

The Lighthouse

Inspired by Psalm 27

By Ronald Estes

I feel the tug of the icy, black waves as my heart sinks deep within me. My earthly plans now left unfulfilled, I am strangely troubled that my God-given purpose will be found wanting. My life is at its end. Terrified I wonder,

“Did I choose this path or was this end always meant for me?”

I am conscious of my body as it rises and falls, powerless within the thunderous clashing of my watery tomb. Its odd rhythm and randomness reminiscent of my inconsistent and unremarkable life. Hope of reprieve abandoned as the blackness grows and extends into the night sky. I do not believe I have the energy left to fight or to live. I ask myself,

“What purpose is there in waiting for help or choosing to go on?”

I'm exhausted from my earthly struggles, failures and disappointments, yet something within me still remains to hold my head above the waters. Something inside me wants to carry on, to live, but I resist this unrecognized stranger. I want to give up, give in and give way to the easy choice before me. In anger I cry out to the God above; the Heavenly Father I never wanted to believe in. The eternal being who I am told somehow loves me and holds me in the hollow of His massive hand.

“Shall I breathe it all in, Lord? Shall I let death fill my vacant lungs and rid you of me?”

I force my chin to drop and tentatively invite the black

death of the sea to fill my mouth and nostrils and I hold it there for only an instant.

Before following through with my selfish decision I halfheartedly look for another path. I choose to see none. There are no stars twinkling above me, no moon shining to guide me, only the desire of ultimate escape left within me. I give in to this repose and give the black waters room to breathe and inhale my first salty breath, perhaps my last.

“Life!” Something shouts from my core. It is not me.

I cough and feel my heart swell and seek cessation to my cowardly egress. My soul reaches out for rescue. My hands claw for life.

“Life!”

I choose life. I don't know why? I know only that I desire it to continue. Yet, not the life I had lived before or a different equally selfish one, but a new eternal life. I cough again and purge more water from my chest. No longer afraid to fight, I gasp for fresh air, grasp for solid ground and ask for God's forgiveness. I do not want to die even as the black waves crest and intertwine above me like fingers clasping in prayer. Still scared by the adopted life of delusion and despair of my former self, I passively stretch upward and am startled to feel and hear the echoing thud of my hand against wood.

“A boat, my salvation?” I gasp.

In a leap of faith, I extend my other hand and grab hold of the wooden craft. I shout joyously as my ten fingers clamp onto my seaworthy rescue. I become arrogant and am paralyzed by it. Impressed with myself I embrace a familiar friend, hubris. Again, a prisoner of this delusion I look to myself alone and I proudly praise my efforts,

“I've done it!”

I do not consider or ask for the Almighty's help, rather I

reach within to find the strength to pull myself from this blackness. I strain and grumble under my breath and am denied my relief. I try again, and again, and again on my own, but alas failure is my ultimate reward.

“Death?”

I apathetically hang from the wooden hull I know is there, and sarcastically doubt even its existence. I entertain the idea of letting go just before another wave drags me and my wooden myth up another massive swell.

Ashamed of myself once again, I repentantly return to Him and humbly pray for His intercession. The violent sea roars its disapproval. It hisses, billows and flings me upward. This time I pray for God's strength. Just before we descend, the breaker tosses me over the starboard hull and I am gracefully deposited into the sturdy craft and concealed from the troubles that would pursue me. Securely aboard, I hold tight to its mast and peer expectantly toward the new horizon for life, for light, for His face. My heart again pounds and threatens to shatter the constricting walls of my chest as I sing His praises, for there is nothing more that I fear. Nothing left do I dread.

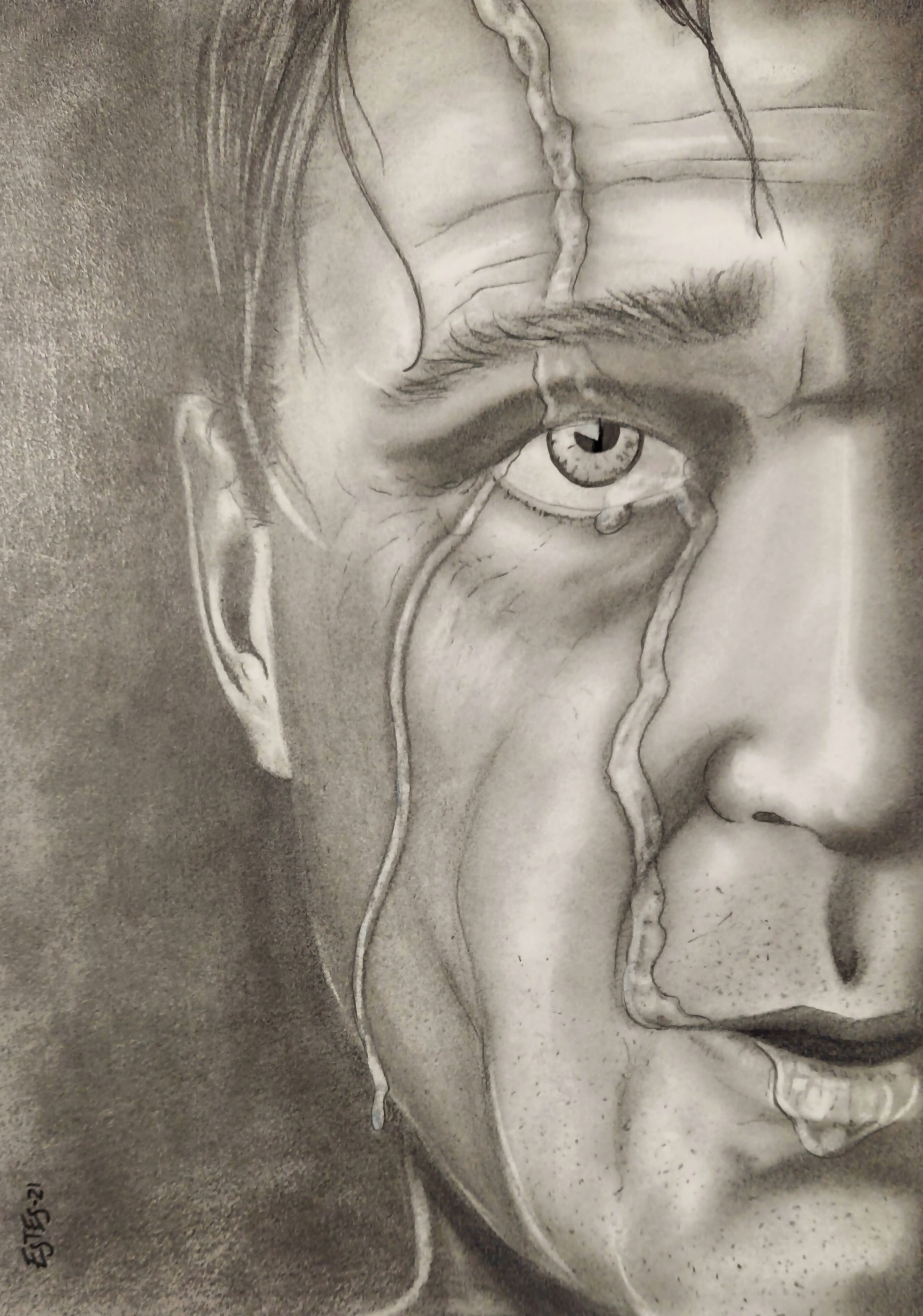
“I am the Lord's.”

I deny any thought of looking behind me and lift my eyes upward and wait. It is then that I see it, and am brought to my knees. Dominating my horizon, pulsating and brilliant, salvation stands in the distance yet is right beside me. Forgiving, yet unmovable from my sight it grows in intensity as I draw closer to its warm glow. Tears well up to cloud my vision, yet I have never seen so clearly.

“He is mine.”

In the midst of all hopelessness we can find our hope. In the utter void of darkness we are to expect the light. When

there's nothing left to cling to we must hold firmly to His promise. The **lighthouse** to our rocky seas is He and He stands eternally straight ahead.



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