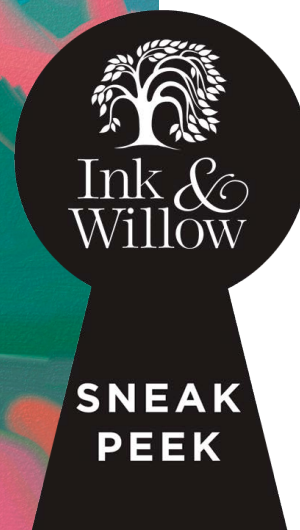


40 DAYS *of* WALKING
IN THE GOODNESS *of* GOD

Abundant Grace

Founders of CREW + Co

WILL & COURTNEY KASSNER



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PROOF

40 DAYS OF WALKING IN THE GOODNESS OF GOD

Abundant Grace

TEXT BY WILL KASSNER
ART BY COURTNEY KASSNER

Founders of Crew + Co



Introduction

Life has a funny way of always taking us by surprise. Seasons come and go and are filled with steady change. In a world of chaos, finding a constant can be one of our greatest obstacles. So what keeps us grounded when we are surrounded by so much uncertainty?

When we first started our business, Crew + Co, life was filled to the brim with unknowns. We didn't know the future, but we were sure of one thing: We wanted our work to be a reflection of God's goodness. Through the highs and lows, ups and downs, our journey as business owners has been an in-color picture of the chaos of life. More than that, though, it has been a reflection of God's faithfulness.

All too often, we find ourselves overwhelmed or bogged down, drenched in the proverbial sweat of simply trying to get by. We get busy. We get tired. But all the while, God offers Himself to us, pouring out His goodness in the quiet moments of the morning and the busy moments of the afternoon. He is always near; we just have to take the time to see Him.

No one said life would be easy, but Jesus did remind us that He would not abandon us in it. He is our constant, our hope, and our joy. Though plenty of distractions will arise, we can always come back to the truth that He has overcome the world. When security seems to crumble like the last saltine cracker, we can always come back to His grace.

Abundant Grace is a forty-day journey of walking in the practical grace of God. Written with the daily grind in mind, these devotionals are designed to remind you of the one true constant: the hope we have in Christ. Each devotion ends with a space for reflection. Some close with questions to ponder, others with a prayer, and others with a prompt to dig into God's Word. Whatever the activity, may each one bring you greater awareness of and dependence on God's grace.

The hope of this book is to establish a routine and remembrance as you start each day. Even when we experience moments of feeling empty, we can set aside time throughout our day for moments to be filled because Jesus offers His grace in so many wonderful ways. We hope as you dive into this devotional and into His Word that you will see a new side of God's grace, waiting at the ready to fill your heart and refresh your soul.

Let's commit to slowing things down. To being intentional. To walking with Jesus over the next forty days, and to seeing how He leads us into His abundant grace.



Grace abounded
all the more.

Romans 5:20

Day

1

Where Grace Begins

The best way to begin a journey is by taking inventory of the past. To truly move forward, you must first understand the path that has led you to where you are now. Perhaps, then, the best way to step into the magnitude of God's grace is to look back on the story of redemption, to recollect God's work from the beginning, and to remember that His goodness is nothing new. He is and has always been a God of grace.

From the beginning, God created us to know Him, but human hearts steadily drifted a different way. We can look back to the quiet morning in the Garden, which quickly erupted into chaos, as sin ran rampant from the choice of two to the hearts of many. Like an invasive vine, sin grew, choking out the peace that God so beautifully ushered into creation. As the world grew older, sin grew with it, slowly creeping to overcome the good that God had revealed in His work.

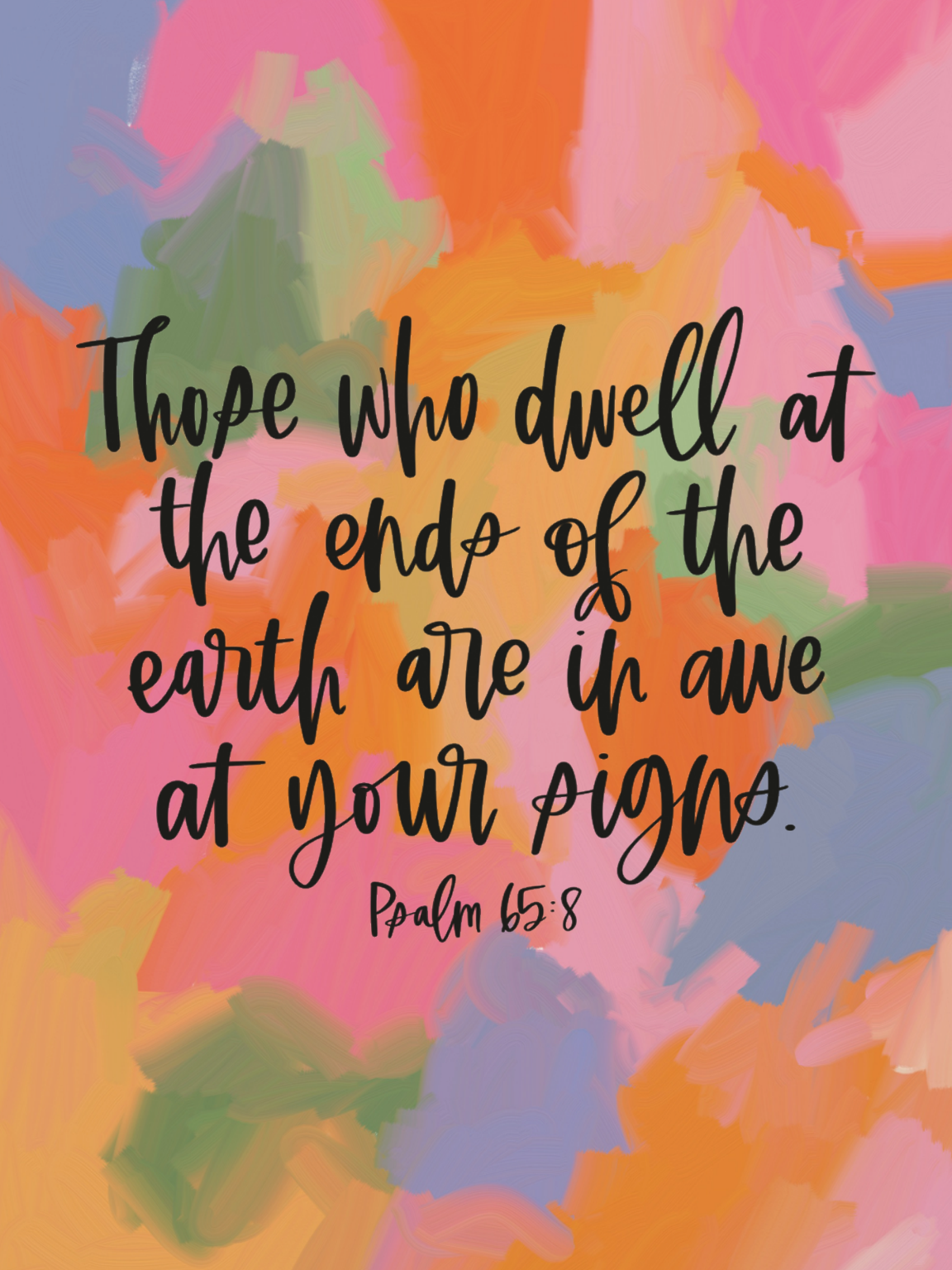
But the goodness of God could not be outdone, and God had a plan for a people He knew would fail—time and time again. Through years of waiting, of making promises and plans, God made this truth clear: though sin increases, grace increases all the more, poured out from a cup with endless supply. While the story of the Garden leads to exile and fear, the story of Jesus leads to glorious hope. For He came not to cast out, but to offer a way back home.

The journey of life is filled with hurdles, many of which lead us to question our purpose and God's plan. But we can look back to remember the story and the promise, because those reminders are often what carry us in moments of frustration or defeat.

When Jesus feels distant, remember that we are the ones who walk away. (Trust me, we've *all* been there.) When He feels inconsistent, remember His grace has always been steady. Our lives are wrapped up in the fullness and glory of what Jesus has revealed—a salvation we could never earn on our own. We can rejoice in the truth that His grace was, and is, always greater.

Reflect

How have you overlooked the importance of God's grace in your own life? What are ways that you have minimized your need for His renewal and redemption?



Those who dwell at
the ends of the
earth are in awe
at your signs.
Psalm 65:8

Day

2

River of Grace

If you have never tried fly fishing, this is me telling you it's time to give it a go (seriously, let me know and I'll come with). The beauty of fly fishing is that catching fish is not even the best part. There is a magic in being surrounded by the river's rumble, by the poetry in motion as water rushes over glassy rocks and sandy banks. The soothing juxtaposition of water washing over unkept ground offers a beautiful picture of renewal moving along unhindered at your feet. Because there's just something about a river that calms the troubled mind.

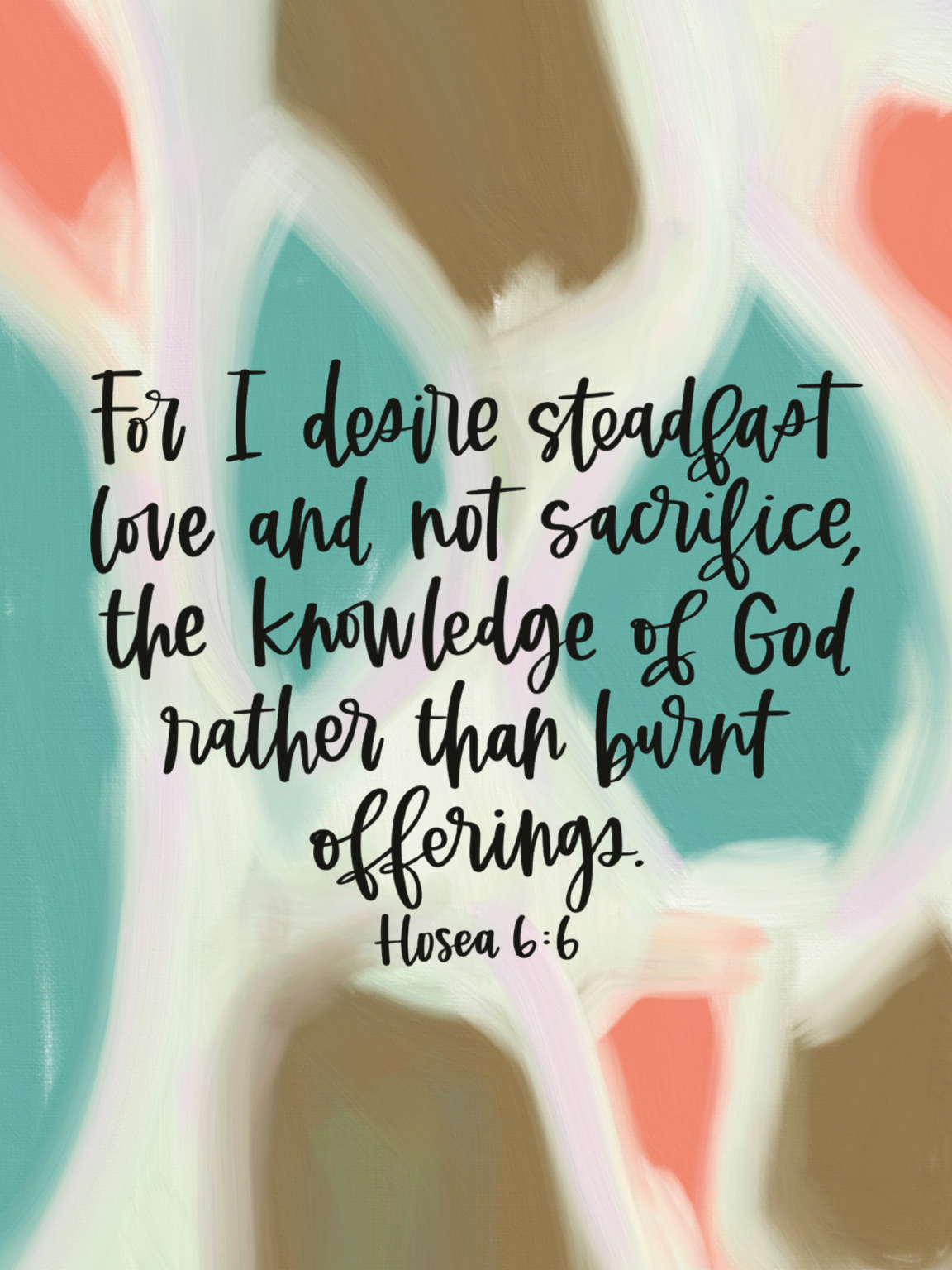
We've all had days when we feel like we've used up every drop of redemptive water and that nothing is left to refresh or refine our own lives. We've all met that person in the mirror and thought, *I'm not sure what God could do to fix this!* Our hearts often fill with questions like *How could God have anything left to give?* or *Surely, I ran out of second chances the last time?*

But on those days, remember that we are the ones standing with our backs turned to the water, our fingers in our ears, somehow convinced there is not enough grace in God's river to fully restore and renew us. But contrary to our doubts, the river of God's grace is swiftly flowing and always abounding, washing over the troubles of yesterday, quenching the thirst of pain, and strengthening our hearts for tomorrow. We simply have to step into the water and let Him do the work. His grace washes over our shortcomings and failures, renewing our souls into well-polished stones.

So instead of wondering what God has left to give, let's roll up our pant legs and wade on in. God is with us—of that we have no reason to doubt. May the rushing waters of His grace revive your soul.

Meditate

Read Psalm 65. Which of God's characteristics stand out to you? How do you see Him at work in the world around you?



For I desire steadfast
love and not sacrifice,
the knowledge of God
rather than burnt
offerings.
Hosea 6:6

Day

3

Don't Check the Box

Checking the box can be a slippery slope. As kids, we clean our rooms with grumbling words, hastily throwing clothes under the bed to get the job done. As adults, well, we do the same thing. Whether cleaning a room, working that nine-to-five, or studying for the next test, we are often satisfied with the minimum requirement.

The trouble is, when we approach God in this manner, we overlook the depth of what He is truly offering. We may read the Bible or a devotional and think, *All good, God, I'm ready for you to bless me now!* but the reality of knowing God runs much deeper than a to-do list. God is asking far more of us than simply going through the motions.

Throughout the Old Testament narrative, we see several instances when box-checking is confused with obedience (1 Samuel 11, Hosea 6). This age-old mistake of going through the motions stems from the common misconception that forgiveness comes from simply following the rules. Old Testament redemption was largely tied to sacrifice, but often, people missed the reality behind the ritual. The sacrifice in and of itself was not the source of redemption; it was merely a picture of what God was doing tangibly in their hearts.

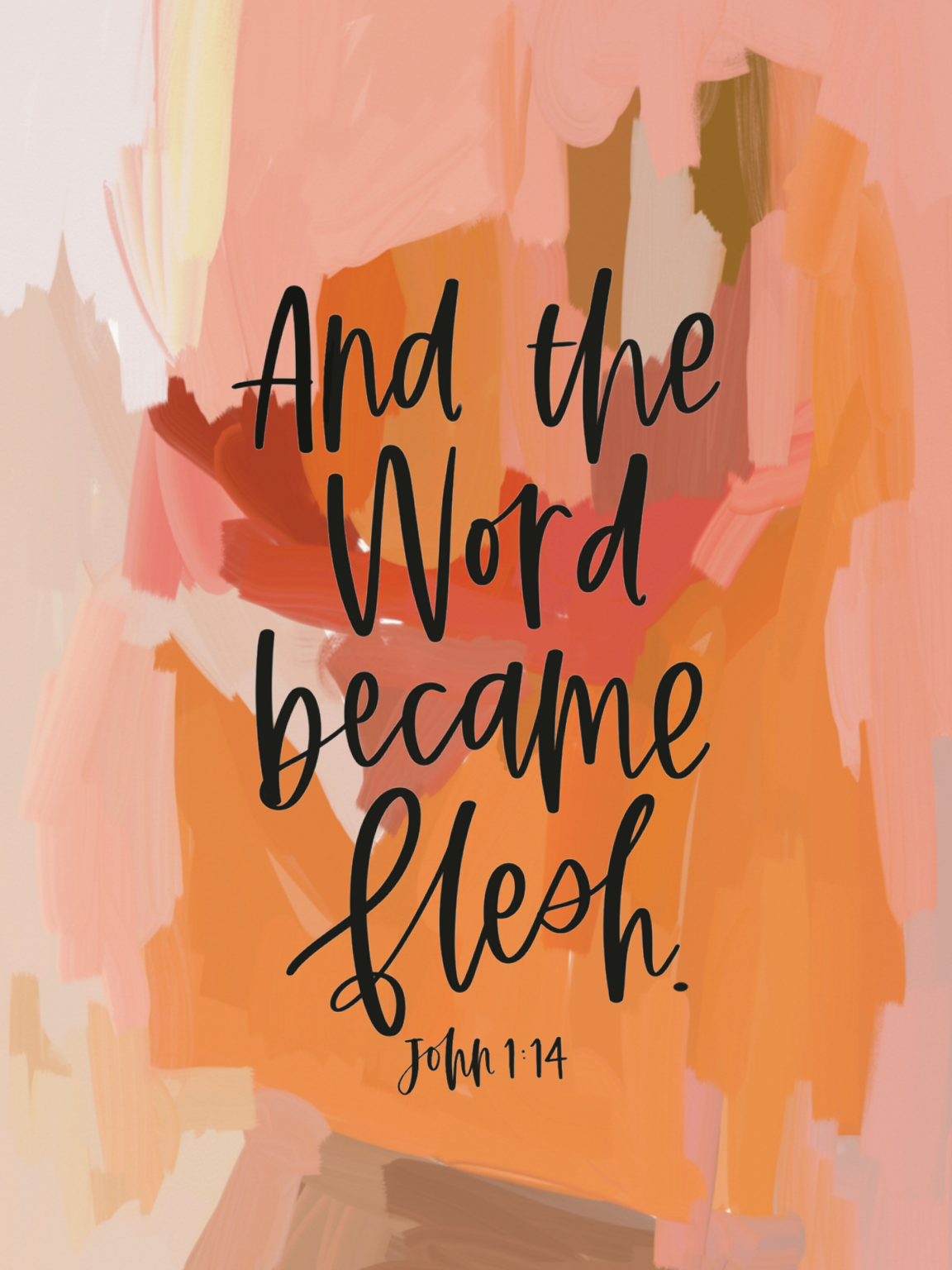
You see, trusting in God and accepting forgiveness do not begin with outward actions. On the contrary, true peace with God begins in the heart. When we surrender our hearts to Him, we begin to find what we could never work to achieve. The simplest of solutions to one of life's greatest predicaments is this: To find true renewal, we must first surrender. Redemption does not come by following a list or reluctantly doing what God thinks is best (He sees your eye rolls!). It comes from giving up control and recognizing our dependence on Him.

God longs for us to obey Him because we love Him, not because of a self-righteous or proud desire to "check a box." We can strive to appear like we have it together, but we gain so much more when we submit to His will and allow Him to lead.

Obedience over sacrifice, love over ritual. These are the daily hallmarks of surrendering to God. So don't settle for the surface; don't just check the box.

Reflect

Where have you been guilty of box checking? When has ego or reputation been more important than obedience in your life? How can you be more honest with God in your pursuit of Him?



And the
Word
became
flesh.
John 1:14

Day

4

God Doesn't Need Our Spectacular

Our church had three double-wide trailers in the back parking lot for the youth and college ministries, a location which earned the affectionate nickname “The Outback.” Filled with secondhand couches and dented metal chairs, those trailers were far from fancy. But the space became a sanctuary, a refuge from the noise of life and a reflection of our own personal imperfections. We prayed and sang and poured our hearts out, unhindered by the distraction of our humble surroundings. We were simply there to meet with God.


We may give them undivided attention, but exteriors are vastly overrated. I mean, what in life really matters, anyway? Our deepest experiences of joy come from moments when we disregard the trivial and focus on the personal. Conversations are deeper when we forget the dishes in the sink or the dust on the light fixtures (just kidding—we aren’t looking up there!) and instead focus on the person across the table. After all, the imperfect is often the place where we most feel known and understood.

We often think of God as unapproachable, but the paradox of glorious presence in a humble venue has always been in His repertoire. Ironically, He is known for stepping in where we least expect. From the throne of heaven to the filth of hay, He took on flesh that we might know Him. From a crown of glory to a sorrowful heart, He took on pain so that He might suffer with us. We do not serve a God who needs our spectacular, our fancy, or our bedazzled. We see and know and love a Savior who meets us exactly where we are, no questions asked.

Jesus is not a distant deity who withdrew from our mishaps, but a personal Savior who meets us where we are, dirty couches and all.

Meditate

Read John 1. How does Jesus's human experience encourage you to approach Him honestly?



He is before
all things
and in him
all things
hold together.

Colossians 1:17

Day

5

It's All in His Hands

Uncontrolled variables are the kryptonite to the modern-day world. As long as everything works, we're sure to have a great day. But what happens when the tire goes flat or the pizza is late? What happens when you order pretzels from the grocery store and they drop off chocolate chips?

As much as we want to be in control, we are constantly bombarded by reminders that we are not. Our response to those reminders should not be to pine for more stability, but to live in a greater attitude of surrender. Our outlook should be a big-picture, panoramic, space-satellite view—one that reveals the world does not revolve around us, but Him.

This world was made through Jesus; and thankfully, through Jesus, it is being reconciled back to Him. He is the glory of God revealed, the perfect picture of grace, the promise of life. And in Him all things hold together. We have nothing to fear because of the work He has done, and we have nothing to fear because of the work He is still doing. In Jesus, we have all our strength, hope, and joy. He was not *just* a man who walked this earth, not *just* a teacher filled with knowledge. He was God in the flesh, who, in humility, took on human form and submitted to death on the cross. He is our Resurrected King, who conquered death and brings redemption to all who believe.

By Him this world was created, and by Him this world will be made new. When your days get caught up in the struggle of stress, or when your heart feels heavy with the burdens of your friends, take a moment to remember who Jesus is. He has not left us or abandoned us, but has made Himself knowable. He holds us up, breathes life into our lungs, and sets joy in our hearts. He knows our hurts and hears our prayers.

Whenever you feel like life is out of control, remember that it is all in His hands.

Pray

Jesus, You are before all things, in all things, and with us in all things. Remind me of who You are and fill me with the joy and peace only You can give. Help me to remember the hope we have in You.

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