extends his hand to welcome you, forgive you, and redeem you for his work. *This* is your life now.