

ISSUE THREE
LIVING IN REVIVAL

Voices
OF REVIVAL
edition



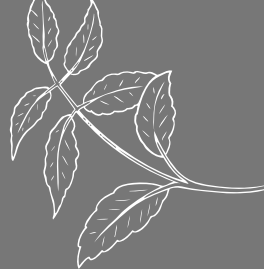
REVIVE

devotional

SPRINGVALE
WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Welcome to Revive

Lori Doner Jones



Recently, I read Beth Moore's new book "Chasing Vines" and it in she says this:

"Coming of age is the most critical intersection of your calling. It's the place of Spirit and slaughter. It's the corner where you take one of two turns; either your fruitfulness will be devoured by the devil, or your own flesh, or you will allow God to crucify your ego, fear and lethargy and raise you to be immensely fruitful for His gospel" - Chasing Vines P. 235

The world is in crisis, and it's serious; but we can shift our perspective and see a glimmer of hope and opportunity. One thing I never have enough of, is time. Now, we've all been given that in abundance. At the end of this crisis – who we are, and what is important to us will be evident. How we spent this time, this valuable resource, that's going to be revealing about our hearts, isn't it? Will I emerge having grown in closeness to my family and treasuring the time of solitude with them. Will I spend time in God's word and grow closer to Jesus? Will I become more fruitful for the Kingdom, or will I retreat into watching Hallmark movies and napping.... (I might have done that a bit)? How can I show God's love to others while so many are suffering and questioning? How can I be a light in a world of fear, darkness and confusion? Or will I spend the next weeks in darkness and confusion myself? Any revival, or breakthrough comes when we choose to follow a path that is less travelled, when we step out of our own "ego, fear and lethargy" and choose to follow Jesus - with reckless abandon.

In these next pages, I welcome the voices of women in our community – women just like you, who are all striving to 'Live in Revival': who are seeking God with determined purpose. A really special feature of our events at Springvale, is that we regularly have a large percentage of women who attend from neighbouring Churches. For this issue of our devotional, I wanted to represent that. As we are all in isolation, we can see how our buildings are not that important. **We** are the Church.

More than ever, Revive is meant to connect women from all over our community, and I am so pleased to be able to introduce you to some beautiful voices from Springvale, as well as from some other local Churches! I am also excited to have the voices of some young women as well who are just finishing high school and have been gracious enough to join us in this "Voices of Revival" edition. Welcome to all of you, and thank you for sharing a bit of your personal journey with us.

DAY ONE

ABIDE

*Lori Doner Jones
Springvale Church*



For the last few years in January, I choose a "word for the year", something I think represents where I am at, what I am learning, and what I need to work on. I usually don't share this – it's just something I put some thought into and something that has meaning to me personally. This year, I chose "abide". It never seems to fail that when I write something down, that's definitely going to be an area the Lord will overhaul quicker than I can even think to take it back!

At the start of the year, I had a strong sense that this would be year to "rest" in God, to let go of everything and relinquish some control. I even wrote a devotional on "rest" for our February team meeting, and then.... the world shut down. (Insert big sigh here....) It was almost like He was preparing me for it....

"The Classical Greek writers used the word *Meno* "to stay", "to stand fast" "to remain" or "abide". It has the idea to remain at home or stay where you are and not wander off" (www.abideinchrist.com). Little did I know when I chose that word, that within a few short months, I would be literally forced to remain where I was, challenged almost immediately to be still, to rest, to let go of control.

Beth Moore in her book – *Chasing Vines* notes:

In one sense, abiding sounds like the easiest command for a Jesus follower to undertake. It means resting in the One who is stronger than we are, wiser than we are, and more powerful than we are – and who loves us and defends us. But for most of us, the not-doing is infinitely more difficult than the doing. Give us a to-do list or a deadline or assignment, but for the love, please don't ask us to be go and be still."

Not sure about you, but patience is not my strongest trait. By nature, I am a "fixer" – if you tell me about a problem – I am going to feel compelled to fix it. It will keep me awake at night until it's fixed, like the Princess and The Pea story, the problem will irritate me until I've tackled it and found a resolution to it. What I am learning is that my natural inclination to this "fixing" – while it might be a strength in many ways, and maybe one of my best qualities, is also one of the things that blocks me from being in relationship with God.

Sometimes it is our strengths we need to overcome in order to walk with Him. The things He designed in us to be powerful, are often the things we end up relying on, rather than relying on Him. God isn't most revealed in our strengths, he moves profoundly in our weaknesses. (2 Cor 12:8)

This year, I knew I needed to address this to live in dependence on Him, but I wasn't quite aware that **this** would be my training ground. It's a dangerous prayer when you ask God to help you surrender.....

This week, as I prepare this devotional, I am personally facing some difficult things, and the sobering reality, that **I am not in control**. In fact, the whole world is feeling that more than ever. Something we cannot even see has crippled us, in no time at all, and removed all sense of power. Not only can we not change the current pandemic but, like me, you might also be feeling a "powerlessness" on a personal level.

Maybe you're faced with circumstances that you are desperate to steer differently, but they just keep going in the wrong direction. Perhaps it doesn't feel like God is working for, or with you right now. Maybe you've found yourself, late at night staring at a wall wondering "God, where are you?" Maybe you're facing the idea that He might not heal you, or your loved one, or your marriage, or bring your child back into relationship with you, or resolve your health or financial issues, or provide you a new job. Maybe He will leave your prayers seemingly unanswered; maybe He has other plans...plans we don't understand, and maybe plans we don't personally align with.

"for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways declares the Lord" Isaiah 55:8.

The very act of abiding means surrendering my expectations, my desires, all my hopes, and being able to follow the example of Jesus when he pleads with his father : *" Father if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."* Luke 22:42.

Those words; they give me pause..... in fact, they stop me in my tracks. Those words challenge me and are my *constant* struggle. Am I willing to say that? Am I willing to "abide", even when the outcome is the very *opposite* of what I have prayed for? Even when everything in me screams *"no, I don't want this, anything but this..."*

Am I **ready**, and **willing** to say – *"Not my will, but yours be done?"*

Prayer: Lord, help me to see You, even when I want a different outcome. Help me to find shelter in You. Stay close, and prepare me to face whatever Your will may be. In Jesus' name, Amen.



If you are looking to chose your own word for 2020 - download a helpful "true purpose word guide" from Gather Women - on our event site at www.readyforrevival.ca/resources

Psalm 91



- 1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."
- 3 Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
- 5 You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,
- 6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.
- 8 You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.
- 9 If you say, "The Lord is my refuge," and you make the Most High your dwelling,
- 10 no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.
- 11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;
- 12 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
- 13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.
- 14 "Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.
- 15 He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.
- 16 With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation."



DAY TWO

WE WILL HAVE TROUBLE- BUT DO NOT WORRY- GOD'S GOT THIS!

Shireen Spencer

Gather Women Intern, Pastor & Speaker



Before Jesus left this earth he was kind enough to let us in on a little secret.

"In this world you will have trouble but take heart! I have overcome the world." John 16:33

That is a verse I have gone to many times as I experienced hurt and challenge in my life. When I battled a year with 7 surgeries I came back to this as it reminded me that the storm I was going through was not the end. Jesus told me I would have trouble but he also told me that it didn't end there. When I battled cancer, I reflected on this truth again as it directed me to focus on what was ahead -my victory was already secured because of Jesus. Even though I did not know how it was going to end in my physical reality I knew that God already had everything under control.

The beginning of this verse in John actually starts like this. *"I have told you these things so that in me you may have peace"* John 16:33 I am so moved by the honesty of our saviour. He tells us what we need to know even before we experience trouble and what is most important is that he wants us to know that in him, is where we find our peace. Our world is filled with trouble. There is no such thing as a pain free life but with trust in Jesus, we can still experience the power of peace in the midst of troubling times.

These days are challenging times for everyone in different ways. They were before this pandemic, are more so during this pandemic and will still be even when the pandemic is over. There are always seasons when worry and fear will try to move in and take up permanent residence in our lives. It is at these times that we need to remember the truth. We have a father who loves us. We have a saviour who died and rose again for us. We have the Holy Spirit to comfort and guide us. We are not alone. We know who we can go to and who is fighting for us. Anxiety may show up but this visitor cannot be invited to stay. Our Father knew we would experience these feelings but he gave us a way to make the visit short.

"Be anxious about nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving make your request to God and the peace of God that passes all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:4-7


Remember that God is always present to meet you wherever and however you are. He promises that if you seek him you will find him. Jeremiah 29:13. He promises that when you cry out he will answer. Jeremiah 33:3. He promises to never leave you. Deuteronomy 31:8. He promises to strengthen and uphold you. 2 Thessalonians 3:3

Revival begins when we take God at his word and believe his promises no matter what is going on around us and how hard life may be. We press in and choose to pray, choose to praise, choose to meditate on God's word and character. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength. Isaiah 30:15. He *"will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you."* Isaiah 26:3. God can keep us when we commit our minds to focussing on him. We find our strength growing when we allow joy to be our choice and trust God to fill us with his joy in those hard times and moments. Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength Nehemiah 8:10

When we are worried or anxious and life is filled with chaos and uncertainty God is still very present. Psalms 46 tells us that He is a very present help in trouble. God meets us in the midst of the crazy. If there is a stillness and quietness in your heart amidst the noise, you can meet God there and he will whisper to you.

If there is praise on your lips amidst the chaos in your environment, you can meet God there and he will sing a love song back to you. If there is a dance you are doing to the rhythm of life that unfolds with each moment, you can meet God there and he will take the lead and make the steps flow together and even change the tune to which you are dancing.

Are you ready for a REVIVAL? God is too and is waiting for you.



"It is doubtful whether God can
bless a man greatly until he has
hurt him deeply"
- A.W. Tozer

DAY THREE

LONELINESS AND ISOLATION IN REVIVAL

Valerie Shank
Springvale Church



It was my birthday and I was alone.

It's hard for me to be alone at the best of times but being forced to stay home alone on my birthday was especially hard. A pandemic forcing everyone to "stay home and stay safe" is ripe ground for a lot of extremely lonely and isolated people.

Am I lonely? Absolutely. Do I feel desperate? No, I don't.

That's not to say that I have never felt a desperate loneliness in the past or that I won't feel that way again in the future. I live alone. I'm a widow. My only child and grandchildren live 1000km away. I know loneliness and isolation. I am human with human emotions and feelings. I have been so desperate that I have sat on the floor, sobbing, crying out to God, demanding to know where He was in the middle of my pain and my loneliness. Where were all my friends? Don't they see, hear, feel, or understand the deep sorrow and loneliness that I am experiencing at this moment? Without fail, God always speaks peace to my lonely heart. He calms and heals my broken spirit, again and again.

Psalm 142:5-7 "I cried out to you, O Lord: I said, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living. Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low; deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise your name; the righteous shall surround me, for You shall deal bountifully with me."

He understands what it is to be lonely. I believe that Jesus spent some lonely days when he was 40 days in the wilderness and again when He was in the garden praying that he would not have to drink the cup. His closest friends were sleeping while Jesus wept bitter tears. Twice they were found sleeping by Jesus when he needed them to be praying with him.

Jesus came to earth as a human so that He could feel and know the heartache and sorrow of the human heart. How could He save the world if He didn't understand the human condition? Jesus understood what it was to be in isolation. He often chose solitude over the crowds.

We were created for relationship with God, first and foremost, then with family and with friends. But we must never think that we can replace the relationship with God with anyone else. He alone should hold that space in our hearts and lives. Everyone else is secondary. Husbands, children, parents, siblings and friends.

I have learned over the years but most especially recently that being alone does not have to mean being lonely. I recently have taken Philippians 4:11 as one of my life verses. *"Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have."* Being alone or with people, God is my sufficiency. He will sustain me.

We don't need to feel disconnected from everything and everyone just because of our circumstances. Our individual lives are quite different and we all handle things differently, but one thing that I know for a certainty is that God alone is the breath we breathe and He alone gives us life to live abundantly. John 10:10

"There is nowhere on this earth that you and I find ourselves where we are separated from the love and companionship of Christ."

- Sheila Walsh, *It's Okay not to be Okay*

You can't imagine a prayer that comes close to what God wants to give you. Only the Spirit of God knows what God is doing or purposing for your life. Let God give you all He wants to bestow.

- Henry Blackaby "Experiencing God"

DAY FOUR EVEN IN THE ORDINARY



*Linda Marr
Eastridge Church, Stouffville*

What works for you to 'Live in Revival' with God when times are good, when times are hard but also when times are mundane? I think it really is a trial and error for each of us as we find what works for us in our own personal love languages with God. My love languages with God is singing and praying.

"Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NLT

Wow, what a goal! Personally, I think we may feel closest to God when on a spiritual high and feeling super positive, life is good. For me this is after a sabbath retreat or on a sunny day, I have worship music playing and I am singing as I am skipping along feeling grateful and counting all my blessings.

I wonder if the next level of feeling closer to God and being able to stay in revival with God is during the hard times when we are crying and pouring our hearts out to God, like the mother in the shower during the sick kids commercial. I have been that mom, with many late night drives home from downtown hospitals with my worship music blasting while I sang and claimed the name of Jesus over my family situation.

*"Peace, bringing it all to peace.
The storm surrounding me.
Let it break at Your name.
Still, call the sea to still.
The rage in me to still.
Every wave at Your name.
Jesus, Jesus, You make the darkness tremble.
Jesus, Jesus, You silence fear."
Song "Tremble" by Mosaic MSC*

Listen to my voice in
the morning Lord.
Each morning I bring
my requests to you
and wait expectantly
- Psalm 5:3

I think as women we forget how important it is to be 'All In' with God or see ourselves as 'Living in Revival' during the 'mundane' days of life. How close to God do we feel doing our daily routines? We are so hard on ourselves, even when we are waking up and going through the day doing exactly what God wants us to do, we don't feel we are enough. God wants us to love him with everything we've got even on the 'ground hog days' of waking up and doing the same thing over and over again.

For some of us, mundane is going to work and maybe not working in what looks or feels like a 'make a difference' job and yet all these jobs are necessary and we couldn't live without them. I think we can 'make a difference' at any job by interacting positively and praying for each person we come in contact with.

For others, mundane days of life may include looking after children, doing laundry, making meals and getting caught up in feeling overwhelmed with the busy busy busy times of life and again questioning are we really 'making a difference'? These 'ground hog days' can be the toughest emotionally and yet we all know how critical modelling positive life tasks are healthy for our children and friends to see as they watch every action and reaction to see how strong our faith is.

And then there is the age and stage of life where we may not be going out to work and our at-home tasks have somehow quieted. We may still feel busy busy busy filling our days with so many events that we have no idea how we ever managed to keep all the plates spinning before this quieter time. Mundane takes on a whole new meaning of lack of excitement and we may start to feel disillusioned with life. In our hearts we know this is the time to keep learning and keep drawing closer to God but we wonder what is our purpose.

I think when we are in 'mundane' seasons it can be the hardest days to be 'All In' 'Revival' days. God loves us no matter what. God is in the everything of life. God will come to us and meet with us. God is waiting for us to talk to him during the daily routines so he can bless us beyond belief during our everyday happenings. How do we change what may feel 'mundane' to 'meaningful' or 'mission'.

Something that is finally starting to work for me is to remind myself to take my eyes off myself. Incorporate all my faith through the day into my values and into my actions talking to God all day long, praying through every thought and praying for every person compassionately the Holy Spirit puts on my mind as I work through my current assignment at home or at work. I desire to decide to make it my mission to humbly and compassionately encourage others, reminding them that God loves each of us and he will stay with us through whatever we are facing today. "God's got this!"

"Therefore, since we have been made right, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love." Romans 5:1-5 NLT

God will bless us as we start the day, fill the day and finish the day with our self-talk conversations with God, completing every little task and every little prayer trusting God and resting in God. As women, let's remember our real affirmation and confidence comes from God alone. We can find meaningful in the mundane.

So, I need to crank the worship music, my love language with God, during the mundane and now meaningful times and work extra hard to keep my faith strong giving God all my concerns over and over again while I am learning to completely rest in Him each and every day. How are you going to worship God while going about your daily routine?

God loves you and he wants to be with you all the way, whether you are shouting from a mountain top, crying from a valley or wondering while you are wandering during the mundane but meaningful tasks of life. God will bless you.



DAY FIVE

PSALM 18 & WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR ME

Carley Dally

Hillside Church - Mount Albert

Have you ever googled most famous person in the world? My daughter Lily did. #1 that comes up is Dwayne the Rock Johnson! Well for me my Rock is Jesus Christ.

I have been a Christian all my life but something has happened in the last 2 years that has rocked my world and it happens to all be in Psalm 18! In the Bible there are 59 verses about God being our Rock. Let's start with the first 3 verses go and read them out loud. God is our Strength, Rock, Fortress, Saviour, my Rock in whom we find protection, Shield, Power, place of safety, worthy of Praise. I love the idea of Jesus being our firm foundation. The kind that will not move or fall away. Through my life I have had moments of "are you real God" or "I can't do what you have asked me to do" and He always shows up as my firm foundation even though we live in this life of flesh. Gal 2:20

I was in Hawaii studying the Bible for 9 months then we went on a mission trip to teach pastors the inductive Bible method. This was very hard for me to be a teacher and be in front of others and I was trying to do it all on my own strength. I had to push myself in almost everything I did. I grew up with a fear of people and low self-esteem so everything was a struggle. I was laying on a cot one night crying out to God I can't do this, I quit. I'm Done. I was honestly not going to teach anymore. God spoke to me and said "good, now I can do it through you". Then, I was able to teach, no problem and I was joyful doing it. It was totally God helping me. But I still lived in fear.

How do we get to know God and His ways? Through prayer, talking to Him honestly like I did in the Philippines. Humbly saying I can't do this without You. I got to know God a bit better that day.

Let's read Psalm 18:6,16 and 28-29. Read it out loud. God did this for me and these promises are for you too. God took this to a whole new level with me about 1 month ago; yes, when the lockdown began. I have anxiety and depression and still fear. I cried out to God after a time of worship. "I want to be used by You but I can't work in this fear." I asked for healing and He answered.



The fear and low self-esteem are gone. When I get a spirit of heaviness still what moves it out is prayer and being on my knees literally face to the ground in humble prayer. The heaviness lifts and the peace that I receive is amazing. Only in God's strength can we scale any wall! Vs 29

We can get to know God as we see in Psalm 18: 30 not only through Prayer but through His word. *"This God-His way is perfect, the word of the LORD proves true; He is a shield for all those who take refuge in Him"*. You probably know that the Bible is the world's best seller! Must be worth reading. I am addicted to reading my Bible. It has not always been this way. I believe the Word of God is powerful. Hebrews 4:12

God's word became alive to me after my parents decided to go in a different direction with their faith. This rocked my world and I wanted to find the truth. I read that Bible like my life depended on it, I prayed God, "speak to me as I read your word" I had never really prayed that before. I started asking God to give me wisdom and show me the truth. Talking to God, telling Him how I felt, again then reading His word. It became alive to me like never before. It's God's story to us to help us through life and challenges.

The most exciting part of this for me is Psalm 18:46,49. Worship and Praise to God. A few years ago I went through a really rough time. I was mostly home alone and we had just moved to Holland Landing. I literally had to pray myself out of bed every morning. Something was missing. There was a longing in my heart for more worship and I didn't know what that would look like. A friend of a friend started a worship time in her home called Worship Room. We worshiped together, prayed and read scripture. I know how we all need to be doing these things on a regular basis in our homes but there is something about getting together with other ladies in worship, prayer and scripture that changed my world yet again.

The first time I went to Worship Room it lasted for 1 ½ hours (feels like seconds) I went to monitor that day at school right after worship and my friend Jameela says to me as soon as she sees me "your face! It's like you have been with God". I was blown away by this. Worship, prayer and scripture is our way of connecting with the God of the universe in such a personal way. In the hard times and the good.

I actually have rocks sitting on my desk by the spot where I spend time with God. It is there to remind me who my Rock is and when I stand on that Rock of Jesus Christ I can do what He asks of me. I also write words on the rock like hope and peace. The storms of life will come as we all know if we keep our eyes on Jesus we can walk on water! This is how I do that through worship seeking Jesus face, prayer on my knees and scripture reading.

Are you someone who thinks God can't use you? Have you ever sat there and asked Him to show you where He is at work so you can join Him? I just started doing this. And I have had more chances to share my story. God healed me from fear of people, now I sit and listen for where He is at work and Obey.

May God fill you with His Spirit and continue to help each one of us grow into a closer relationship with Him one step at a time.

God Bless.

"the Lord is close to
all who call on Him"
Psalm 145:18



The idea of revival originates in the reality that on one hand, God is the decisive giver all spiritual life and on the other hand, humans, even those who are born again and part of God's covenant family, from time to time drift into some kind of lifelessness and lethargy and backsliding and indifference and weakness. And when you put those two together - God as the giver of life and man as ever drifting towards lifelessness - what you get is the need for the hope of reviving, coming back to life - a fresh outpouring of God's life-giving Spirit on His people. That's what revival is.

-John Piper
From audio transcript on "Desiring God"

DAY SIX

THE WORD REVIVAL

*Lisa Naumoski
Springvale Church*



The Word Revive means to come to life again, breathe as if it's your last, as we are brought back to life by living with our Hope in Jesus.

We all may face obstacles, struggles, trials, but whether it is today, tomorrow or yet to come, we continue to live with great hope in Jesus. I try to live in belief of this mindset by setting my hope on Christ. This meaning isn't just a word, it's embedded in my heart, it protects and gives me peace and understanding, knowing that God is God and he is always with me; His timing and not my timing, I shall only fix my eyes on Him and listen to His words daily. To not fear or worry about what tomorrow will bring.

I did not always believe in this great joy of Hope, I worried excessively about my future, what others thought, my past hurts, what was going to happen with this and that, my marriage, kids, job and the list went on. Mainly, I was trying to fix the broken areas of my life that only God can and I still catch myself, but Jesus always pursues me, He invited me to have a relationship with Him "my best friend", providing me true love in comfort of His blessings. Providing assurance that things will work out for the greater of good, and that He has won my battles and through His salvation and forgiveness, he asks me to be kind, loving and to forgive. He tells me that he died on the cross and freed my worrying soul with His great Love. He asks me to put all my HOPE on him.

Through many scriptures, he continuously reminds me:

Psalms 121: 1

"I lift my eyes to the mountains where does my help come from"

Matthew 6:34

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself, each day has enough trouble of its own"

Ephesians 1:11 *"In him we are also chosen having been predestined according to his plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will"*

Matthew 11:28 *"Come to me all you are weary and I will find you rest"*

Lamentations:

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail"

Isaiah 45 - 7 *"I form the light and create the darkness. I bring prosperity and create disaster. I the Lord, can do all these things."*

Psalms 54:4 *"Surely God is my help: The Lord is the one who sustains me"*

I remind myself that He is my provider, and His love will defend me in any storm that I may face. We can put on the armour of God and choose to live in a revived Life with our "Best friend" Our living Hope, Jesus Christ".

The Lord's daily Prayer is part of my daily devotions. Praising Him through any storms, asking for His forgiveness, and learning to take every breath slowly to let go of fear and what I can't fix, to live a life with purpose and peace of hope, to trust Him daily with having a revived heart as the daughter of God!

I once read: If Jesus asked "If your situation never changes, will you still love Me?"

Yes! Yes! Yes and Amen to Jesus. I will love you even if my situation never changes. Even if I never get to do anything else, I will still choose You every day. He knows exactly what we are facing and will heal the deepest places of our hearts. When we truly know who we are in Christ, then our intentions will be a natural with trust. He cares more about our hearts than He does about what we are going to do next. At the end of the day, it's all about how we unite, and love Him and His people.

What would your answer be?

My Prayer

Father, I put my hope and trust in You. I thank You that You love me and care more about my heart than everything else. Please help me to clean areas where I have put my trust to live by anything other than You. Help me to see myself the way You see me. I love You, Jesus!

Favourite verses

1 Peter 2:9 *You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Philippians 1:6 *"being confident of this; that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."*

Favourite songs

All my hope by David Crowder

Goodness of God by Jenn Johnson



DAY SEVEN

CONTAMINATED ME!

Sonali Sinnatamby
Springvale Church

Dearest Jesus,

I've been outside for hours in this gentle haven where spikes of green poke their heads through the dark earth. The air is crisp and a brisk breeze drives the wind chimes to a mad medley of music.

Oh, the heaviness of your holy presence in the garden, Lord! My soul is on its knees in worship before you. I'm drunk, Jesus. With joy.

I drag and dump, rake and prune as my spirit dances to a heart-symphony and utters wordless whispers of wonder.

This space is free of contamination, those toxic things that impede my walk with you. Contamination! The word's been on my mind all week when I've sat silently before you in the quietness of dawn and struggled with situations confronting me, wondering how to pray. You've spoken a quiet understanding into me about how I need to examine myself, to acknowledge and empty out the ... contamination. Contamination that stands in the way to block and hamper the free-flow of my prayers. Because you are holy, Jesus, and you are pure, and the only righteousness I will ever have is in you. I was humbled and taken aback to see my heart as it really was. To be presented with a panorama of wrong attitudes and coloured perceptions. I asked for forgiveness and cleansing, for a new heart and mind. The weight lifted, you rained clean, cool water all over me. The tone of my prayers changed instantly. They ceased to hover like leaden weights at ceiling level. They became sharp, swift arrows and sped heavenwards. I could sense the ease of their passage.

This garden in the throes of spring re-birth, smiling with the secret joy of knowing the beauty that is to come, content in its state of gestation, is a reflection of my soul, Lord, I think. My soul as it should be. As you designed it to be.



And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden (Genesis 3:8)...

I'm reluctant to come back inside to the strange, surreal world of COVID19, the nasty new normal clamouring to make its voice heard on the evening news. Then I remember that you are coming with me, Jesus. As long as I'm free of contamination, we'll dance together to the sweet symphony the soul. All through this troubling time and beyond. Because you live in me, only the best is yet to come.

Always. In spite of. Until eternity.

I love you, Jesus. With all my heart, my soul and my mind. With everything I am and ever will be.

Thank you.

Your devoted daughter,

Sonali Sinnatamby



Written by Author Jennie Allen on Instagram in May:

"I keep hearing this on revival.... ' Things are going to have to get worse, for revival to happen.'

Listen, revivals have very little in common with each other, except they are surrounded by prayer and surrendered people. Revivals weren't always in the midst of suffering. They didn't follow a formula.... It's as if God said,

NOW.

Now they will see. Now the scales will fall off Now they will wake up. Now they will want me – the whole mess of them. They will want me more than life itself."

Lyrics to Available by Elevation Worship

Narrow as the road may seem
I'll follow where your spirit leads
Broken as my life may be
I will give You every piece

CHORUS

I hear You call
I am available
I say yes Lord
I am available

Here I am with open hands
Counting on Your grace again
Less of me and more of You
I just wanna see You move

CHORUS

I hear You call
I am available
I say yes Lord
I am available

Here I am, here I am
You can have it all
You can have it all
Here I am, here I am
You can have it all
You can have it all

For the one who gave me life
Nothing is a sacrifice
Use me how you want to God
Have your throne within my heart



DAY EIGHT

FROM REVIVE TO REVIVAL

*Barbara Hill
Springvale Church*



During this strange time it seems to me that there are opportunities to talk about eternal and immaterial things that normally do not hold people's attention. Life is too busy, so concerned with the here and now and how to navigate it successfully that reflection on the inevitable future does not have a chance. But, in this season, things have changed. An invisible enemy has shut down life as we know it bringing both time and fear in its wake. People are afraid. Their confidence in man's mastery over nature has been shaken. They may be ready to listen to someone talk about eternal realities and the only real hope for a joyful, peaceful, confident life - the eternal Saviour Jesus Christ.

And why shouldn't that person be me? Every Revival - a widespread acceptance of religious truth and a turning to a new way of living - starts with individual people talking to others.

Look at what is called the Great Awakening in the American colonies and the Evangelical Revival in the UK in the 1700s. People like George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, Jonathan Edwards who are now famous started out as ordinary folk. But they preached and hundreds listened and were convinced of the truth of what these men said. These men were not born special - but they were obedient! And the Great Commission is quite clear - go and make disciples of all men. (Matt 28:19)

But I find that I am sometimes afraid to speak out. Some people make me more afraid than others. It's not that I care more for their opinion than other people's. It is that their reaction is more condescending. If someone will honestly tell me they think I am an idiot for believing in such an old book and in the divinity of a Jewish carpenter then we can have a talk. If they merely sneer slightly and keep their thoughts to themselves I get more afraid and less ready to speak out another time. So I struggle to take opportunities that are presented to me. And that is bad.

Then I turn to Paul, orator, great missionary, a lion among believers, with the courage to endure numerous beatings, imprisonments, and in the end

martyrdom and I find this prayer request made to more than one of the churches to which Paul wrote. He asks that they will pray for him, when he preaches the gospel 'that I may declare it boldly, as I ought to speak'. (Eph.6:20. Col. 4:4) If Paul had times when he was afraid to speak, then I should certainly expect that I will too. I find encouragement in his admission of fear, the will to persevere when I fail.

For I know that nothing is more exciting than witnessing for Jesus and all that he has done in my life. When life is boring and dull, witnessing to someone brings a high, a surge of happiness, a bubble of joy. To me! I pray that the other person derives a benefit but I certainly do. So why not do it all the time? FEAR!

It must be identified, faced and overcome if I am to live the full life in joy and excitement, to say nothing of obedience, planned for me by my Lord. If I am to live in personal revival that my gracious God will use to bring Revival to a wide circle. And God is gracious. He chose to use weak human vessels to pour his grace into so that they could pour it back out again over those whom he loves who are currently not living for him. It's His plan. I would never have done it that way but He chose to. And so my good and my best and my fullest life will be found in doing his will.

To God be the glory, great things he has done!



O God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace. I am ashamed of my lack of desire. O God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee; I long to be filled with longing; I thirst to be made more thirsty still. Show me Thy Glory, I pray Thee, that so I may know Thee indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long. In Jesus' name. Amen

- A.W. Tozer "The Pursuit of God"

DAY NINE

CRYING OUT TO GOD

*Priscilla Woode
Springvale Church*



We've all had feelings of anxiety and fear when facing adversity. If you want God's best for your life and desire to be used by Him, at one point or another you're going to be hit with personal trials. However, our mindset towards these trials is the make or break part of it all.

Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like you couldn't go on one more day? Laying all your emotions on God and praying for him to take you away from this world? This isn't an anomaly. In the book of Job, Job regretted the day he was born and loathed his life. You see, this is the glory of God: He does not give us what we want all the time, but rather what we need. God knows what you need better than you know what you need.

We see this evident in the story of Moses. (*Numbers 11:14-15*) *14 I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. 15 If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me—if I have found favor in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin.*" Here you see that Moses is at his lowest point, overwhelmed, and longs for release from his work. Doesn't this seem familiar to our own life?

What captures my eye in this story is not what Moses calls out for, but God's response to this cry for help. (*Numbers 11: 16-17*) *16 The Lord said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you. 17 I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone."*

Galatians 6:2 *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

Moses thought he needed death, but God knew he needed the right people around him. Isn't that great? Don't live the lie that you're safer hidden inside and there is no need to submit yourself to others.

God allows big changes to happen to show us that nothing changes Him. If God doesn't change, then how he feels about me hasn't changed either. In my perspective, I believe that God answers all of our prayers, but we are just not alert of how he answers them. Be careful of thinking you know what's better than God, because that's when pride trickles in. What would happen if God answered every prayer you made? He would essentially hand over His power to the world (which we all know won't end well).

Whenever people say that they're struggling with connecting with God on a deeper level, the first thing I wonder is if they're being obedient to him. I'll admit, I struggle with this a lot. Obedience isn't just the do's and don'ts of Christianity, but about truly knowing God's character, and trusting that he knows what is best. As we continue to grow in our walk with Christ, obedience becomes the avenue by which we get to know Him better. However, this is easier said than done. When we feel tempted to believe that we stand to lose more through our obedience than we might gain, we falter. We aren't alone in this journey though. God stays close to us in this growing season. One thing I've noticed is that worry will never get you where you want to go. Instead of ranting or venting, turn to prayer, and ask God to reveal himself to you.



"My health may fail, and my spirit
may grow weak, but God remains
the strength of my heart.
He is mine forever"

-Psalm 73:26

At times, we're in the dark because God is revealing some aspect of his Glory that's more than we can stare straight in the face. The beauty in the darkness is that God is close enough to cover us with His hand. Often at the end of a tremendously intense season, He'll grace us with a glimpse of his back. He gives us just enough evidence of His presence for us to realize He was there all along, not as a spectator, or even just a protector, but as Lord over all"

- Beth Moore "Chasing Vines"



DAY TEN


LIVING IN REVIVAL WHEN YOU ARE DISAPPOINTED

Carol Boyd
Springvale Church

Many of us have experienced the pain of watching a loved one choose a path different from what we would have chosen for them. One that perhaps doesn't align with what Scripture indicates is God's best plan for our living an abundant life in Him. Oh, my heart! As a woman, as a mother, as a wife, as a sister, as a friend, as a Grandma it is sometimes difficult to watch and sometimes disappointing. What could I have done differently? Did I make a mistake? Did I not love them well enough, my dearest people on earth? What can I do to change things, put things back in order, just plain fix it? Lord help me! I long to shine for you, Father, in the daily purpose you give me but these situations weigh heavily on my heart. Ladies, can you relate in your own life to what I am saying?

I love them unconditionally, but how do you love them well, love them like Jesus loves them when there is disagreement, and you yearn for them to have all God can offer? What does that look like? I don't want to criticize, though I feel compelled to not stay silent as well.

Max Lucado says "never interpret the presence of problems as the absence of God. He offers us peace in times of uncertainty and hope in exchange for heaviness". 1 Peter 4:8 says "love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins." However, 1 Cor. 13:6-7 says "love does not delight in evil, it always protects." Are we so focussed on the distraction of our disappointments that we are in danger of missing the personal revelation that Our Father wants to give us? We must daily rest in Him as we ask Him to help us adjust our attitude. He knows what He's doing so let's pay attention. If we miss what He's trying to do, what will He have to do to get our attention next time? Expectantly, prayerfully, sincerely, open our eyes and our hearts to Him. He will guide us as we converse with Him by reading His Word and spending time in prayer. Psalm 94:17-19 says "*Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul would soon have settled in silence. If I say "my foot slips, your mercy O Lord will hold me up. In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul".*



Psalms 61:1-4 says *"Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry to you when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been a shelter for me. A strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in your tabernacle forever. I will trust in the shelter of your wings."* God's responsibility is to lead us, to love us, and to grow our faith as He invites us into an intimate relationship with Him. He gave His only Son for us so that we might have eternal life. Our responsibility is to open every corner of our hearts and lives so that He can draw close to us as He shows us His glory, despite our current circumstances. We must keep our eyes on Him and TRUST Him in every situation.

That is how we grow. He longs to give purpose to each day. And so, Lord, I drop to my knees and lift up each dear one to you. What a privilege that is! You will take my disappointments and turn them into hope. I can rest in you as I ask you to adjust my attitude knowing that You will give me opportunities in each life to share my heart and love more. You know what You're doing so I need to pay attention. I will lovingly pray for each one and step back to watch for You to do amazing things that only You can do in each life.

Anne Graham Lotz says "What storm has swept into your life? I'm convinced that God allows storms to increase and intensify in our lives because He wants us to soar higher in our relationship with Him...to grow stronger in our faith, to bear more fruit in our service to Him, to come to a point of personal revival.

May the spark of our revival shine so brightly that others draw closer and see Him reflected in our love for them. I surrender all my disappointments, my fears, and my hopes to you, loving Father, knowing that You can take them and turn them into jewels for your Kingdom. I thank you for your comfort and guidance, Holy Spirit! I long to shine for you! I choose to trust You, Jesus!

Portion of a Prayer from "Power of a Praying Parent" by Stormie Omartian

Lord, I come to you, in Jesus' name, and give you (my loved ones). I'm convinced that You alone know what is best for them. You alone know what they need. I release them to you to care for and protect, and I commit myself to pray for everything concerning them that I can think of, that You put upon my heart. Teach me how to pray and guide me in what to pray about. Help me not to impose my own will when I am praying for them, but rather enable me to pray that Your will be done in their life. Thank you that I can partner with you and I don't have to do it alone.... Help me to not live in fear of possible dangers, but in the joy and peace of knowing that You are in control. I rely on You for everything, and this day, I trust my loved ones to You and release them into Your hands. In Jesus' name I pray

DAY ELEVEN

HOW TO LIVE IN REVIVAL WHEN THINGS ARE TOUGH, GOD'S PRESENCE THROUGH IT ALL....

*Katelyn Romanko
Springvale Church*

Isaiah 40: 31: but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

After my mom passed away in late 2018, life turned into a complete whirlwind for my dad and I. As 2020 approached I was looking forward to a new year filled with graduating high school, prom, spending summer with my family and friends and then going off to university in the fall...but then came the coronavirus.

It was starting to feel like every year there was something that was turning my life and plans upside down. At first I was upset and wondered where God was in all of this. Why would He let these events happen to me and why He is letting this pandemic affect so many lives, especially those who are sick or have lost loved ones because of it.

While doing a daily devotional about a month ago I came across the verse, Hebrews 13:5 where God says, *"I will never leave you nor forsake you."* This reminded me that even when life isn't going the way we want it to, we as Christians have hope that God will lead us through troubled times, whatever they may be. With this in mind, it has helped me try to see the good in every situation, even quarantine. While staying at home the last couple months I have been taking time to deepen my relationship with God by making an effort to read the bible and do a daily devotional every day since I'm not going to school and doing other activities that would consume much of my day.

Although times may seem tough to us, especially in times like these, God knows the plan he has for our lives and He will always be there no matter how we may feel.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to feel Your presence through all the good times and the troubled ones. Thank you for Your promise to never leave me. You are my hope and strength to help me through every situation. Amen

DAY TWELVE

LOSS AND GRIEVING

Stéphanie Rourke Jackson
Springvale Church



Grief is never easy. Nor is it a “one size fits all” kind of experience. Yet, there are definite stages that unifies our grieving process. As much as it would be wonderful if it were a step study in recovery, it really isn’t. Grief is not linear. Nor is there any real closure. There is only HOPE. Let’s explore.

It’s a tangled mess of one step forward and three steps back.

It’s an onslaught of emotions that slap you upside the head.

It’s a fog so dense you could cut it with a knife.

It’s a pain so deep your heart feels shattered and sharp like it’s cutting you from the inside out.

It’s tears that leak out at the strangest times without any warning, stinging your cheeks.

It’s a wrestling and bargaining that if you could only have done or said something different it could have been a different story.

But it isn’t. And it wasn’t ever within your control. That’s the thing about grief. It’s stealth. We usually never really see it coming. Grief is the response to loss. Something we once held dear that is no more. It’s the loss of a dream, a relationship, a loved one, a way of life, freedom or a global pandemic from Covid-19. It can come from betrayal like an unfaithful spouse, or an economic collapse, a restructuring, or the death of a loved one like the recent passing of my brother.

Loss feels like “the enemy that comes to steal, kill and destroy” John 10:10. Grief specialist David Kessler writes, “the worst grief is always your own” because it costs us our heart. Grief requires us to use courage, in fact the root word ‘cor’ is latin meaning ‘of the heart’. We feel broken, just like Jesus did for his friend Lazarus when he died. The shortest, most profound verse in the bible is John 11:35 “*Jesus wept.*” He has compassion with us during our suffering. We can take it to Him at the cross where the most excruciating grief took place. Jesus knows our pain intimately because He has experienced it too. We can trust Him there, at the cross.

When we feel beaten, banged up, broken, betrayed and bloodied we identify with Christ. Psalm 34:18 *"The Lord is near to the broken-hearted and saves those crushed in spirit."* This is good news. We are not alone. He is right there, holding us in the palm of His hand. Giving us strength, courage, and comfort. God meets us where we are. He is not offended, shocked or upset by our stages of grief: denial, bargaining and anger. Even Jesus asked his Father "if you will, take this cup of suffering away from me. Not my will, however, but your will be done" Luke 22:42.

Like Jesus, we too can surrender our pain (over and over) at the foot of the cross knowing that our Lord and Saviour went to the cross to pay for the cost of sin and suffering and we could be restored there. Yet, Jesus didn't stay nailed to the cross. Nor do we need to stay nailed to our pain of suffering. When we accept and surrender to that which we have lost, we can then receive the hope that Christ offers. We can move away from the shock, denial, and anger of the dark Friday nights of our soul; the sorrow and surrender of our Saturdays; into the HOPE of Sunday. We can take what *"was meant evil and use it for good, for the saving of many lives"* Genesis 50:20. God can help shape our perspective and our work to bring meaning out of our situation.

The perspective we can eventually come to after our loss that builds resilience and revival in our lives by asking:

What have I learned through this?

How have I grown through this?

Where can I use this to help others?

How can I bring meaning from this?

God never wastes a hurt. This is a paraphrased promise that my counselor encouraged my husband and I with, on our first visit when we sought guidance on how to restore our marriage after infidelity.

Where can you build beauty from the ashes of your grief?





DAY THIRTEEN

REVIVAL IN MOTHERHOOD

Rebecca Doner
Hillside Church, Mount Albert
Gather Intern and Women's Speakers Collective

I often find myself sitting quietly, watching my children be themselves, doing everyday things. I notice the way they change expression, the sound of their laugh, or how they fight sadness and fear in moments that call for bravery. I want to know them, to know they are doing well on the other side of what I can see. Sometimes I wonder if I have done enough or been enough and to be honest there are times when I watch, desperate to be all they need, aching to support them, and I'm left uncertain.

With the arrival of my first child I experienced the familiar pressure of being a 'good mom'. As more children came I wanted to be there and meet every need, which I suppose is natural. I longed to help them become academically sound, emotionally and spiritually mature, to guide them through relational drama, to keep them safe, and to offer support in both success and failure. Mostly perhaps, for them to know that I meant it every night when I said "I love you No. Matter. What." While many of these desires have merit, I still found the true purpose of my motherhood elusive.

That changed forever when in still quiet moments over passing years God revealed something that made all the difference in my life. God reminded me that they are first His children and that the only purpose I have that really matters in the end, is to introduce them to Him. My heart had a weight lifted from it as I received the answer I'd been waiting for! I had found my purpose, a kingdom-focused purpose. This means everything I do, the simple, the painful, the frustrating, the frivolous and fun, and even the mundane all have the same beautiful and amazing purpose - to offer motherhood in a way that allows God to work in and through me so that my children may know Him. I think most of us have a sense that our children are 'God's children too' as though we have some sort of joint custody. However, this is a realization that while those of us who carried our children may feel like we knew them long before anyone by their movements and kicks, there is only one who they belonged to first. Scripture tells us that God knew us before HE formed us in the womb. He had our children well in mind and heart long before we ever dreamed of being parents.

Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you before you were born, I set you apart' Jeremiah 1:5

I find now as I watch them and consider that long before they were mine, they were His, I am overwhelmed and amazed. Amazed that somehow in His sovereignty He determined me to be a mother to his children for however long He allows. Sometimes I still have to breathe deep to consider and carry the weight of that responsibility in full. Yet, the beauty is that when I wonder if I am enough I pause and remember that God did not choose me because I had everything I need, He chose me so that He might provide for His children through me. I see this in His word where instead of instruction on school, screen time, sports, or meal plans, I find verses like:

'These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.' Deuteronomy 6:7

So, with kingdom purpose I still care for them in all the ways I did before. I drive them everywhere, play with them, teach, encourage and comfort them, and I always will, but I see each moment as opportunity and pray that God might use me to reveal Himself to them. If you ask me what I want for them now, years later, more than anything it would be that they would be positioned in a way that they are inclined to God's call and when they hear His voice it will be heard as the familiar voice of their Heavenly Father.

Motherhood for me has become a beautiful masterpiece where the unseen happenings of God will take your breath away if you let them and where planting roots and cultivating Godly heritage happens in the moments in between life. May God show you today that you too were appointed to this moment to be a mother to His children. May He remind you that He will supply you with all you need and is waiting to reveal himself through you to your children in each passing moment of your day. After all, we are called to be kingdom mothers.

You can find more inspiring words by Rebecca on her blog at www.rebeccadoner.com



DAY FOURTEEN

A SWEET ROAD TRIP

Lori Doner Jones
Springvale Church



Years ago, the first Krispy Kreme opened in Mississauga, and I surprised my father by picking him up one Saturday morning and driving him out to this brand new “Krispy Kreme”; we both *love* donuts, so I thought he would really enjoy this little road trip! We drove all the way out there and it was so busy we stood in line for *hours* in a tent just outside the doors, waiting for a taste of the anticipated delicious-ness! The staff even brought full sized sample donuts to the people waiting because the wait was so long. By the time we actually made it into the store, we had already been generously sampling all of the sweet goodness and were a little full already, but we still bought a few dozen to take home, so everyone else could enjoy too! It was sort of ridiculous to go all that way and wait in line for so long for donuts, but we had so much fun together and my dad loved talking to all the people in line, as he always makes friends, from strangers, wherever he goes. So it was totally worth the drive and time, not just for the donuts, but for the memory of us together.

Recently I saw an ad on Instagram for a place in Hamilton called “Donut Monster” that makes fresh donuts, and the desire to re-live my Krispy Kreme memory was ignited! So, I tried to convince my partner in crime, (a.k.a. Dad) to put on some elastic-waisted pants and gear up for the trip, but my father hasn't been feeling very well lately, so he felt unable to go this time. My younger daughter, sensing my disappointment, jumped up and volunteered to be his stand-in. We would go get the donuts and bring them back to Grandpa!

It was February, just before the world shut down, but the teacher strikes were happening, so on the scheduled strike day, the two of us piled in the car, with empty stomachs to make the trip to Hamilton. My oldest daughter, thought this was a crazy trip and stayed home with her Grandma, but Peyton and I were off for adventure! It took over an hour to arrive, but once there we discovered a cute little donut store, with lots of unique flavours to choose from. We sat in the store, and people- watched, we chatted and laughed together, we filled our bellies with sugar coated pastries and bought several more to take home with us for Grandpa and even for the sister who stayed home! We even bought Peyton a souvenir t-shirt; and her smile was enough to make the long trip more than worthwhile.

Just as we were leaving my husband called to see how our day was going, and before he hung up he said, "let her sit in the front seat on the way home". She always sits in the back with her sister, even though she's almost as tall as me now! I had thought of letting her sit in the front on the way there, as it was just the two of us, however, I always feel she's safer in the back. But, under his encouragement I looked at her and said "Hey, do you want to sit up front?" Her eyes lit up with the idea of this special treat of sitting in the front seat and she jumped in with the biggest grin on her face (and maybe some sugar frosting), looking like she'd finally arrived! We headed home, full of donuts and giggles.

In the front seat, **everything changed**, it was like she came alive! We listened to her music, she put her devices away, she sang songs to me, she was more engaged and chatty.... maybe it was that I could hear her better or that she said more because of how close she was, but the whole dynamic changed between us, and I thought how fortunate it was that my husband had encouraged me to let her sit up front. It completely altered our interaction. It had made our trip that much more awesome, and made us feel that much closer to each other.

So I got to thinking, isn't that how life is with Jesus? Maybe we are actually with Him, but He's somewhere in the backseat, where we are communicating through side glances and the rearview mirror. Maybe we are missing the dynamic of getting Him "closer". If Peyton had stayed in the backseat that day, we still would have had a great time, but I would have missed the blessing of her right beside me, close enough to touch. I would have missed her sweet smiles, and clever little jokes, I would have missed knowing what was in her secret thoughts and letting her music play and her songs fill the air, I would have missed the intimacy and tender closeness of having her as "close" as she could get - and even worse, I would have never known what I had missed, or even that I had missed anything at all.

When she was little, Peyton used to cuddle close to me before she went to sleep and she'd say in a tiny singsong voice- "let's see if we can get a -n- y closer..." and she'd snuggle even tighter and hug me more fiercely like she didn't ever want to let go. I wonder if God is waiting for ME to say to Him, "Let's see if we can get any closer..." I wonder if I am missing the blessing of not letting him into the front seat.

So I challenge you in this next week – are you missing out? Is He with you, but not as close as He could be? How would things change, if we were to just draw closer.... As close as we can get?

Isn't that what Revival is?

Are you ready for Revival?

Father, as we close out this week talking about Revival, let us experience closeness with you. Let us feel your presence and encounter you with wonder and expectation - More than we could ever fathom, more than we could ever even ask for ... in Jesus' name, Amen



I still struggle to stay focused on Jesus every day. But a couple things keep me going. First, I remember that if I stop pursuing Christ, I am letting our relationship deteriorate. We never grow closer to God when we just live life; it takes deliberate pursuit and attentiveness. When I pray, I sometimes ask God to make it the most intimate time of prayer I've ever had. Many times when I speak, whether at my church or another venue, I remind myself that I could die right after I finish, so what would I want my last words to be?

Second, I remember that we are not alone. Even now there are thousands of beings in heaven watching what is going on down here - "a great cloud of witnesses", the Scripture says. It reminds me that there is so much more to our existence than what we can see. What we do reverberates through the heavens and into eternity.

- Francis Chan "Crazy Love"



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women

Check www.springvale.org/women
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REVIVE

www.ReadyForRevival.ca

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WOMEN'S MINISTRY LEADS

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