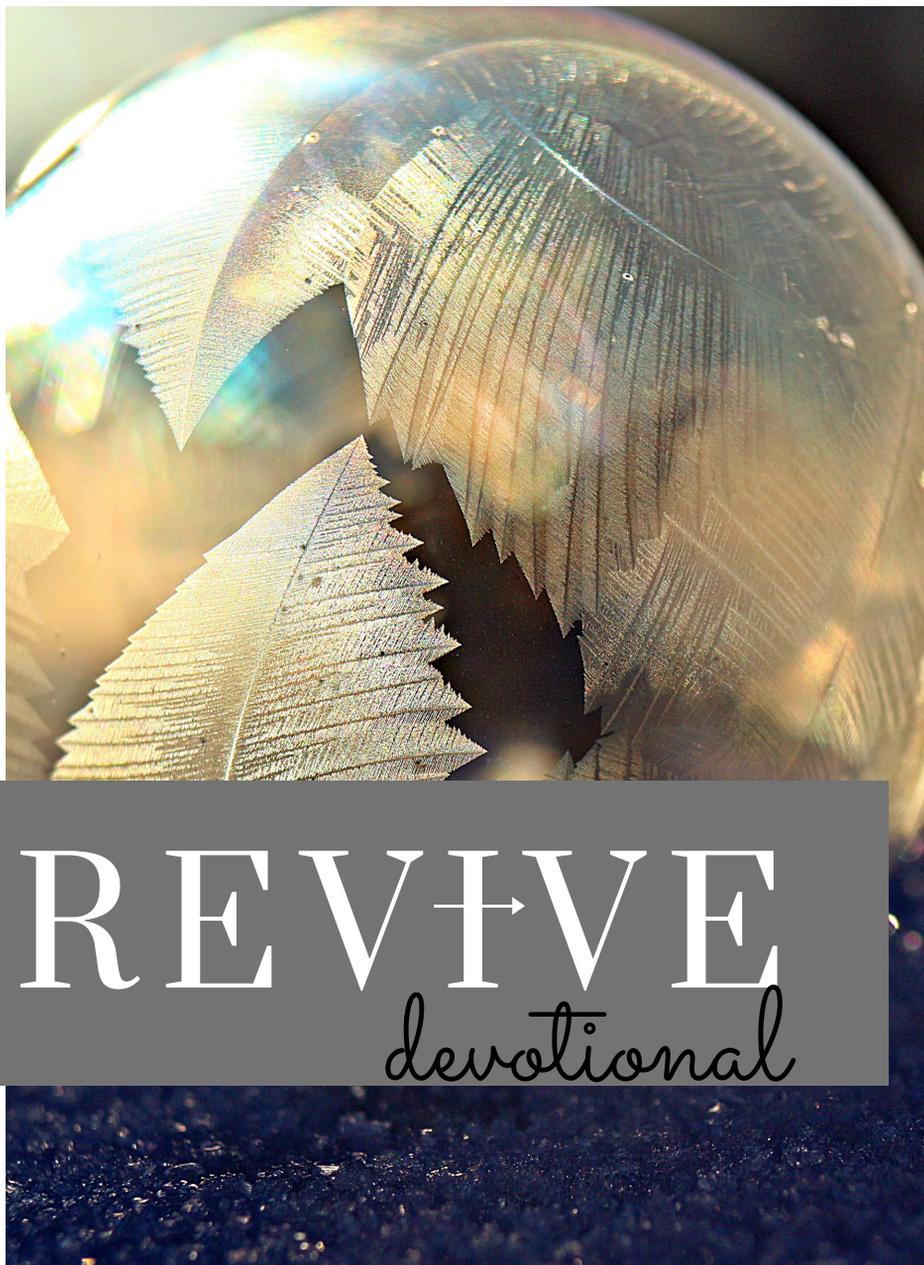


ISSUE FIVE
STARTING OVER



REVIVE

devotional

SPRINGVALE
WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Welcome to Revive

Lori Doner Jones

One Thing

"Sometimes I lose sight of where Jesus is" - @she.withastory

Recently I read an Instagram post which reminded me of the story of Martha and Mary. Martha is complaining to Jesus that she is doing all the work while Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus, just enjoying His presence and leaving the work for later.

"Martha, Martha, you are worried about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her" Luke 10-41-42.

*Mary has chosen what is better...
One thing is needed...
It will not be taken away from her...*

Those words are like stones in my heart right now. I wonder what they mean to you as you read them. What actions do I take to cling to the "one thing" needed: the ONE thing that hasn't been taken from me, but perhaps I left it somewhere - Jesus.

Sometimes I too, lose sight of where Jesus is...

Maybe "starting over" and learning to let go and let God, begins with us refocusing... re-evaluating, and shifting our perspective to rediscover where Jesus is, because He has not left us. Sometimes I need to focus less on me, and more on Him; more on the one thing needed, and not let myself lose sight of it or let it be taken from me.

Sometimes life's struggles knock me clear off course in this. I am busy being Martha doing the work, worried about what is required, and resenting or comparing myself to someone else that is focused elsewhere. I am looking through the wrong lens and some days, it's a challenge to fix my eyes on Jesus.

Sometimes God needs to remind me... sometimes I need to start over.

This week as you read through the devotionals these women have shared, I hope you are learning that you can trust Him, and you can let go and let God. No matter what your circumstances, God is sovereign and in control. He is with you each time you start over. Life isn't easy, but today let's not lose sight of the one thing needed.

**You can find our full video
series on *Starting Over* at www.ReadyForRevival.ca**



day one

Drive Through It

By: Lori Doner Jones



Over the past summer I spent most of my time in this little gazebo tent in my backyard. My husband started to call it my gazebonacle, because this is where I started each day, and where I ended up at the end of the day, looking for what God had to tell me.

One such day my thoughts turned to this phrase: "You can drive through it....". It's a line from a movie- which I haven't seen or even thought of in years, and yet on this summer morning, out of nowhere came those words...."You can drive through it" and I knew what it meant... I knew that's what I had been waiting to hear.

Now, I am not saying God speaks to me through action movies, but I think He does guide my thoughts to silly anecdotes to write devotionals about, and it's through thinking and writing these, that I can lean in to what God is trying to show me and teach me. I think sometimes life feels a bit like a racetrack- where I am racing towards something or some result, and everyone else is rushing around me. It's busy, chaotic, and filled with noise and danger, maybe some pain and hardship, and sometimes, I feel a bit out of control.

As a teenager, I was a big Tom Cruise fan -in the 90's he made a movie called "Days of Thunder" where he's a race car driver. The story goes something like this - he's a thrill seeking guy who really knows nothing about cars, but he can drive, and he gets partnered with a veteran racing personality that is put in place to manage and take care of the car. Played by Robert Duvall, "Harry" doesn't like Cole Trickle (Cruise's character) at all in the beginning, but quite predictably, he evolves into a mentor for the young racer. They grow in fondness for each other and there's a sense of trust that develops between the two unlikely partners. Cole ends up in an accident about midway through the movie which gives him a sense of trepidation about his job - maybe makes him feel the danger a little more than before, and makes him nervous. In the last race, the one Cole has been working toward the whole season, this fear climaxes. About midway through the race, an accident happens on the track. You can hear Harry in his earpiece instructing him: "*there's an accident on turn 3, there's cars spinning down the track... There's oil at the bottom - You have to go high...*"

Harry has a view of the road ahead that Cole can't see. He's in Cole's ear, telling him how to navigate the danger ahead. He's trying to lead him away from trouble and trying to guide him. But Cole can't seem to hear...You can see Harry is very concerned about Cole, as the cars spin around him and Cole stops interaction entirely on the headset.

Cole goes silent, his panic rushes in. He's deep inside his own mind, circulating around in his uncertainty, paralyzed by fear - all he can see ahead is smoke and chaos, mixed with flashbacks of his previous accident. He can't see for himself where to go, or what moves to make. His view is obstructed, and he's painfully aware that one wrong move could cost him everything. He's afraid...he's been here before....he's gripped by uncertainty. In his earpiece he hears Harry calling to him, urging him to come out of his trance-like state, and saying this:

"You can drive through it... Cole... I know it in my heart, you can drive through it. "

And so, the decision becomes can Cole trust that voice in his ear? Can he trust that Harry can see what *he* cannot. Can he put his life in Harry's hands? Can he drive through it?

I feel like these are the words God gave me that day in the gazebo. "You can drive through it..."

In that moment, on that day, all I could see was smoke and chaos – it felt like I was speeding out of control, and there it was... a voice in my ear saying – "You can drive through it..." You don't need to see the other side right now.... Drive through..."

In times like that, when we are faced with life's hardships, and we are smack dab in the middle of something that has gripped our heart, I think there's part of us that wants to stop and examine all the wreckage. We want to stop on the track and make sure we see every twisted piece - we take a mental inventory of every artifact and broken fragment laying on the track. We want to ask "why". We want God to explain it to us, rather than guide us through. We want to wallow in the destruction, rather than speed by without a second glance and keep moving, when we know that's the safest thing to do. We want to see through the smoke, and see the answers, when often God's plan does not include answers today – or maybe not for a long time.

Cole, in a split second decision trusts in Harry, and punches the gas, taking the outside wall, drives into the smoke and danger and through to his victory. One second of indecision, potentially changes the outcome. If he hit the brakes instead of the gas, maybe he crashes. If he stops to look, he probably dies.... But instead he trusts in Harry. He's at a precipice moment – the moment where he needs to choose fear - or faith. Of course, it's a movie and real life isn't quite so exciting. In real life the moment doesn't always end in joyful victory.

But we still have those precipice moments, don't we? Moments, where we have to choose to keep going, to keep in the race, to persevere, and maybe moments

where we need to start over entirely. Maybe those moments of starting over for you feel like a lot like an impending destruction. In these moments we cannot predict or control the outcome – they simply require us to "let go, and let God"...

God never said following Him would be safe. He never promised us a life without chaos, smoke and danger. In fact, He promises that as believers, life might feel a whole lot like being on a dangerous racetrack. But when we face life's troubles, we can drive through it, because if we are listening, He will be in our ear, guiding us through the wreckage, through the smoke, and the things we cannot see, and cannot understand. He doesn't always clear our path for us, but He helps us navigate it, and we can trust Him. Even if the moment doesn't end in victory, He assures us that our triumph IS coming. The race isn't over yet and all I want - is to finish well.

I can drive through it... and so can you.

This issue is dedicated to our
loved ones that are no longer with us

*I have said these things to you, that in me you
may have peace, in the world you will have
tribulation, but take heart:
I have overcome the world"*
John 16:33



We are too prone to engrave
our trials in marble and write
our blessings in sand.

- Charles Spurgeon



day two

I Know Who I Was

By: Rebecca Doner



I was sporty and active. I was an overachiever and had friends in several social groups. I often felt alone and misunderstood, but I was happy. I loved music of all kinds: blues; jazz; classical; country; rock – you name it. I loved to read, mostly fantasy, sci-fi, mysteries and poetry – I read for hours. I was fun and a little wild. I could get lost in my thoughts for hours and loved to think and question things. I was never concerned about body image or people's opinions. I was confident and terrified and had failed enough times that the fear of failure had left me, but I had a disdain for the feeling of having not measured up. I worked hard and was thankful for work, I studied hard and played hard. I loved and lived with my amp turned to 10. I adored people and animals. I always believed in people and that there was a story behind what I saw and I longed to know it – probably because I had my own story behind what others saw. I was all of these things and, I was more.

Then something happened...for a decade I became something new. One of the best things ever happened to me – I became a mother (four times over) and I was either pregnant or enjoying my babies for almost 10 years of my life. I call it my "decade of diapers". During this season I was sleep-deprived, barely organized, hardly dressed, ragged and distracted in a fog for a very long time. That role became my world which I was fine with of course, but somehow in its blur it completely redefined me.

As my children grow and my freedom is slowly reclaimed and as responsibility slowly shifts from my shoulders to their own, I find myself in a strange place. It is as if I am standing and as I look into the mirror I ask, "Who is she now?" – that woman who looks back at me. As I said, I knew who I was – and in many ways, I am still very much that person and yet, I am forever changed and forever a mother. This new phase intrigues me and I can't help but wonder what the future holds.

For a time, I was saddened by this feeling, I thought I had lost something. I was angry when people would define me by things that I wasn't sure to be true for myself. Then I realized, that I have gained the most amazing opportunity. In this season, I get to decide with a fresh canvas what my self-portrait would look like. I get to start over. Perhaps I have become an older, wiser, more tender version of a younger me. Perhaps an adventurer or someone who will challenge themselves to change the world. Perhaps a quiet bookworm, who finds comfort withdrawing from others. Perhaps all of these things, and none of these things – perhaps something I can not even dream for myself.

It is as I begin to consider all the possibilities of this next stage I experience my most profound realization. In the past years, I have gone through endless and in some cases extreme life changes and now I stand at the cusp of a new journey. Yet, there is something that has never changed – never wavered – never left me. It is perhaps the only thing that changed with me in every celebration, every heartache, every secret doubt, public failure and in every victory. The only constant in every exhale of every moment has been Christ.

I suddenly have a deep and profound understanding of the promise that God is the same yesterday, today and forever found in Hebrews 13:8.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."

I am left then, still standing in front of the mirror – wondering who I am. Still staring at that blank canvas envisioning possibilities – hoping, wanting and planning. Somehow though, in all the anxious anticipation I find myself passing the brush that I SO desperately want to wield over to the God who is faithful, who is true, and who has been and will be constant as He creates a new masterpiece in me. I am quite assured He will create in me something beyond whatever I might be capable of on my own...

Whatever moment you are in, be it a mountain or a valley, be it stillness or chaos – know that in every fresh start, there is a faithful constant who will and has always been the same and He is just waiting for you to hand Him your brush...



Prayer from Stormie Omartian's book "Just Enough Light for the Step I'm On"

Lord, thank You that my life is never over here on this earth until You say it is. And when that time comes, I will see you face to face and dwell in your presence. Thank you that You never give up on me, even when I have given up on myself. I am so happy that no matter what age I am, I will always have a purpose because you have great things for me to do. When it's time for me to do something different, help me not to cling to the past or be afraid to move into the future you have for me. My times are in Your hands, and I know that I am secure as long as I can walk through them all with You. Give me strength, courage, health, wisdom revelation, and faith for the journey. I trust You to keep me on the right path and to continue giving me the light I need for the step I'm on.

day three

Starting Over as a Woman of Valour

By: Cathie Ostapchuck



THE BRAVERY OF THE PROVERBS 31 WOMAN

In May 2019, the world lost a brave woman and a beautiful writer, Rachel Held Evans. I'll never forget what she wrote about busting some of the myths around the Proverbs 31 woman:

"The woman described in Proverbs 31 is not some ideal that exists out there. She is present in each one of us when we do even the smallest things with valour."

The Proverbs 31 woman shares the same descriptor as Ruth—*eshet chayil*.

"A woman of valour who can find?" —Proverbs 31:1035

She girds herself with strength [spiritual, mental and physical fitness for her God-given task] and makes her arms strong and firm.

—Proverbs 31:17, AMPC

Strength and dignity are her clothing and her position is strong and secure. —Proverbs 31:25a, AMPC

We might want to hate this woman, but instead, we should be looking to her as a model of a woman who's made some hard choices about who she's going to be, despite what culture is telling her. She is a woman who literally had to surrender everything she had known and start over in a new country, with little tying her to her culture and her past.

Have you been hanging on to misconceptions about the Proverbs 31 woman?

PROVERBS 31 IS A POEM

Because it's a poem, Proverbs 31 should not be interpreted prescriptively as a job description for all women. Its purpose is to celebrate wisdom-in-action, not to instruct women everywhere to get married, have children, and take up the loom. Ruth was called a woman of valour as a widow without children. Being a woman of valour means you can be single and be found in any season of life.

PROVERBS 31 IS WRITTEN FOR MEN AS ITS TARGET AUDIENCE

It's a Jewish tradition to read or sing Proverbs 31 at the beginning of Erev Shabbat on Friday nights in the Jewish household. Husbands sing it to their wives to honour them for making the house a home. Proverbs 31 is not written to shame women into achieving every facet of this supposed to-do list. It is not written for women to try to "measure up." No one can be all the things! Rather, it's a tribute to every woman who is honouring God with her strong character, evident by the choices she makes day in and day out. Proverbs is for the men to study as a lesson in how to give tribute to the women in their lives.

PROVERBS 31 CELEBRATES VALOUR

The passage uses the same term, *eshet chayil*, to describe the virtuous woman as it uses to describe Ruth. The late Rachel Held Evans reminds us of the following: Ruth was a destitute foreigner whose daily work involved gathering, threshing, and winnowing wheat. For most of her story, she is neither a wife nor a mother. Circumstantially, her life looked nothing like the life of the woman depicted in Proverbs 31.

Ruth didn't spend her days making clothes for her husband. She had no husband; she was widowed. Ruth's children didn't rise up and call her blessed. She was childless.

Ruth didn't spend her days exchanging fine linens with the merchants and keeping an immaculate home. She worked all day in the sun, gleaning leftovers from other people's fields, which was a provision made for the poorest of the poor in Israel.

And yet guess what Boaz says of Ruth before she gets married, before she has a child, before she becomes a wealthy and influential woman: "*All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character*" (Ruth 3:11).

The Hebrew that's used there is *eshet chayil*—woman of valour.

Ruth is identified as a woman of valour not because she checked off some Proverbs 31 to-do list by getting married, keeping a clean house, and producing children, but because she lived her life with incredible bravery, wisdom, and strength. She lived her life with valour. So how would you measure up to the Proverbs 31 woman on a scale of one to ten, now that you know her character was so much more than any "to-do" list? I hope it inspires you to look at your life right now and make some choices to step out in courage.

THE BRAVE TRUTH

Even when Ruth was "out," God had already provided a Kinsmen Redeemer for her to be brought "in." God is your Kinsmen Redeemer for your future, but you might have to wait to see it be fulfilled.

Ruth was part of the lineage of Christ. "Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David..." (Matthew 1:5–6, NIV). Remember to surrender yourself at Jesus' feet as an act of valour. He'll respond with an invitation to belonging and will act valiantly on your behalf for the rest of your life.

Despite Ruth's external reality of leaving behind everything she knew, moving to a foreign land as a woman who didn't fit in, what was Ruth's internal reality as a woman who became the very center of the gospel story?

Ruth's "I Am..." statements might have been as follows:

- I Am... Complete
- I Am...Confident
- I Am...Resourceful
- I Am...Whole

If you were to complete "I Am..." statements, what would they be?

Valour isn't about what you do. It's about who you are. And we need to be reminded God has a particular place in His story for us to step into, just as He did with Ruth in Matthew 1:5 and onwards... all the way down the royal line that leads to Jesus.

I shared that it was a difficult transition for me to move from my family of origin in Alberta to Ontario. About six months into my marriage, I was unhappy. I called home and talked to my mother about it. In true Ukrainian style, she asked if I had ever missed a meal. I replied I hadn't, so she declared, "You're staying!"

She was right. She saw through my unhappiness and discerned that the choice to settle and begin to create a home where happiness could flourish was a better one than coming home. How about you? Do you find yourself in a place you never imagined you'd be? Have you ever felt like you've lost everything, even your identity?

Be encouraged by Ruth's story and see what might be possible by being open to new options. Give things time to unfold. Most importantly, watch for God to honour your sweet obedience by providing solutions in the middle of your situation that you might never have thought of on your own. Change is difficult. We like the status quo and try to hang on to what's comfortable. Sometimes we have the power to do that. But when change happens that's outside of our realm of control, we must remember we always have a choice in our response, even in a devastating loss. This is strength-building, character-forging grit.

Don't be scared of change. Don't be scared of living a strong life. Choose courage over culture, context, and the pressure to conform. The world is waiting for you to live as a woman of valour—not trying harder, but finding your place in God's story, knowing who you are in your core. I believe there's so much room at the table for women who truly display the *eshet chayil* qualities.

Would you step into your place in history and be that woman?



day four

There's More in Store

By: Lori-Ann Dinnall



Like most little girls, I grew up obsessed with wanting to one day get married and have children. I thought that being a wife and mother were the best jobs in the world and I couldn't wait until I could become one. I eventually got married in my mid-thirties and was eager to start a family with my husband. However, getting pregnant took years. And even when it finally happened, we suffered two back-to-back miscarriages that left us shattered.

It was in my season of mourning the loss of my children and the picture of what could have been, when I had some of my most intriguing conversations with God to date. Most of us, do not wade through the waters of grief without some serious questions for our Father who seemingly allowed such terrible pain to touch our lives. I learned from King David that I could bring my anger, my frustration, my disappointment, my tears and my fears to God and He wouldn't turn me away. So that's exactly what I did. I kept the conversation with Him going, even when it hurt.

My husband and I talked about exploring the possibilities of medical intervention or adoption, but those routes ultimately did not feel like something we were willing to pursue. This left me with the very plausible reality that biological motherhood may be something I will not get to experience. The mere thought of such an outcome, once brought me such anxiety that I could feel my chest tightening in defiance. I couldn't fathom such an existence... or so I thought.

Somewhere along the way, in my walks and talks with God, I started to look at things differently. He brought to my remembrance the passage from Romans 12:2 (NKJV) that says "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God". I know that we normally look at this scripture and automatically relate it to fleeing worldly cultural practices but I saw it with fresh eyes and found a new application for myself. It was impressed upon my heart that as I continued to renew my mind – challenging society's notions of motherhood, reminding myself of what God thought of me, His plans for me, His love for me – that my new way of thinking would help me to properly discern what His will is for me.

When it says that His will is good, perfect and acceptable, that got me thinking that whatever it is that God has in store for me as it relates to my life, He has already covered all the angles. He has assured me that it is going to be good and

we already know that He is the giver of every great gift. He has told me that it is going to be perfect, meaning that it is a complete plan where He has already worked out every detail and left nothing to chance. And lastly, that it will be acceptable. That means that whatever the future holds for me, it is going to be agreeable to my soul. God isn't giving me a lack luster, pales-in-comparison, Plan B kind of life. Whatever it is, whether or not children are in that picture, it is going to be a masterpiece.

When I came to that place of total surrender of my wants, hopes and desires for my future and gave them all to God, an indescribable peace permeated my heart. It was if I was echoing the words of the writer of Psalm 31:15a (TPT) who said "*my life, my every moment, my destiny—it's all in your hands*". I was no longer preoccupied with how the clock and my body seemed to be working against me; I had found a place where I could park in contentment and rest in the fact that my times and seasons belong to Him.

When I did this, I began to see all of the opportunities that were around me to be a caregiver and nurturer to the children in my life. I am blessed to be a stepmother to 3 incredible adults and a step-grandmother to 5 adorable little ones. I am an aunt and a godmother and I have many friends with children of various ages. The Lord began to show me that I could take steps to be a more present role model in the lives of these precious little ones, not as some sort of substitute for motherhood, but as a way of giving them the love and tenderness that I had inside. Those qualities that I was desirous to use for my own children, did not need to wilt within me, but could still be used for God's glory. He led me to start a mentorship program for young women as a way of pouring into the next generation and as I led these ladies, I found a satisfaction that I never knew was possible.

Perhaps the thing you've been waiting on God for isn't children but it is something else that is very near to your heart. You have prayed, cried and waited and still haven't seen the manifestation. I want to encourage you today my friend to know that we serve a God who wants to carry out His purpose in your life and He is well able to exceed your expectations and do superabundantly more than anything you could ever dare to ask or think.

Ephesians 3:20 (AMP) says that He wants to go beyond your greatest prayers, hopes and dreams according to His power that is at work within you. Yes, this is the part where we give Him everything; the precious, sacred, grandiose things we want for ourselves and we say "Daddy, not my will, but yours be done". This sounds terrifying, but it is also exhilarating if we truly trust that He

wants what is best for us. Know that He has already put His power within us to bring His will to pass in our lives.

Are you willing today to trade your dreams in for His?

What if the things that He has in store for you are so much greater that what you had envisioned for yourself? Are you willing to let go of the life that you imagined for yourself to embrace the beautiful destiny He has crafted just for you?

I dare you today. Take a leap of faith and trust God with the timeline of your life. He has so much more in store for you



God's Promise

By: Dulcie David idiens



**God did not promise there will be no rain,
But He did promise a rainbow.
He did not promise there will be no sorrow,
But He did promise a better tomorrow**

**He did not promise tears won't fall,
But He did promise to wipe them all.
He did not promise there will be no pain,
But He did promise it will be for your gain.**

**He did not promise your burdens will be light,
But He did promise He will win the fight.
He did not promise life will be easy,
But He did promise and say;
"I WILL BE THERE IF YOU CALL ME"**

day five

Starting Over

By: *Phyllis Diller Stewart*



How can I start over and "Let God" do the work that needs to be done in my life? What does it mean when God calls us to something new, something unknown? How do we conquer fear and face our circumstances through the lens of what God is doing in our lives? How is He offering new experiences and new perspectives, and how do we hear His voice more clearly?

In preparation for writing this piece, I considered the italicized words above, taken from the website, and pondered them for quite a while.

I kept returning to the words, "... when God calls us to something new, something unknown", and then I wondered, "What if the new and unknown in our lives has been thrust upon us? What if being called by God to a new situation is the last thing we feel?"

Exactly a year ago there were rumblings about a strange and potentially frightening virus that seemed to be moving out of China. At first it was a postscript in the daily news, but before long the door of Life as We've Always Lived It slammed in our collective faces. "Something new", and "something unknown" were handed to each of us without our desire or consent, quickly becoming the central themes around which, each day rotated.

Called by God to go through this strange and evolving reality? That's the last thing it felt like, and the unexpected and extraordinary challenges were many.

Stay at home!

Unless you need essentials,
Many of which are being grabbed and hoarded by panicked shoppers,
Thereby increasing our own panic when confronting empty shelves.

Close the schools!

What? Endless March Break??
How will I care for my children and do my job too?

My Job!

Thank goodness I still have a job.
But have to travel out into the strange new world to do it.

My Job!

Scrambling to learn how to work from home, While I scramble to help the kids learn from home, While my spouse also tries to work from home. Or, I have to balance all of this alone.

The noise.

The lack of organization.

The lack of bandwidth!

My job!

How am I going to manage without one?

Will my employer ever reopen?

What am I going to do?

How will my small business survive?

My job!

I am a frontline worker. I'm exposed and I'm scared out of my mind.

I'm alone. Cut off from all my supports, I feel myself sinking.

How long can I go on?

God? Hello... God??

Where are you?

I'm not even sure that you're here.

Let alone, nearby.

The past year has been nothing but stress, heaped upon stress, affecting body, mind, and emotions. News changes daily, rules change just as often. We cope, adapt, update, and somehow manage, but where is God in this mess?

When I was in my teens, I jotted down a quote that I've never forgotten: "Far from God? Guess who moved?"

Throughout my adult life I have (too often) found myself in a chilly and lonely place, where my prayers seem to bounce off the ceiling and my friend Jesus seems unreachable. My head understands my faith, but my heart feels empty.

Eventually, I remind myself: Who moved?

It helps me to picture the solar system. When I'm in tune with God, I'm like Mercury, warm and bright in my close orbit around the sun. But during my darkest hours, when I take life for granted and drive my own bus, making decisions without considering Jesus's input, my orbit moves farther and farther from the sun's - the Son's! -- light and warmth.

Perhaps, during the past year of craziness, some days have felt like you're taking Neptune's long and far-away path; cold, cheerless, and alone.

But "Guess who moved?" is not an accusation. It is reality for everyone. We may be Christ-followers, but we are not guaranteed continuous warm, bright days. Instead, just like the sun at the centre of our solar system, we are promised that the Son, who has made us children of God, will never move, even when we do.

With David, we can say: "To You, O God my strength, I will sing praises; for God is my stronghold [my refuge, my protector, my high tower], the God who shows me steadfast lovingkindness. Psalm 59:17

Isn't that just the best thing? In these still-strange and confusing times, when we're hurtled from orbit to orbit, God is our refuge – our shelter / sanctuary / protection – from all that is going on. And not just that! God and his lovingkindness are steadfast. He is unwavering, unfaltering, and completely trustworthy.

Psalm 55:22, says it well in The Message:

*Pile your troubles on God's shoulders—
he'll carry your load; he'll help you out.
He'll never let good people
topple into ruin.*

My favourite life verse, also in The Message translation here, quotes Jesus, and I return to again, and again.

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."*

*Note that religion is very different from faith and the path Jesus asks us to walk.

How can we start over and do what needs to be done?

How do we conquer fear and face this never-ending circumstance of change? Whether you have time for a long study of the bible, carefully examining the many ways in which God has been faithful throughout recorded time, or whether you have only a moment in the midst of the busyness to whisper, "Take it over Jesus, because I just can't anymore," the outcome is exactly the same.

He has already responded to us, "Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest."

Rest for your spirit. Hope for your future.

Promises to steadfastly remain. Even when we move.



The Heart of God

BY: DULCIE DAVID IDIENS

Each morning when I kneel to pray;
I ask God to bless each day
Even when in doubt I look up and say,
God's love will show the way.

Sadness and Joy at times I see;
Through people's eyes as they are passing by me.
Father God I pray to Thee
Hear their prayers and grant their plea.

Your heart is so big and wide
Accommodating the whole world inside;
Your love calls out to one and all
Come, and in me abide.

Help me to heed to your call
That you will pick me up when I fall,
And to remember, the love in your heart;
When you gave Jesus to die for all



day six

Let go and Let God...

By: Lillian Boyd



Something is off about the story of Rebekah. She is a mother of twins but favours one over the other. She is painted early on as a woman of character, yet she deceives and manipulates her husband. She is a wife by divine arrangement and the mother of Israel but seeks to do the work of God on her own. During her pregnancy, the LORD told her that the Abrahamic Covenant promises would carry through, not be her firstborn but her second son.

As the boys grow up, they are pitted against each other. Esau, the elder, was favoured by his father, Isaac. And Jacob, God's chosen, loved by Rebekah. The conflict grows when Esau sells his natural birthright to Jacob. Years later, we are brought into Isaac's secret plan to bestow the covenant's blessing on Esau. We watch as Rebekah (who eavesdrops on Isaac's conversation) orchestrates her own plan to circumvent her husband's actions and, with a willing partner in Jacob, deceives him so that the younger son receives his rightful blessing. Some say that because God doesn't explicitly condemn Rebekah and Jacob's actions, they were justified. But we should not be so quick to draw this conclusion.

God often uses flawed people (even our childhood Bible heroes) and their sinful actions for his greater purpose. What we see in Rebekah is someone who believes in God's prophecy but takes matters into her own hands. She steps into God's work and manipulates circumstances and people to fulfill God's promise. God's silence in Scripture is not an affirmation of her actions; instead, I think he points to a better way.

One chapter earlier, we read an incredible story of Isaac and wells. It is here that God establishes Isaac as the next patriarch of the covenant he started with his father, Abraham. God tells Isaac to stay in the promised land (at the time Canaan) during a famine, and he will bless him. Isaac obeys, and God blesses him with crops and wealth. He becomes so wealthy that the Canaanites send him away. Isaac takes his family and all of his possessions and moves. And then, he starts to dig wells, establishing a claim on the land and ensuring a regular water source for his family and flocks. His first well is met with conflict with local herders. He moves on and digs another well. Still, more opposition, so he leaves. Then he builds a third well. No quarrels. He declares that "the LORD has given us room and we will flourish in the land" (Genesis 26:22). And what does he do?

He abandons the new well and the land he could claim! He moves on and goes to Beersheba. Here he builds an altar, worships God, pitches his tent. His last action is to dig a fourth well. He worships God, settles, and then looks for water to sustain his physical life. Isaac has moved from a self-sustaining heart to one that seeks God first and trusts in his faithfulness.

Many commentaries suggest that Genesis 26 is intentionally out of order to make a point and pre-dates the twins' birth. The sandwich of Jacob's stories between Isaac's are meant to demonstrate a contrast between how the two patriarchs received God's blessing. Jacob's story is human-orchestrated, full of failures, conflict, and pain. Isaac's shows a man who understands that he needs to trust the LORD to fulfill his promises. He is required to obey and receive. From Rebekah, we learn the end does not justify the means. It matters how we believe and act on that belief. From Isaac and the wells, we understand that we are to obey and receive!

God's promises are to be received! God will orchestrate it according to his perfect will and plan. He will work through the messiness. And yes, God may call us to be a part of it. But often, he is asking us to let go and let him.

**I've learned that people
will forget what you said,
people will forget what
you did, but people will
never forget how you
made them feel.**

-Maya Angelou



WHEN WE PRAY, WE RELIEVE OURSELVES OF RESPONSIBILITY. WE LET GO AND LET GOD. WE TAKE OUR HANDS OFF AND PUT OUR CONCERNS INTO THE HANDS OF ALMIGHTY GOD. AND TRUST ME, HE CAN HANDLE WHATEVER WE PUT IN HIS HANDS.

- MARK BATTERSON, "DRAW THE CIRCLE"

day seven

Your Value as God Sees You

By: Dulcie Davids



'Your value does not decrease because of someone's inability to see your worth'

Isaiah 43:19

"Watch for a new thing I am going to do. It is happening already - you can see it now! I will make a road through the wilderness and give you streams of water there"

There will be times when you think you have reached the end of your road and feel you are lost, I want you to remember, 'with God on your side it is never too late. He is always doing a new thing and working behind the scenes in our lives to bring about new beginnings.

Our God is an unchanging God, He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Nothing you do can change His love for you. He does not see you like others see you, He looks at you with so much Grace and Mercy. He calls you "You are mine" No one - no one, can snatch you away from His hands. Stand strong, because if satan has to get to you, he has to go through Jesus; He stands between you and the evil one

As humans we always tend to see the negative more than the positive, where we see failure, God sees potential for something new. No matter how many times we stumble and fall apart, God is already planning on fixing us.

In my personal life I cannot remember how many times I messed up and felt fallen from Gods grace but God in his infinite love had carved out a plan according to his own purpose.

He is an amazing God!

When we mess up 'Plan A' we don't have to worry - God has a 'Plan B.' All that He wants us to do is to stay determined and focused to see His hand in creating a new beginning for us.

Galatians 6:9

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up"

Our enemy wants us to quit and give up, he is the father of lies and most of the time we tend to quit just when our breakthrough is right around the corner. If we'll

remain focused, steadfast and refuse to give up – we will reach our goal and walk in God's presence.

God will walk with you, wait with you in your wilderness and give you living water, that you will thirst no more. It's not over, God loves you, He sees you, and he has a plan to help you begin again.

He is the God of do-overs, fresh starts and new beginnings.



God's plan is like a beautiful tapestry and the tragedy of being human is that we only get to see it from the back with all the ragged threads and muddy colours. We only get a hint of the true beauty that would be revealed if could see the whole pattern on the other side, as God does.

- spoken by Matt Murdock
in the Netflix series "Daredevil"

day eight

The Hidden Things

By: *Lori Doner Jones*



Revive's "Starting Over" online series was released on social media February 1, 2021, and three days later, my father unexpectedly died. My father was diagnosed with ALS in May 2020. I say unexpectedly, even though he had a terminal disease as I never saw it coming so fast. He had a sharp decline over January, but I was expecting and convinced we had a few more months. Then, just like that my plans, my expectations, my anticipation of what was to come and how I would control it was obliterated and my dad was gone, and I was thrust into "starting over", in what felt like the cruel blink of an eye.

I received a phone call in the middle of the night on February 4th, that my father had passed away in his sleep. I had left him at 5:00 pm, the night before, and told him I loved him and I would see him the morning, just as I had done every day for the previous 2 weeks. There was no indication at that time that the morning would not come. As I drove in the middle of the night to my parents house, I cried out to God in an elevated volume, why? Why? Why? Over and over. A hundred variations of the same question. Why now? Why today? Why so soon? Why my dad? Why couldn't I have been there holding his hand when he took his last breath? All I wanted was to be there in the end - but that was kept from me. Why God?

Over the next few weeks those questions did not subside but got stronger, and probably a lot more bitter. No amount of Christian-ese made me feel better. Even if my head could rationalize that he did not suffer and was now in a better place, my heart could not and still cannot bear it. Why couldn't it have been someone else? Why is everything so unfair? Where are you God? And I am just going to be honest, I am still upset. I am angry, I am sad, I am frustrated, I am a lot of things that don't look like what I think a woman seeking God with determined purpose looks like, and yet, maybe that's exactly what she looks like...

Broken.

Full of sorrow.

Several years ago I watched a movie that was based on the life story of Billy Graham. At the beginning of his journey as an evangelist he was good friends and colleagues with a man named Charles Templeton. Both were preachers on a road to very extensive public ministries, and in fact, as the movie portrayed, it was believed that Charles Templeton would be the more prolific figure and was probably the more gifted speaker of the two; Billy Graham was more like an opening act.

However, Templeton end up suffering a crisis in his faith and his questions overcame him. One man went on to be one of the world's most beloved, influential and accomplished evangelists, and the other, became disillusioned, left his ministry and became Agnostic.

An atheist doesn't believe in a god or divine being... However, an agnostic neither believes nor disbelieves in a god or religious doctrine. Agnostics assert that it's impossible for human beings to know anything about how the universe was created and whether or not divine beings exist.

I have often wondered since watching that movie, how do you go from one extreme to the other? How fragile is our faith?

One man dives in and drowns, the other dives in and thrives. Why? What is the difference between the two?

I think that the ability a truly follow Jesus depends on our ability to stand in the "Why" – and let go of our need for all the answers; to let go and let God.

How successful we are at this is maybe the key to us experiencing God's presence like never before. I think maybe we need to be aware of these two stories; these men, who were both extraordinary, and at the same time just like us; ordinary examples of how people deal with issues of faith. We could so easily, as believers slip from one camp to the other. When we are tested, when we are questioning, when life's tribulations hit us like a wave, is our response more like Billy's or Charles'? Do we stand in the "why" and say what I think Billy did, "I have enough evidence of God to trust him", or is our faith too fragile to sustain the questions, and like Charles, we drown in our doubt?

Days after my father's funeral, I woke up at my parents' house, having stayed with my mom overnight, and I still felt these why questions heavy on my heart. As I went to get myself a coffee, I could hear that my mother had left the television on but she wasn't there watching. A familiar voice in the family room, drew me in, it was Sheila Walsh interviewing Mark Batterson on the release of his new book. I have read multiple books by both these people, and I spent the entire last summer entrenched in Mark Batterson's prayer challenge, "Draw the Circle" so I knew his voice immediately and when I went in the room he was discussing this exact question; and this is basically what he said:

"We all ask God WHY – but some of the answers to my big questions are just above my pay grade – so I just file them in my Deuteronomy 29:29 file."

What he said was this: when we just don't understand what God is doing or don't agree with Him, we need to focus on the heart of God, and trust in that, because as believers, we do know (or should know) God's heart for us.

Deuteronomy 29:29 says this:

"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

Over the last few weeks, I have been thinking on this verse and what it is saying to me. This is usually how God teaches me as I am left with an idea or scripture that I chew on for a while, and can't let go of until I have some understanding. I roll it around in my brain for days or weeks and maybe I write about it until my heart understands it.

I wonder if maybe we are so focused on the secret hidden things that we become less concerned with the revealed things. Maybe I need to focus on the second half of Deuteronomy 29:29. Some things aren't meant for us to know or understand, but other things, we are meant to know, and I wonder if I neglect what God is revealing, while I am focused on the things that aren't meant to for me to know today.

One man dove in and was drowned by his questions and what was hidden, the other dove in and discovered a life that was forever changed by what he found.

One fell away and the other was "all-in". And I wonder...which of those two, am I ?

Revive began as an idea in the Spring of 2019 and became an event that October, and as I think on the experience of leading this, I realize today how much God actually has revealed to me during that time. I think now on our first topic of stepping out of complacency and "Loving God with all You've got" and I wonder today if that's not exactly the same topic I am struggling with right now.

I think to Last January when we talked about Resolve and Resilience, and what it's going to take today for me to plug into those things.

I remember our Spring series on living in Revival no matter what our circumstances are, and I think about my prayer challenges over the summer and how powerful they were in my own life and the moments I spent with my dad directly, because of that challenge, moments I am so grateful for today...and I can see God's hand in it.

I think about the video I made in October on Great Expectations, where I discussed Naomi and how she questioned the "why" of it all when she said; "I went away full and the Lord has brought me back empty" and I realize that February 1st, when I started this series, I went out full and within three days, the Lord had brought me back empty, and I think about what it will take to resolve my lost expectations, and embrace God's version of my story - a version, that like Naomi, I don't particularly want. I think of the words I said in that video, that were maybe God's voice to me for today.

I think of the all the devotionals women have written that have encouraged me and how your words have impacted me, and then I think about the words I myself have written, and I can see God there... revealing Himself to me. Teaching me. I think of the devotional for Day 1 in this book, that I wrote months ago, that reminds me today "I can drive through it..." and I understand how it applies to me in this very moment. Sometimes we don't see what God is revealing because it's so slow and subtle and maybe we aren't paying attention because the answers aren't revealed the way we wanted them to be.

I don't think any of these things were an accident, and I don't think it was a coincidence that I stood in my childhood home that morning as the voices of two trusted people drew me in to draw my attention to a verse. I don't think it's an accident that the piece of scripture was from Deuteronomy, a corner of the bible that we don't usually hear too much from. Because if you know me, you know that I have a heart for those hidden corners that feel like undiscovered treasure, especially in the Old Testament. When I think on all these things, I know I see God, leading me to know Him better and trust him, even when things are so very dark.

So I wrote down my questions and my lost expectations and all the things I am disappointed, discouraged and angry about... all my questions of "why" and I folded it up and wrote Deuteronomy 29:29 on the outside of it. These are my "hidden things" the ones I don't have answers for.

Then I tucked this list inside the back pocket of my Bible, which holds all of what **has** been revealed to me. Truth, still left undiscovered and unexplored; so many hidden corners for me to still find, things that God intended for me and for my children to know. Looking at my Deuteronomy 29:29 list versus looking at this book, God's word, side by side, suddenly it seems like they aren't quite weighted the same. In fact my list doesn't even fill an entire page. Sure, my list is full of what I see as huge, life-altering kinds of questions that shake my very core, and speak to my deep disappointments and pain. Questions that cut deep into my soul... but I can choose to let those questions control and maybe destroy my faith, or I can let my FAITH control (and maybe someday even conquer) my questions.

If I truly believe, what I say I believe aren't these truths in God's word just as important, or even more important than my questions? Maybe the deep importance I am placing on one, has gained a bigger significance in my head than it should. I wonder if I spend more time truly understanding God' revealed word, maybe God will also reveal truth about the things that are hidden from me today.

Maybe I'm just not ready yet to get my list answered.

"The revealed things" - are MINE

"The secret things" are HIS

It's our human nature to want the thing we can't have. We can see the beginning of that in Eden. Eve, even with all God had provided to her, wanted what would make her like Him - that which she could get from the tree of Knowledge. She wanted the answers, the knowledge, the wisdom; she wanted what God said was not hers to have, and in taking what was not meant for her, what she actually got was destruction. Instead of trusting God's plan she doubted His goodness. She was consumed and tempted by the things kept secret. I wonder if I am just the same; wanting the tree of knowledge, when I have what I need already.

When I am standing in the WHY - Who am I? Am I my Creator Father's daughter, or the daughter of Eve? Maybe knowing that I am both; broken and flawed, and yet still redeemable, is the key to knowing how to not drown in my own WHY.

A year ago in our devotional I quoted Charles Spurgeon where he says "I have learned to kiss the wave that tosses me against the Rock of Ages". As I think on that devotional and what I was thinking at that time when I quoted that and what it means to me today, I am struck at the layers of God; all the complex details of how He works.

Today as I think on Deuteronomy 29:29 and the story of Billy and Charles, and all MY questions of WHY, I realize this:

*"One man drowns...
The other, learns to kiss the wave"*

Today maybe you're starting over. Maybe you're in the middle, or maybe you're struggling at the end of something. My prayer for each of us, is that regardless of our season, we are learning to dwell in the unknown, standing in our WHY with courage and faith, that we continue seeking and cherishing the things God IS revealing, finding light in the darkness, and patience in the unfolding of God's story for our lives. I pray for each of us to have determined purpose to seek Him.

Though there might be days I feel under water, I know in my heart that all I truly want is to learn to kiss the wave, and I pray that for you as well.



The Tree Stump Prayer - by Will Graham

excerpt taken from www.BillyGraham.org

On a daily basis I'm blessed with memories and stories of the many ways God chose to use my grandfather to reach people around the world over the course of many decades. Nearly everywhere I go people stop to tell me about how entire families and generations were impacted by his ministry. It's humbling.

What many people may not know is that it almost didn't happen. Everything we know of the ministry of Billy Graham from the late 1940s on – the massive stadium events, the evangelistic movies, the radio programs, the counseling of presidents and kings – hinged on a singular moment in history that took place at the California retreat center of Forest Home.

At the mid-point of the 20th century, he had already been an evangelist with Youth For Christ and had preached across Europe in the aftermath of World War II. He had held his first "Billy Graham Crusades" in places like Charlotte, N.C., and Grand Rapids, Mich. He was also the president of Northwestern College in St. Paul, Minn., the youngest college president in the country. Not everything had gone as planned, however. His crusade in Altoona, Pa., had been – in his own words – "a flop." It was spiritually difficult and he felt things had gone poorly, and it left him questioning whether or not evangelism should be his focus.

At the same time, a very good friend and contemporary of my grandfather's, a man named Charles Templeton, had begun challenging my granddaddy's way of thinking. Mr. Templeton, who had preached with Youth For Christ as well, had gone on to study at Princeton, where he began to believe that the Bible was flawed and that academia – not Jesus – was the answer to life's problems. He tried to convince my grandfather that his way of thinking was outdated and the Bible couldn't be trusted. My grandfather had more questions than answers.

As a young man in his early-30s, all of these things were swirling in his mind when he traveled to California in 1949. Did he even believe the Bible from which he was preaching, or should he follow Templeton in questioning its validity?

It was at this time that my discouraged grandfather reluctantly accepted the invitation of Henrietta Mears to visit and speak at a Christian retreat center called Forest Home.

As I toured Forest Home last year, it moved me greatly to walk the paths that my grandfather walked as he struggled with the Lord, and ultimately had the experience that would change the course of his ministry and the eternities of millions.

You see, while he was at Forest Home, he spent a great deal of time studying the Bible, and he kept seeing the same phrase pop up. "Thus sayeth the Lord... Thus sayeth the Lord..." While my grandfather had always accepted in his head the authority of the Scripture, this became the turning point as he realized in his heart that God's Word is divinely inspired, eternal and powerful!

One night at Forest Home, he walked out into the woods and set his Bible on a stump – more an altar than a pulpit – and he cried out: "O God! There are many things in this book I do not understand. There are many problems with it for which I have no solution. There are many seeming contradictions. There are some areas in it that do not seem to correlate with modern science. I can't answer some of the philosophical and psychological questions Chuck and others are raising." And then, my grandfather fell to his knees and the Holy Spirit moved in him as he said, "Father, I am going to accept this as Thy Word—by faith! I'm going to allow faith to go beyond my intellectual questions and doubts, and I will believe this to be Your inspired Word!"

My granddaddy wrote in his autobiography that as he stood up his eyes stung with tears, but he felt the power and presence of God in a way he hadn't in months. "A major bridge had been crossed," he said. The resulting change did not go unnoticed. The next day my granddaddy spoke at Forest Home, and 400 people made a commitment to Christ. Henrietta Mears remarked that he "preached with authority" that she hadn't seen before from him.

See the rest of this story at www.billygraham.org

bonus: a look at scripture

Random Musings

By: Lori Doner Jones



In his book the "Problem of Jesus", Mark Clark describes listening to a sermon delivered by Timothy Keller after 9/11 where he references the story of Lazarus, and Jesus reaction to the death of his friend Lazarus.

If you know the story, you know that Jesus had been notified of his friend's illness and waits two days before He proceeds to where Lazarus is, knowing of course, that He will arrive too late, and His friend has already died. He is also aware that He is about to perform yet another miracle and resurrect Lazarus who has now been dead four days. Though Jesus knows the situation is temporary, His reaction is beautifully human – real and emotional.

"The text says that when he reached the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus was deeply moved. The Greek word here means 'to roar or snort with anger like an animal', like a lion, like a bull. So the best translation would be, 'Bellowing with anger, he came to the tomb.' That must at least mean nostrils flared with fury. It might mean he was yelling"

What a powerful picture of strong emotions in the presence of death. Jesus was yelling in anger at death, which is fascinating if you believe He was God in the flesh. He, like us, hates death and sees it as His enemy. Death angers Him like it angers us when we lose a loved one. And there is comfort in that, knowing that God shares our anger – our grief over loss and death. I am not sure I can entirely explain why, but I know it brings me comfort. (Clarke "The Problem of Jesus" p. 221)

I am always in awe about the details that we miss in scripture, the ideas that escape us in translation or that we just skip over without fully considering the weight, or why those words are written as they are. If this is our sacred text, maybe we need to spend more time sitting with it, examining its intricate messages and nuances, really immersing ourselves in the words. Reading this today, it settles with me in a profound way, as I have never heard this story told this way until reading it here in Timothy Keller's interpretation. I have never heard of Jesus' reaction of anger.

I invite you to examine this scripture and ask some questions, read some commentary and explore what God wants to say to you today. Also consider that this happens just days before the crucifixion and the act of raising Lazarus from the dead, brings Jesus one step closer to the cross and His own death.

The word used in scripture to describe Jesus' reaction to Lazarus' death is "embrimaomai". Some commentaries translate this to "sternly warn" while others say it means "indignant and angered". All agree that this word is imbued with connotations of anger.

John McArthur's commentary notes that "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. The phrase here does not mean merely that Jesus was deeply touched or moved with sympathy at the sight. The Greek term 'groaned' always suggests anger, outrage or emotional indignation. Most likely Jesus was angered at the emotional grief of the people because it implicitly revealed unbelief in the resurrection and the temporary nature of death. The group was acting like pagans who had no hope... Jesus may also have been angered because he was indignant at the pain and sorrow in death that sin brought into the human condition" McArthur Bible Commentary p. 1396

The Moody Bible Commentary says this: "Jesus' anger appears to be directed at their lack of faith in what God would do, especially through Jesus (p.1640)

My ESV Crossway Student Bible says this, in relation to the translation and meaning of the word embrimaomai, and the reaction of Jesus: "Jesus was moved with profound sorrow at the death of his friend and at the grief that his other friends had suffered. In addition, this sorrow was intermixed with anger at the evil of death (the final enemy; see 1 Cor 15:26; Rev 21:4) and also with a deep sense of awe at the power of God that was about to flow through him to triumph over death."

As I have been dealing with the realities of grief, I have been considering our reactions to suffering and those suffering. The story of Lazarus has been on my mind quite a bit, even before reading into it more closely. Often as believers, when we reach out to someone suffering, we fail to acknowledge the depth of emotion that grief holds. I am amazed to hear Christians gloss over loss, as they seek to speak "Jesus" over pain. We say things like "just be grateful... God has a plan... He's working it for your good...Let's celebrate their homecoming... It's a joyful day in Heaven..." when speaking to bereaved or suffering people, and I know I have probably been just as guilty and insensitive. To be honest, I don't feel like celebrating, though I know my father is in heaven. I am not rejoicing; I am missing him and I too, "groan and feel deeply troubled" - angry - even though I know that our separation is temporal.

We feel like these are "Christian" things to say, but they maybe aren't Christ-like, if we are looking at His reaction in this story. What we see in the story of Lazarus is an emotional Jesus. While Commentaries disagree on why Jesus is angry I think Timothy Keller's interpretation makes the most sense.

Why would He be angry that they didn't have faith that He would raise Lazarus? In John 11: 4 Jesus notes that "this illness is so that the son of God may be glorified through it". The intention therefore, is that they will believe, **when** they see Lazarus risen. If they already believed and had strong faith, there would be no purpose, so I don't think His anger is directed to their unbelief. I think it must have been because death itself is the enemy, death elicits a deep response of anger and sorrow – even for Jesus. Because He was human and knows what it is to carry the weight of our skin...our feelings...our heart. After He is angry, He then weeps (v 35), we don't see him make light of their loss, or rebuke them for unbelief, or even just tell them it will all be ok because He is present – though those things are all TRUE. He allows them to see Him react and weep with them.

Keller explains this when he says:

"Does it make psychological sense to you that if you knew you were about to turn everything around, you would be drawn down into the grief, you would enter into the trauma and the pain of their hearts? Why would He do that? The answer is because He is perfect love. He will not close his heart, even for 10 minutes. He will not refuse to enter in. He doesn't say, "Well there's not much use entering into all this grief. After all, we're going to be putting it away in a minute. He goes in."

(Keller sermon archive, as referenced in The Problem of Jesus by Mark Clark)

In verse 38, scripture says as He approaches the tomb, "Then Jesus is deeply moved again" indicating the same word *embrimaomai* – noting He is still angry. He knows our suffering. He knows us. Seeing this reaction from Jesus makes me love Him more! To know that He was angry at death, He was angry at the loss of His friend whom He loved, that He wept and felt it, even though He was about to turn it all around and erase the loss entirely, He still let them seem Him grieve.

Why do you think He did that? Maybe, it was so you and I would learn how to be with people in sorrow; how to weep with them. Maybe it was so we could understand anger in loss... Maybe it was to pull us close to Him and to each other; and to connect with us in our sorrow and pain.

Grief and anger isn't a sign of unbelief. It is not the absence of faith. We don't have to gloss over it and act like as Christians we aren't meant to be sad...or angry. It is simply our human reaction to loss. Love, left without subject... Love that's been dismembered, and left us with missing pieces. Loss hurts and hurting is not a sign of our lack of faith in Christ. Loving Jesus, and believing in Him does not eradicate our pain, but it does give us hope, and helps in the moments of darkness, giving us the ability to trust that Jesus will walk through our emotions with us.

First He was angry...then He wept...then He was angry again...
Then He did what He was assigned by His Father to do.

I think what we are meant to see today, is that Jesus showed us that He could walk through each of these things consecutively and maybe simultaneously and that we are destined to as well. We will feel pain. We will be angry. We will weep and then we will be angry again ... then we will / should /can do, what He needs us to do.

There is still work to be done.

Are you ready for Revival?

Resources:

The McArthur Bible Commentary - by John McArthur

The Moody Bible Commentary - Edited by Michael Rydelnik and Michael Vanlaningham

ESV - Study Bible - Crossway

The Problem of Jesus - by Mark Clark

(Sermon by Timothy Keller was referenced in the above book but can be found at Timothy

Keller Sermon Archive: New York City Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013 - sermon on 9/11



The purpose of this "musing" is to cause you to ask questions; to be curious and to investigate scripture; to help motivate you to dig deep and to realize that there are lots of interpretations that maybe need our deep thought and discernment in order to hear how God is speaking to you. Don't be afraid to delve deeper!

To view the corresponding video series

STARTING OVER

when it's time to let go and let God

see www.readyforrevival.ca

see www.springvale.org/women for upcoming events

REVIVE

www.ReadyForRevival.ca

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