Dear Open Door Family,

I went to bed but even though I was tired my mind would not stop. It kept going, thinking over and over about what I could say, what I could do, to encourage and help a good friend who was hurting so deeply. If I was loosing sleep over it I could not imagine how they were feeling. Too many times in my life I have gotten angry when I can't sleep. Part of that is because I don't ever sleep very well and I always feel like the night is too short. But I have been slowly learning that if I cannot sleep then instead of getting angry, I can pray, I can review verses, or even get up and spend some time alone with God. I wish I did that perfectly; I admit I am still a learner in this area. So these verses have been a big encouragement to me. When I'm tossing and turning and have something heavy on my heart I remember God cares very much about what I'm going through. Let's look at these verses together.

Psalms 56:8-9 (ESV) You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? Then my enemies will turn back in the day when I call. **This I know, that God is for me.**

Psalms 56:8 (MSG) You've kept track of my every toss and turn through the sleepless nights...

Psalms 56:8-9 (NLT) You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book. My enemies will retreat when I call to you for help. This I know: God is on my side!

Translating poetry from another language and culture is always difficult. If you add in more than 2,000 years of time going by, it makes it even more difficult. It is hard for us to picture catching tears in a bottle. Yet this was done in both the Greek and Roman cultures to show that a person was truly grieved over the death of a family member or close friend. It showed that those tears were valued. When the Psalmist says God collects all our tears in a bottle he is telling us that not ONE of our tears escapes God's notice. I love the Message translation of vs. 8, which may actually capture the first line best. When we toss and turn and we cannot sleep because something is heavy on our hearts and minds, God sees and understands. Of course, the best part of these verses is the last phrase. They are spoken with authority; *This I know* or of this I am convinced; God is *FOR ME* or *ON MY SIDE*. What more could we possibly want. God is on our side; He is FOR us, NOT against us.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, thank You that You care so much for me that you keep count of my tossing and turning. My tears, every one you value. May my tears be of genuine whole hearted brokenness for my own sinfulness and the cost too of my Salvation. May I rejoice that you are *FOR ME - ON MY SIDE*. Thank you!

Pastor Mark Kieft
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