

ISSUE EIGHT
HONEY IN THE ROCK



REVIVE

devotional

SPRINGVALE
WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Welcome to Revive

This week our town is blanketed in deep snow. The cars and roads are covered, and today's first task is to shovel ourselves out so we can still access the world. But underneath all this snow, dead things are dormant waiting to be brought back from barrenness, waiting for life to spring anew – and be reborn. For me, this time of year feels long and tedious; cold and inhospitable, something to hide from, and yet, beautiful things are happening underneath it all. New life is budding, new roots forming and soon all that has been dormant will awaken and reveal a new season! I feel like the global church is perhaps in the same place, on the verge of rebirth and renewal. Certainly, more than ever it feels like this culture needs to come out of our sleep and wake up to the calling before us – a world that is still waiting for a hope that we know was offered many years ago. A world that needs Jesus. People waiting for a new season... ready for Revival.

Over the last several months, I have been personally inspired by Shannon Champ as she walks through her journey with a brain tumour. After two surgeries and months of treatment, Shannon shares with us in these writings, what it is to trust and surrender to God; to walk with Him in difficult times that might cause our hearts to be hard... but if we are willing, maybe it's here that we will find the blessings, the "honey in the rock" - the sweetness of Jesus when surrounded by circumstances that we wish we could change. To witness Shannon's peace and joy through her journey is truly a testimony to God's faithfulness and power, and how a heart that seeks Him with determined purpose changes how we see everything.

What if this year, we saw things differently? What if this year, we allowed God to truly reign in our lives? What if a Revival is ready to start today? Maybe... it starts with you and me.

Lori Doner Jones

I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?
2 My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.
3 He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.
4 Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.
5 The Lord is your keeper;
the Lord is your shade on your right hand.
6 The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.
7 The Lord will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.
8 The Lord will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore.
(Psalm 121)



Faith That Had to Become Mine



"I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded now lives in you also." — 2 Timothy 1:5 (NIV)

I grew up surrounded by faith.

Not pressured by it.

Not trapped in it.

Not forced to perform it.

Surrounded by it.

My dad was very clear about one thing: my faith had to be mine.

Not because I was a pastor's kid.

Not because it looked good.

Not because it kept things neat and respectable.

He didn't want obedience without belief.

And he definitely didn't want borrowed conviction.

My dad wasn't what people expect when they hear the word Pastor. He grew up in a rough part of Toronto. He had even been in a gang, where his initiation was breaking someone's leg with a baseball bat. When he felt called into ministry at eighteen, his own minister told him "No - you're not called. You haven't lived the right life."

But God disagreed.

The high-school dropout who made a mess of his teenage years became a minister in the Salvation Army. My parents ran drug and alcohol rehab centres, and my dad connected with the men there because he was one of them. He didn't talk down to them. He didn't clean up their stories. He didn't shame them into change. He showed them Jesus — the kind who doesn't flinch at your past. The kind who says, "You are forgiven. You don't have to live buried under guilt. You were made for more."

That was the faith I grew up around, and here's the thing — my dad didn't make me go to church. He wanted it to be real. Which, honestly, felt risky - and it was. I rebelled.

I pushed back. I made choices I wouldn't recommend. I did a lot wrong in my teens. I did a lot wrong in my twenties. I did a lot wrong in my thirties.

My priorities were off, and my faith was inconsistent. For a long time, I kept God close enough to know He was there — but far enough not to change me.

I didn't get baptized until after I had kids — in my thirties.

Growing up Salvation Army, baptism wasn't emphasized. Instead, at fourteen you could choose to become a "senior soldier" and sign a pledge. I didn't sign it. I wasn't ready to say yes to something I hadn't wrestled through honestly.

Looking back now, I'm grateful my dad let me wrestle.

Because borrowed faith doesn't hold you when life breaks you open.

And life eventually does break you open.

My forties have been heavy.

Loss.

Crisis.

Things I never would have chosen.

And it was in the valley — not the sanctuary — that my faith finally became real. When it really deepened and truly became mine - between me and God. Bible study, prayer, making intentional daily time with Jesus became not just a habit but a desire and not for anyone but me and God. It was a relationship, personal and genuine.

Not loud.

Not impressive.

Just anchored - and *real*.

I wouldn't have joined a Bible study if life hadn't undone me.

I wouldn't have stepped into women's ministry.

I wouldn't have learned how to pray the way I do now — honestly, desperately, without trying to sound faithful or "perfect".

I'm not thankful for the things that broke me, but I am thankful for the way God met me there.

He didn't rush me.

He didn't shame my questions.

He didn't withdraw when my faith felt thin.

He stayed.

Somehow, faith that once felt inherited became chosen. Faith that once felt optional became necessary. Faith that once belonged to my family became something I clung to myself.

And now, as a parent, that's what I want to pass on.

Not a polished faith.

Not a pressured one.

But a faith that makes room for questions, doubt, honesty, and return.

Because real faith isn't protected from hardship.
It's formed in it.

And if my kids ever walk through a valley — I don't need them to “perform” belief.

I just need them to know where to run to.

Reflection:

**Where has faith in your life felt inherited, expected, or assumed — but not yet fully your own?
What might God be inviting you to wrestle through honestly in this season, so your faith can
deepen without pretending?**

For a long time, I kept God
close enough to know He
was there - but far enough
not to change me.



When Surrender Starts on the Inside



"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

— Psalm 23:5 (NIV)

Years ago, I was fired while on maternity leave from a spa where I was the head RMT (Registered Massage Therapist). I loved that job — my clients, the respect, the income, and I was good at it! Losing it felt deeply unfair.

So I fought it. I took it to the Labour Board, then to the Human Rights Tribunal. I wanted justice. I wanted someone official to say, "you were wronged".

The process dragged on for years. Meetings. Documents. Hearings. Waiting. It consumed my energy — and quietly, my peace. Eventually, the CEO admitted that letting me go was one of the worst decisions they had made.

I was proven right, but I still did not feel free.

That season taught me something uncomfortable: even when you're justified, bitterness can still sit at the table - if you invite it.

At the time, all I could see was what had been taken from me. What I didn't see, was what had been given.

I ended up taking a job with a chiropractor for a year and a half because I was too afraid to go out on my own, but then Brian convinced me to finally open up my own business from home. It allowed balance between working, which I still loved, and being with my kids, who meant the world to me. When I wasn't working, I was home. I was present.

I was there for slow mornings and sick days, school drop-offs and pickups, field trips and pizza lunches, practices, games, volunteering, being available in ways I never would have been otherwise.

I didn't know then how fleeting that season would be. I didn't know how much I would need those memories later. Had my career unfolded the way I thought it should have - had I been treated fairly - I would have missed so much of their growing up.

That realization didn't come quickly. It came slowly. Quietly. With hindsight.

And it humbled me.

I also began to see something else I hadn't noticed before: I thought my enemies were on the outside — the opposition, the injustice, the people who had wronged me. But, I was also shaping and growing enemies on the inside - resentment, anger, the need to be right, the desire for justice more than the desire for peace.

When I read Psalm 23 now, I hear it differently.

"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

Those enemies weren't always faces across from me. Often, they were the things forming inside my own heart — the places God wanted to refine.

God didn't ask me to focus on who hurt me. He invited me to bring what had hardened in me to the table, and instead of removing those enemies immediately, He met me there.

Softening.

Refining.

Healing what I hadn't realized was growing rigid.

Sometimes what feels like loss is actually redirection.

Sometimes being "fired" is the first step toward being refined.

God wasn't trying to fix my circumstances alone.

He was tending to my heart, and God's plan was so much better at managing my hours with a new balance of being present and not so focused on recognition, income and status.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh." —Ezekiel 36:26 (NIV)

Later, I went on to start my own business. I work from home now, doing what I love — still present, still close, still available for my boys. But the greater gift wasn't the new direction. It was the transformation that came with surrender.

God knew I didn't just need peace, or justice, or a different job.

I needed a softer heart.

And sometimes, that only comes when we loosen our grip on what we think we deserve.

Reflection:

Is there a disappointment or loss in your life that still feels unresolved?

Are any "enemies" quietly forming inside your heart — bitterness, resentment, the need to be right?

What might it look like to bring those honestly to the table and let God meet you there?

A Heart Check I Didn't Ask For



"Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you."

— Matthew 9:22 (NIV)

Years ago, Pastor Ed and his wife Crystal led a Women's Ministry session on marriage called "Beyond Hallmark".

I walked in ready to take notes. Ready to learn. Ready to fix my marriage. Ready to hear how my husband should change - I was confident I knew where the problem was, and it couldn't be me!

Midway through the session, Pastor Ed looked right at me — not harshly, not accusingly — and said something simple:

"We can't change other people. We only have control over ourselves. Maybe... you need to check your own heart."

I wanted to disappear.

I wanted him to take my side and blame my husband.

Crystal sensed it immediately and prayed over me with such gentleness. But I drove home angry. Not reflective-angry. Not humble-angry.

Just angry.

Somewhere between the frustration and the tears, I realized the truth I didn't want to admit: *My heart wasn't as soft as I thought it was.*

That day marked the beginning of what I now call my four-year heart check — a long, refining season where God slowly and lovingly exposed what needed healing in me.

Unforgiveness.

Impatience.

Pride.

Control.

It's always easier to point outward and pray, "Lord, fix them."

It's much harder to sit still long enough to hear Him say, "Let Me tend to you."

For a long time, I believed peace would come once things were made right; once apologies owed to me were given and once justice was served. But God began teaching me something I didn't expect:

Peace is not the reward for being right. It's the fruit of trust.

When I finally stopped demanding outcomes and started opening my hands, something shifted.

Not all at once.

Not cleanly.

But slowly, God began filling my hands with different gifts than I'd asked for.

Peace.

Joy.

Patience.

Gratitude.

I even got a tattoo of my favorite verse (Matthew 9:22):

"Take heart, daughter, your faith has healed you."

But here's the truth I've learned since:

It wasn't my faith that healed me. And that's crazy. It wasn't even that He was healing my heart from being broken or hurt. It was so much a deeper healing, much more personal, much more intentional. It wasn't what I thought. It was what God knew. It was His holy work. It was God's faithfulness.

He let me wrestle.

He let me vent.

He let me be honest about the parts of my story I didn't like.

And He stayed.

Later, during one especially hard season, my son Nate, gave me a verse that became an anchor:

"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace... will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you." — 1 Peter 5:10 (NIV)

I didn't know then how much suffering still lay ahead.

I didn't know where the journey would lead or how long it would be. I was still so focused on my heart and had no idea what was to come.

But God did.

He wasn't just addressing my present pain.

He was preparing me for what was coming.

*"Take heart, daughter,
your faith has healed you."*

Sometimes I wonder:

If I hadn't walked through that refining season, would my boys write me Scripture verses?

Would they see faith lived under pressure — not explained, but embodied?

Would they pray the honest, childlike prayers that melt me at bedtime?

Would I have joined a women's Bible study?

Would I have come to Springvale?

Would I have met the women who now walk beside me — praying, carrying, holding space?

God knew I needed all of that more than I needed to be “right”.

He wasn't interested in fixing my marriage alone.

He was shaping my heart.

And through it all, He has been gentle.

Patient.

Kind.

He took my wrestling with my pain and my frustration, and my “I don't like this...It's not fair” complaints and He worked on all of it. So full of grace, not condemnation. So gentle and tender and loving. He was right there the whole time.

And He still is.

Reflection:

Where might God be inviting you to stop pointing outward and start listening inward?

Is there a place in your life where your need to be right that may be costing you peace?

What part of your heart might God be quietly asking to soften today?

If my people would only listen to me,
if Israel would only follow my ways,
how quickly I would subdue their enemies
and turn my hand against their foes!
Those who hate the Lord would cringe before him,
and their punishment would last forever.
But you would be fed with the finest of wheat;
with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.”

-Psalm 81:13-16



Singles All Day



"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters." – Colossians 3:23 (NIV)

The other day, my friend Lori was preparing to speak at a Bible study. I told her, "You're going to knock it out of the park." She laughed and said, "I'll be happy with a few singles."

And without even thinking, I said,
"Singles all day."

Because baseball has a way of illustrating a lot of life lessons and character building.

I've watched my boys step up to the plate hundreds of times. Sometimes confident.
Sometimes nervous. Sometimes swinging way too hard.

There's a lot of pressure in that batter's box.
You want to do something big. You want to make it count. You want to prove yourself.
But what I've learned – watching season after season – is that trying to crush the ball often
leads to striking out.

The players who consistently help the team aren't always the ones hitting home runs.
They're the ones who show up consistently. Focused. Patient.
Singles matter.

Don't get me wrong – I will scream and celebrate a home run too.
But a team full of players hitting singles will score just as many runs, and often win more games.

Baseball was never meant to be a "look what I can do" sport. It's a team sport. The best teams
are made up of players who care less about individual glory and more about contributing to the
final outcome.

A single may not look flashy, but it moves the game forward. It advances runners.
It creates opportunity, and over time, those small, steady hits add up to real runs on the board.
I've watched my boys practice for hours and hours.
I've watched their dedication lead to success.
I've also watched it lead to plenty of swings-and-misses.

I've seen them walk back to the dugout after a strikeout – shoulders slumped – and yet still
turn around to encourage a teammate. And when it's their turn again, they step back into the
batter's box and give their best effort.

That's where the lesson is. Faith looks a lot like that.

Most days aren't highlight reels, they're quiet obedience - faithfully showing up.
Doing the next right thing, when no one's clapping.

In a world that celebrates big moments and visible success, God seems to delight in something different.

Consistency.

Faithfulness.

A willing heart.

I think sometimes we put unnecessary pressure on ourselves to be impressive — in our faith, our parenting, our ministry, our lives.

But God has never asked us to be impressive. He doesn't want all eyes on us celebrating us and our work. He wants our work to turn eyes toward Him — toward what He's doing, what He's done, and who He is.

He asks us to be faithful.

To step up to the plate again.

To trust what He's been building in us through practice, failure, and repetition.

To keep our eyes steady and our hearts open.

The truth is, God doesn't need us to knock it out of the park.

He just asks us to keep showing up.

Singles all day.

Reflection:

Are there areas in your life where you feel pressure to “hit a home run”?

What might it look like to release that pressure and focus instead on faithful, steady obedience?

Where is God inviting you to simply show up today and trust Him with the results?

Most days aren't highlight
reels, they're quiet obedience -
faithfully showing up.



The Weaver's Hands



"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." – Romans 8:28 (NIV)

It happened as I was being taken in for my second brain surgery.

As the room grew quieter and the preparations began, I returned to the rhythm that had become familiar to me — the one thing I could control when everything else felt out of my hands.

Breathing...

Inhale: Yah.

Exhale: Weh.

YHWH.

The name God revealed to Moses — I AM.

So holy it was rarely spoken aloud. Some theologians believe the sound of that name mirrors the sound of breathing itself. From our first breath to our last, every inhale and exhale becomes a prayer — whether we realize it or not.

As the mask was placed over my face and the lights began to blur, I whispered the only name I needed. Always so powerful like it invited God into the room and He washed right over me. The peace of him being with me was so powerful and so present.

YHWH

And then I saw it. **Hands.**

Steady. Intentional. Unhurried.

They were weaving — not hurriedly, not forcefully — but patiently, as if forming a basket from unseen strands. Over and over, the hands moved with precision and care. No wasted motion. No panic.

And in that moment, I sensed Him say, *"See? Five years ago. Four years ago. Three years ago. Two years ago. This last year. These last months. I've been weaving it all together."*

What felt like "breaking" had been "building". What felt scattered had been held. Every loose thread, every hard moment — shaped into something stronger than I could see. It was a gift I didn't ask for and didn't deserve — a glimpse behind the curtain.

God didn't owe me reassurance, but He gave me His presence.

Gratitude settled in big time.

Instead of being so sad or upset by everything I've been through I saw that there was purpose. I saw that there was beauty from the ashes.

I realized then: I was safe — not because the outcome was guaranteed, but because the hands had never stopped working.

We usually only see the mess.

The tangled threads.

The unfinished edges.

But God sees the pattern.

He sees the way every heartbreak, delay, and disappointment fits into a design still forming. Nothing wasted. Nothing forgotten. Not one tear unseen.

I wasn't being undone.

I was being woven.

And the same hands that shaped the heavens were holding me together.

It didn't erase the pain or make it small. But it reminded me that none of it was meaningless.

I wasn't forgotten.

I was being woven.

Reflection:

Where in your story does life still feel tangled or unfinished?

Can you imagine God's hands at work there — steady, patient, intentional — even if you can't yet see what He's making?

What would it look like to trust the Weaver more than the pattern?

The same hands that shaped the
heavens were holding me together.



Nebby Is Not the King



"The Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes."
— Daniel 4:17 (NIV)

If you know me, you know I don't do life neatly. I'm crazy, a little unconventional, usually working just outside the lines — which is ironic, considering I no longer have left peripheral vision. I joke about it, but it's true: I've always lived slightly off-map.

So when treatment days ran long — an hour and forty-five minutes late — my best friend Heather and I did what we've always done when life feels heavy. We brought humor into it.

Heather and I have been doing life together since we were two. Our parents went to training college to become ministers together. We grew up side by side — more like sisters than friends. My dad used to joke that we shared a brain. Sitting there in that waiting room, Heather said, "Okay. We need to name your tumor." And I said, "Yes. We absolutely do."

Because sometimes naming the thing that scares you takes away a little of its power. We started throwing out ideas, and eventually landed on one that stopped me cold.

Nebuchadnezzar.
Nickname: Nebby.

It fit.

Nebuchadnezzar was powerful. Proud. Convinced he was in control. He believed kingdoms rose and fell by his hand.

Until God humbled him. Until he learned that any authority he ever had was borrowed — given for a time, and removable in a moment.

That's when it clicked.

This tumor — this Nebby — isn't the ruler of anything.
It doesn't get the final say. It doesn't define my future. It is not eternal.
God is.

Just like Nebuchadnezzar, Nebby is being humbled. Some days, I say that with confidence. Other days, I have to remind myself slowly — breath by breath — that fear doesn't get to crown itself king. Nebby tried to convince me it had power — over my body, my joy, my story.

But God interrupted that narrative and says, "No. This belongs to Me."

Nebby is not the king here.

Eventually, Nebuchadnezzar lifted his eyes to heaven and said:

“Now I... praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just.” – Daniel 4:37 (NIV)

That's where I'm learning to live. Not pretending this season is easy, not pretending I'm fearless, but choosing, again and again, to lift my eyes higher than what threatens me.

This is why worship has become my weapon.
Why breathing the name of YHWH steadies me — inhale Yah, exhale Weh.
Every breath reminds me of *who* truly reigns.

Nebby is small. Nebby is temporary. Nebby does not sit on the throne.

My body belongs to the Lord.

This story belongs to Him.

Whatever happens next — His sovereignty remains. Trusting God and surrendering all of this to Him is so much easier right now because I don't have to control. I don't have to know what's next. I don't have to know what's happening. I just get to rest and be at peace that God's got me.

Reflection:

What in your life has tried to claim authority it doesn't actually have?

Where might fear, loss, or uncertainty be asking for the throne?

What would it look like today to lift your eyes and quietly remind yourself: God is still King?



Use Me (Even Here)



"Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." — Romans 5:3–4 (NIV)

I don't love the hard place. I don't think we're meant to. Hard is hard for a reason — and I've learned there's no spiritual prize in pretending otherwise.

A therapist once told me, "You get to choose your hard." That sentence stayed with me.

Because if this is the road God has me walking, then I want to walk it honestly.
Not bitter. Not numbed out. Not pretending I'm stronger than I am.

Just willing.

There's a prayer I've come back to again and again in this season:
"Use me, Lord. Even here."

I don't want this pain to be wasted. If I'm going to carry it, I want it to become something — not just something I survive, but something that forms me.

As an RMT, I tell clients all the time: There's purpose in the pain.

After deep work, the soreness comes before the release. The body resists before it lets go. It's uncomfortable — but it's doing something. Life seems to work the same way.

Pressure comes before freedom. Stretching before strength. Surrender before peace.

Over the last five years, my life has held more "hard" than I ever expected. Loss. Shock. Seasons I didn't see coming. But looking back now, I can see how each one quietly drew me closer to God. Not because I handled them well, but because I kept bringing them to Him.

Like Jacob, I wrestled with God. It was raw and honest and it created dependency, intimacy and trust. Now I have the peace and the ability to say truly "it is well in my soul" not because everything is well in my body or around me or in life, but God's got me and He and I are good. I keep being honest and real and surrendering to Him, telling Him what I'm struggling with and trusting Him.

I'm currently writing a five-year prayer journal for my boys — something they can one day look back on and see the prayers I prayed through every season.

In it, I tell them this:

*You're allowed to feel what you feel. God gave you emotions on purpose. Be honest — but take it to Him. Because when life breaks open, we really only have two choices:
we can run from God, or we can run to Him.*

There was a season after my dad died when I ran from God — not dramatically, just quietly. Grief does that. It numbs you. Confuses you. Pulls you away from the very place meant to hold you.

But God didn't rush me back. He stayed patient. And slowly — breath by breath — He breathed life back into me.

Inhale Yah.
Exhale Weh.

Looking back now, I know this much:

If this season had come earlier — four years ago, even one year ago — I wouldn't have the peace I carry today. I needed the refining. I needed the quiet work. I needed to learn how to rest in God's presence instead of chasing control. Surrender used to feel like losing. Now I know it's where peace lives.

Not because I know how this ends —but because I know who's holding it.

So this is my prayer now:

"Use me, Lord. Use even this.

Let the 'hard' shape me instead of harden me.

Let my life — even here — bring You glory."

Reflection:

Where in your life are you resisting the hard instead of inviting God into it?

What would it look like to pray, "Use me — even here" instead of waiting for things to get easier?

How might surrender be the doorway to peace you've been searching for?

Surrender used to feel like
losing. Now I know it's
where peace lives.



When Faith Sounds Like Grief



"Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him." — Job 13:15 (NIV)

Honest grief does not disqualify faith. God is not offended by our raw prayers. Faithfulness can look like staying and speaking honestly — not pretending.

Yes, I know it might seem strange that the Book of Job is my favourite book of the Bible. But Job was raw. He was honest. He was unfiltered in his grief. He didn't sanitize his pain. He didn't pretend to be okay. He didn't hide his questions to sound faithful. He poured out his anguish — and God allowed it. More than that, God accepted it.

Job's grief was deep, messy, and uncomfortable, yet God never rejected him for it. He didn't silence him. He didn't shame him. He didn't turn away.

Job's friends tried to fix him. They tried to explain his suffering and assign blame. But through it all, God was simply there with him. In the end, God didn't rebuke Job for his honesty — He affirmed him. God said that Job had spoken rightly. God called him faithful.

That truth matters so much to me.

Because it tells me that faith isn't about saying the right things — it's about enduring even when your heart is breaking.

Job teaches us that God can hold our grief. That He can handle our questions. That honesty is not a threat to faith — it is often the evidence of it. Job didn't lose God because he grieved. He encountered God in the middle of it.

Job lamented. Job questioned. Job spoke from deep grief. Job said things that sounded uncomfortable, raw, and unresolved. *And God called that truth.*

Not polished theology. Not tidy answers. Not quiet suffering.

That's why Job will always matter to me.

Because faith isn't about performance or saying the right things — it's about trusting God with your true heart, even in heartbreak, even in grief.

Reflection:

Where have you been holding back parts of your grief from God, unsure how to bring them honestly?

What questions or pain might God be inviting you to place before Him — without fixing, explaining, or resolving them?

What would it look like today to simply stay with God, trusting that your honesty is welcomed and held?

Trusted Through the Valley (An Exodus Story)



"The Lord said, 'I will be with you.'" - Exodus 3:12 (NIV)

Exodus has been reading differently to me lately. Not as a victory story. Not as a celebration of power. But as a story of trust. God didn't choose Moses because he was confident. God didn't choose him because Moses felt ready. God chose Moses while he was hiding in the wilderness — unsure, reluctant, aware of his own limits.

Moses stood on holy ground and said, "Who am I to do this?" And God didn't answer with a resume or a strategy. He answered with a promise: ***"I will be with you."***

That's what I'm learning in this valley. This season isn't about me proving strength or surviving for my own sake. It's about being trusted. Trusted to walk through the hard without hardening. Trusted to surrender without disappearing. Trusted to carry a story that points beyond me. Like the Israelites standing between the Red Sea and the army behind them, I've learned that valleys don't always come because we've done something wrong. Sometimes they come because God is doing something holy.

This surrender — it's not passive. It's obedience in slow motion.

I didn't choose this road. But God trusted me with it.

Not because I would do it perfectly, but because I would keep showing up — asking, listening, learning.

And the most humbling part is this: God hasn't asked me to walk this valley alone. He's been guiding. Providing. Strengthening me quietly, faithfully, daily.

Just enough courage for today. Just enough peace for this step. Just enough grace to do it well — not for my glory, but for His.

This story isn't mine to control. It's His to tell.

And somehow, in His mercy, He's allowed me to be part of it.

That still leaves me in awe.

Reflection:

Where might God be trusting you with a difficult season — not to prove yourself, but to reflect Him?

What would change if you saw this valley not as punishment, but as holy ground?

How can you lean into God's help today, trusting that He is equipping you for what He has asked you to carry?

This is My Story, This is Your Glory



"You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden." — Matthew 5:13-14 (NIV)

I was getting headaches - and I mean throbbing, off the charts headaches. I was propping myself up on the counter and holding ice packs to either side of my head. I actually had to cancel two clients, which I never do. That's when my husband and closest friends knew something was wrong. I have a very high pain tolerance, and I don't take medication. I use heat or ice or essential oil, I will self massage if it's muscle pain. We went to a walk in clinic and the doctor sort of brushed me off. He told me it was just a muscle spasm...uhm I'm an RMT - and this was not a muscle spasm.

Three days later, the pain was so bad that I didn't disagree when Brian said we should go to the ER. The doctor wanted to do a scan and a lumbar tap but I brushed that off, thinking it was a waste of time and not needed - so we left. We ended up back in Emergency the next day because I finally knew or accepted that something was indeed very wrong. This time the ER doctor did a scan. And when she walked into the room, I'll never forget what she said. "We found a mass..." I responded with "well that escalated." She said, "Yes it's the worst thing we could have found and none of us were expecting this. I am on the phone with the neuro team at Sunnybrook Hospital and the paramedics are going to transfer you down there now."

The next day I had my first craniotomy.

The day after that, my surgeon reported that he only got 70-75% of the mass, but the pain was back and unbearable, so when the doctor said he wanted to operate again and try to remove more, I was in full agreement and actually wanted him to just cut me back open to relieve the pressure. Less than 48 hours later. I had my second craniotomy. The end of September I had a meeting with the neurologist and the radiation oncologist and was given the diagnosis and prognosis of a Grade 4 glioblastoma. It is aggressive, it had only been growing a few months, it will come back and it will kill me.

I looked at the doctor and was very calm and said two things:

"What do I tell my kids?" and "I know you probably don't care but I need you to know I am not scared, I know where I am going and I have God. I know you are experts and have studies, past cases etc. *but I have God.* Only God knows when I am going or when any of us are going."

I have such peace. I used to pray that I would be able to declare and mean that it is well in my soul, and that is the gift God is giving me in all of this; the unexplainable peace and strength to do this.

So I surrendered it all it all and said "okay God, USE ME. If this is where you have me, use me. Let this story be for Your glory. I want to be salt and light, I want to change the environment I am in - not because of me but to finally be someone who is bold in her faith, her trust in God and that finally points people to Jesus."

I used to be so shy, so scared to talk to people about Jesus. I didn't want to bombard people or hit them over the head with it. Now I pray, "God help me be bold. Use me... I want to **Make Heaven Crowded.**"

Sometimes I still shake my head and whisper, "God, You really trusted me with this?" With Nebby? With this diagnosis? With this story?

It humbles me to my core.

He could have written anyone else into this, but He chose me — not because I'm strong, but because He knew I'd pray that "Use me" prayer. He knew I'd still want to be salt and light—to walk into rooms and shift the atmosphere, not so people see me or this tumor, but so they sense Jesus. I'm not clinging to a diagnosis or a prognosis; I'm clinging to purpose.

I want my life to point people toward Heaven. I want to make Heaven crowded.

C.S. Lewis once wrote that when he gets to Heaven he'll be surprised by three things:

"First, who is there; second, who isn't there; and third, that I am there."

That thought sits heavy on my heart. Not in an egotistical way, but in a holy way. Because I don't want to leave anyone behind.

When my time comes and I step into that garden - a place with no pain, no sorrow, no fear, I want to see faces I know - friends, family, and strangers who somehow met Jesus through my story. If God trusted me with Nebby, then use even this to draw people to You. Let my laughter, my tears, and even my scars be invitations that whisper, "Come and see what God can do."

I often picture Jesus' hands—the ones that were pierced for me - walking through Heaven, touching everything, making beauty bloom. No pain. No sorrow. Just perfect peace. It's the home we were always meant for.

And then I see my dad.

After living with diabetes for over fifty years and losing his leg, I picture him running — really running — towards me. He's laughing, calling out, "Jesus, sorry — I've been waiting a long time to see her!" He gives Jesus a friendly elbow on the way by, and I can't help but laugh through the tears. That image makes Heaven feel close.

When my dad died, I knew he heard "Well done, good and faithful servant." That brought me peace for him—but it ached for me, because Heaven's gain still feels like Earth's loss. And that's what I think about now too: I'm not afraid of Heaven, but I ache for the ones I love who will still be here. My prayer is that when they think of me, they won't just remember a tumor; they'll remember faith, joy, and God's faithfulness. That they'll run to Jesus, not away from Him. This is my story — Your glory.



So Lord, if You've trusted me with this story... use it. Use it to heal hearts. Use it to awaken souls. **Use it to make Heaven crowded.**

When I walk into rooms, let me carry Your presence so strongly that peace fills the space. Let me shine Your light until people can't help but see You through me.

This is my story—but it's Your glory.

Inhale: Yah.

Exhale: Weh.

Every breath still speaks Your name.

Every inhale says, "I'm still here."

Every exhale says, "And so are You."

Until my last breath—and even after—I'll keep shining, trusting, and pointing to You.

Reflection:

Who might God be entrusting you to reach through your own story?

How can you carry His presence into the places that need light?

Let this be our shared prayer:

"Lord, use my story. Make me salt and light.

Let my life change the spaces I enter—

and let it help make Heaven a little more crowded."

After you've read these devotionals,
consider signing the back and then giving it
away for someone else to read.

The names on the back will show how
many have seen it!

Let's share Shannon's story.

Let's **Make Heaven Crowded.**



REVIVE

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