



A 40 Day Devotional in the Perspective
Of Women From the Bible

THROUGH HER EYES

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PART 1

**THE BLEEDING
WOMAN**

THE BLEEDING WOMAN

Day 1:

Overcoming Disappointment

And a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for 12 years and had spent all her living upon physicians, and could not be healed by anyone...

Luke 8:43

Have you ever been disappointed? I mean really disappointed. The kind of disappointment where you put your trust and your expectations on someone, put all your eggs in one basket, hoping that they would come through for you and they completely let you down?

This woman who is unnamed but named solely by her pain can completely relate to what it feels like to be disappointed. The people whose profession it is to give a diagnosis were confounded by her illness. As if not knowing what is happening in your own body is bad enough, she had been suffering from this disease for 12 years!

Doctor upon doctor took her money and in the end there was little or absolutely no result for her condition. How frustrating this must have been for her to keep putting her energy and time into these treatments and in the end to have nothing work out for her. Where is God in the midst of it all?

Where is God when you are feeling brokenhearted, upset and extremely frustrated? Does He not hear? Does He not understand?

He does. The word of God says that the Lord is close to the brokenhearted; He rescues those whose Spirit's are crushed. (Psalm 34:18). Sometimes our definition of being rescued is God removing the pain, the mountain or the rescuing us from the journey that we are embarking on. But actually the Lord is saying that this disappointment and pain that you are going through right now is for your good. He's saying it's ok to be disappointed, but that He is available to you for you to use him as your pillow to land on when you're feeling like you got punched in the gut...again.

He wants to be your everything. He also wants to teach you something through this pain. The Bible says to draw close to Him and He will draw close to you.

It's okay to be disappointed, but we can't stay there. Our help through this season comes from God. What is God teaching you through this disappointment? Ask Him. He will surely show you.

Let me pray with you:

God I am so grateful for your daughter who is reading this right now and may be in a place where they are feeling disappointed. I am thankful for this moment because when we are faced with trials, there is a lesson in it for us to learn. Sometimes, the trial seems to go on for a long time, but you never wanted us to go through these seasons alone. You are desperate for us to run to us so that you can rescue our crushed spirit. I pray for you who is reading this book right now that the Lord would make it clear to you what you are to learn through this disappointment. May you remember the strength of God in this season of lowness. May you experience the overwhelming beauty of God in the midst of the darkness. May the Lord's presence be so tangible in your room right now. May you know deep down in your soul that the creator of the universe is with you through your disappointment. He is maturing you and refining you to pure gold. The Lord bless you.

Scripture:

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted;
He rescues those whose spirits are crushed. Psalm 34:18 - NLT

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.

Romans 8:28 (NLT)

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.

Day 2:

How Big is Your Bucket?

She had heard reports concerning Jesus, and she came up behind Him in the throng and touched His garment
Mark 5:27

What is your expectation from God? When you walk into a service or a conference or even from your daily devotional time, what are you expecting from God? A wise person once shared something with me that I will also share with you. She said we all come to God with buckets. The size of your bucket will determine what you receive from God. Some of us come to God with tea cups and we ask Him to fill it. And He does. Some of us come to God with huge containers and we ask Him to fill it. And He does.

Ever wonder how it is possible that two people can be sitting in the exact same service and one person leaves feeling like they “touched the hem of His garment” and others left feeling like the service “ok”? It’s all about our expectation. We receive from God what we expect Him to give. How big... or small is your God?

See this woman with the issue of blood had a HUGE expectation of God. She heard that He was a healer and she believed. Hearing is believing right? She heard and she believed.

Simple.

This is what the bible calls “child-like faith”. It’s uncomplicated. It doesn’t have to make physiological and biological sense. After all, her condition didn’t seem to make much sense to her or anyone anyway. Many of us have heard that God can raise the dead. Do we expect Him to do that? We have heard that He can heal the blind? But do we expect Him to do that? Sometimes we don’t expect because we are afraid of what would happen to us if we expect and God doesn’t deliver in the way that we want. But the God being who He is, is good regardless of what the outcome. So we might as well expect and hope in Him.

In other words, God expects us to come to Him expectantly. Are you reaching for a time in the presence of God? If that is what you are expecting, then you have arranged things in your week to lead up to that time with God. It means that you’ve put aside distractions and you have prepared your heart for that worship experience. Even when things come up that want to take your attention away, your focus is one thing: Meeting with God.

Are you reaching to receive a word from the pastor’s preaching? Then you will receive that. Are you reaching to just go to church and fulfill your mundane weekly routine? Then you will also receive that.

I am not saying that God cannot surprise us and blow our expectations. God is God almighty. He can do anything He wants and He certainly does not need to operate within the limited confines of our expectations. What I am saying is that Jesus told this woman, “Your faith has made you well.” That means that our expectations of God count for something.

What are you expecting from God? How big is your bucket?

Let me pray with you:

Father God, ruler of the universe, we come before you this morning blessing your name for your provision. I thank You God that you are an eternal God and that you do not operate and are not limited to our constraints of time but God you do things according to your divine timing. God teach us to heighten our expectations of you. Teach us daily how big you are. Would you show us just a glimpse of your awesome splendour. God, I pray for this woman that you would blow her walls of expectation away and fill her with an awe and reverential fear of how mighty you are. And would you also father, teach your daughter how to expect great things from you in her everyday walk with you. From you, she can achieve the unthinkable. With you, she can weather any storm. God with you, she can bring light to the darkness in this world. Would you show her your power today. In Jesus’ mighty and matchless name I pray, Amen.

Psalm 5:3

“In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will prepare [a prayer and a sacrifice] for You and watch and wait [for You to speak to my heart].”

Proverbs 23:18

For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.

Day 3

1-800-Call-on-JESUS

Mark 5:25-26 There was a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years, and who had endured much suffering under the hands of many physicians and had spent all that she had, and was no better but instead grew worse.

I love the song by Nicole C. Mullen that has lyrics that go like this: “When You call on Jesus, all things are possible. You can mount on wings like eagles and soar. When you call on Jesus, mountains are gonna fall. Cause He’ll move heaven and earth to come rescue you when you call.”

Who is our first source when we get sick? Who is the first person we call on our car breaks down? How about when we get fired from a job? Is our first response to call Employment insurance or to bang on heaven’s door. This woman with the issue of blood thought that maybe the world had the solutions to the ailment. She searched and searched and found nothing.

Isn’t it interesting that we turn to the world to look for answers to our pain? We seek the help of ungodly friends, mediums and even money to heal our pain. Where has that landed you? How is that going for you so far? The bible teaches us that God supplies ALL our needs according to His riches in glory. Not some of our needs. Not our needs when prayer is our only option.

Let’s set one thing straight. God cannot be mocked and He is not a genie. We don’t get three wishes if we rub him the right way. Our lives are to be an act of constant surrender. That means we need to live every minute of every day with His guidance and the understanding that we are kept by His power and His power only.

My sister, I want you to get into the habit of making God your first option and not your last. The world doesn’t have what you need, but God does.

Let me pray with you:

Father Lord, I thank you for your beautiful daughter. I thank you that you are taking her on a journey of learning to depend on you and not on society for her every need. Would you communicate to her the necessity of feeding from you mouth everyday. Speak to her of your love and may she have an understanding of how you desire to lead her through each day no matter the hill and valley. I pray that she would receive a revelation of your Holy Spirit who is our greatest teacher. I thank you that from this day forward, she is putting you in control of her life. To you be all the glory for the changes that we believe are going to come. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scriptures

Phil 4:19

19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Matt 4:4

But He answered and said, "It is written: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.'"

Day 4

Do Not Pick Up: The Spirit of Rejection

Matthew 9:20

Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak.

I once had a friend who refused to pick up the phone if she didn't know exactly who was on the other line. Of course with caller ID this wasn't difficult. She also did not pick up the phone if she felt like you would waste her time or would drain her energy. Some people she went as far as to label them "Do Not Pick Up", to remind herself not to answer this person's call when they called.

Some of us have friends or even relatives whose call we would rather not answer. I can imagine that this woman with the issue of blood was that person whose call you would rather not pick up. You see, back in the bible times, women who were menstruating were considered unclean. They were usually sent to a hut where no one could come close. They were instructed to sit or lie down on rags until their menses was over. Anyone who so much as touched a woman who was menstruating was considered unclean until evening. Any person who even touched the bed of a woman who was menstruating was asked to bathe themselves immediately. The woman herself would be unclean for seven days after her menses was over.

What I'm trying to say is that this woman was a societal outcast. It wasn't like she had a long period every other month. She had been constantly bleeding for twelve years. Meaning, she had no social life. In the bible times, if a person was unclean, they would have to yell "unclean!" everywhere they went so that people would know, and avoid touching them. She probably had very few friends. After all, who wants to be constantly bathing themselves. She most likely spent most of her time at home as she was deemed to be unclean. She probably had no marriage and most likely no children. If she did have any of those things, the relationship was most likely strained due to her condition.

So you can imagine what this woman had to go through just to get to Jesus, let alone touch Him! She understood she was unclean and so therefore, she couldn't actually touch him. The bible says that the crowds were surrounding Jesus and many people were touching Him, but there was no way she could be one of those people. So her resolve was just to touch the end of the cloak - the part that has been dragging on the ground and collecting dust, dirt, feces and mire. That was the only thing that she felt worthy enough to grasp.

Where does your worth come from? Many of us have been in situations where we felt like her - societal outcasts. You may not have an issue with blood but maybe you are an immigrant to a new country where English is the first language and you barely speak English. You find it hard to understand the people around you and you can tell that they are mocking you and treating you like you're stupid. Maybe you are a single mum trying to make ends meet for your children. This makes it difficult for you to be highly involved in your kids education like some of the other mothers at your children's school and when you do show up, they treat you weird

because you're not part of their clique. Or maybe you've been trying to find love and all you seem to get are the guys who want something from you that you can't give them. No man seems to actually like you for your mind and heart. All around you your friends seem to be getting engaged and married. When you attend church or parties, people always seem to say the same things. "You're so pretty! Why are you still single?" Or how about, "Girl! Your Boaz is right around the corner. Keep praying." Or better still, "He's not here because you want him to be here. Just stop looking for him and he will appear magically." Or maybe you are married and you and your spouse have decided you would like to start a family and for some reason, things are just not working out in that department. Those around you keep asking you when you guys are going to start having children and that you shouldn't wait forever. Some may even say you're being selfish for not wanting children and that they are a gift from God. Your friends slowly start to not invite you to their mommy groups and playdates because in their opinion you have nothing to contribute.

Whatever the case may be, rejection is a painful pill to swallow. It is a very big pill to swallow. And each time we are rejected, a part of us becomes wounded. Thank God that we have a high priest who can empathize with what it's like to be rejected. He knows exactly what it feels like to be a stranger, to be not what people want you to be and to feel unloved. He was on a mission and that's what kept Him. The woman with the issue of blood was on a mission too - to get whole. What's your mission? What God has called you to do at this point in time is where your eyes should be fixed.

Let me pray with you:

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus. He is the ultimate example of the pain that we feel. He knows exactly what we go through and He can relate. Help my sister Oh Lord in her pain to recognize that she must focus on her mission here on earth. That when she is feeling rejected, they who are rejecting her are rejecting you and not her. Lord show her her purpose and mission in this life. Let that be the main thing that she sees in her view. May the distractions of the crowds voices become quieter and quieter and may your voice be the loudest voice she hears. May your voice that beckons and encourages her roar in her ears. We silence the voice of the Enemy for He is a defeated foe. In Jesus Name we pray, Amen.

Romans 8:37

37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet he did not sin

Day 5

No, really! This actually Hurts

Mark 5:28

And who had endured much suffering under the hands of many physicians...

There was a time in my life when I was dealing with some health problems and those health problems required that I had a minor surgery here or there or minor operations. They weren't so bad in that they really didn't take long - maybe half hour - and I was back in recovery. The issue with these minor operations was that they were extremely painful to me. The part that was so painful was the needles that were being used to freeze my cells. It was so painful that I would cry in the middle of the operation. The recovery was pretty rough too.

Now any one of my close friends can tell you that I'm not a crier. I'm not the type to boohoo a lot. Maybe it comes with being an older sibling, I'm not sure. The first time I had this operation, they did not allow my husband in the room and so I had to go in alone. The second time, there was no way I was going in alone. He stood by my side and they were ok with him being there because he's great when it comes to that kind of stuff. But it was also a bit different for him seeing me in pain. The great thing about this last operation that I had was that it did fix the problem and I didn't have to deal with it again.

That was not the case for our bleeding woman here. The bible says she was literally SUFFERING at the hands of these doctors. Back then, they didn't have the technological advancements that we have now. So only God, our bleeding sister here and those doctors know what was going on with her behind closed doors. They were trying all kinds of things, and she was paying out of pocket for it! Not only that, but those things they were trying on her must have been extremely painful for her.

Modern medicine and science believe that she may have had a uterine tumor or polyps of the tissue that line the uterus that were causing her to bleed out or that she may have had what we today call anovulation. This is when a woman's hormones are off balance and this prevents an egg from releasing and therefore can cause problems in fertility.

It's one thing to go through emotional pain from your disease but physical pain adds it's own other layer on top of it. Back in those days, the pain relievers they had were more natural pain relievers, so they worked differently than just popping a pill like we do today.

All this to say, when it comes to being in physical pain, this our bleeding sister totally could relate to it. I want to pull our attention back to Jesus once again. I think for Him, it was even more painful because the people who were causing Him physical pain by beating him and spitting on the open wounds and sores he had, with a crown of thorns on his open and bloody scalp - these people were the people He once healed!

Yes you read it correctly. His pain was coming from those He healed. Let that sink in for a moment. It's one thing to go through pain, it's another to actually have someone causing the pain on purpose.

What if I told you that your physical pain can serve a purpose? What if I told you that your physical pain can be a part of God's plan? Pain and suffering don't come from God. They are a result of sin. But God doesn't allow our pain and suffering to go to waste. Every moment in your life, God can use it in some way shape or form for you. But the choice and the decision is yours. It's all about our perspective. You see our bleeding sister is in the bible now for eternity. But that didn't come easy. She suffered for twelve years but it wasn't for nothing. From her story, women and men all over the world are receiving hope daily. Our bleeding sister is world famous but only because of her condition. If she was perfectly healthy, this story would not exist. God has a purpose for your physical pain. We may or may not ever fully understand it until we get there. But in the meantime, He is holding our hand and guiding us through it.

Let me pray with you:

Dear daddy, I am holding the hand of my sister right now who has gone through physical pain, may be in physical pain right now or may have some physical pain that she may have to deal with later on. I thank you Lord that our pain is never in vain. Our pain is never a mistake. Our pain is never a loss for us because our pain is part of our testimony. Our pain is part of our story. In our pain we identify with you. As the Apostle Paul says, we count it all joy when we go through trials and afflictions because it is also the building of our character. God you are the God who builds. Would you continue to build us in you until that final day when you say well done good and faithful servant. May my sister be a woman who is like a tree, planted, strong and fortified with leaves that do not wither because her strength comes from you, Jehova, her banner. Have your way in her life - in EVERY season I pray.

Amen

Psalm 23:4

4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Isaiah 41:10

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Day 6

Won't He do it?

Luke 8:46

But Jesus said, Someone did touch Me, for I perceived that healing power has gone forth from Me.

Jesus was so in-tune with His anointing. He could sense when power had gone out from Him to heal. Not that He had become drained of power but some of it had left him to serve a purpose. He knew when someone had been healed and He wanted make sure that God got the glory for this.

There are many stories of Jesus in the Bible healing people and asking those that He healed to go and show themselves to people and to let others know about the miracles that have taken place. Why did He do all of that?

Because ultimately the very reason we live and exist is for the glory and the pleasure of God. The fact that we wake up each day is a testimony of God's power to keep and preserve us.

Take some time today and think about one thing that God has done for you. Just that one thing, and thank Him for that. Make that your testimony. Let that be part of your story and your conviction. When what Christ has done for you becomes your conviction, you have no problem living or dying for Him. You know exactly where you stand and the line is clear.

Christianity in the west has become wishy washy because of the comfort that we live in from day to day. If we are sick, we go to the doctor. If we get into trouble, we call a lawyer. If we lose our job we have employment insurance.

What Jesus did for our bleeding sister, she will remember and take with her for the rest of her life. There is nothing anyone can tell her about Jesus that will cause her to doubt her faith and disbelief in the God who healed her. This is because she has a testimony.

What's your testimony?

Let me pray with you:

Father, I thank you for my beautiful sister and the life that she is living right now. I pray God that you would impart into her the knowledge of your saving grace. As she walks out her daily walk with you, would you remind her of the many miracles you have done in her life thus far. Would that become part of her testimony so that like David, she can overcome any obstacle that comes her way. Thank you Jesus that our testimony is what we will overcome the enemy with. We give you glory Lord. In the powerful name of Jesus, Amen.

1 Samuel 17:36

I have done this to both lions and bears, and I'll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God!

Revelations 12:11

They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

Day 7

No Regrets

Luke 8:43

And a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years and had spent all her living upon physicians, and could not be healed by anyone,

The hair, makeup and plastics industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Women and men will do anything to look better than they do now. We want longer hair, faster growing nails, stronger jawlines, higher cheekbones, bigger booty's, smaller waiste lines, thicker thighs, or smaller thighs. We want longer lashes, fuller lips, slimmer faces, eyelids that fold, makeup that doesn't crease and very slender noses. So because we want these things, the hair, makeup and plastics industries are making more money than ever. We want to look like the women and men we see on TV. And we will do anything to be like them.

So we continue to spend our money on these things. We continue to spend and spend and spend. We want to be attractive and weigh less. We learn from society that money can get you absolutely anything we want. We look at people like Kim Kardashian and admire their body shape and hair and lashes and we want what she has. These are our role models. So when they come out with a product, we rush to buy it because we are convinced that maybe whatever they're selling will help us to look more like them.

So who is directing our finances then? My mom taught me a little secret growing up. She said, before you buy something always ask yourself, "Do I really need this? Can I survive another week or two or a month without it? Is it going to add some exponential value to my life? How often will I actually use this in reality?" This has prevented me from a lifetime of spending.

Our bleeding sister had spent her entire life's money trying to find a cure to this disease. What would have happened if she had heard about Jesus maybe twelve years earlier? Would she have been as desperate to try Jesus as she was twelve years later? Would she have even given Him a shot? It probably would have appeared more logical to her initially go to a physician rather than a healing man right? What if God was not actually late when He met her? What if He knew that she was exactly where she needed to be mentally and emotionally in order to be in a state where she could have the faith she needed to receive her healing?

Some of us have a tendency to look back on our past and think, "wow, if I had only taken my walk with God serious earlier, I may not have spent all that money on drugs or clubs or alcohol or stupid vacations" Or maybe we think that we could have saved ourselves from a world of hurt. Or maybe we feel that we could have focused better on life goals and settled down sooner instead of wasting time having fun.

Those thoughts are valid thoughts and I of all people can relate to having some of those thoughts too. I'm sure our bleeding sister had those thoughts too at some point. I'm sure she

felt like if maybe she had met Jesus a few years earlier, she may not have had to spend all her money on those physicians and doctors.

But we have to also reel our mind back in and remember what the word of God says. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Old things have passed away and the new has come.

Basically what I'm telling you is that although we have made mistakes, life is a journey. There are paths that we have walked on that are not only for our benefit but for the benefit of generations to come. It is more important to God that we learn from our mistakes and repent, than pretend like we have been angels all our lives. How can you convince someone not to walk down a path that you have never been on yourself? I'm not saying spill your sins to the world. I'm saying that God may bring someone down your path who is exactly where you were ten years ago so that you can help pull them out of the pit they are in. God is never late, but He's always on time. I want you to take a moment and think about the things that keep coming back to your mind from your past, and commit it to God. Ask Him to turn that around and use it for your benefit. Remember that your life is never wasted because God has a way of using it as part of your testimony for His glory.

Let me pray with you:

God I humbly bring before you my sister. I thank you Lord for her life and for the journey that she's walking with you. I thank you that you are ordaining her steps even now God, that you are aligning her path for her destiny. We submit our lives to you today Lord and ask that you take complete and full control. God we know the enemy likes to remind us of our past, but we chose to combat that with your word. We are NEW CREATIONS and the old has passed away and the new has come. Thank you that we are more than conquerors and that we must forget the past and strive towards the calling that you have for us. Teach my sister Lord how you can use her past for her benefit and not to condemn her or draw her back. Let her past be a launch pad to her next level.

In Jesus name, Amen.

Scriptures:

Romans 8:1

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Psalms 37:23

The steps of a [good and righteous] man are directed *and* established by the Lord, And He delights in his way [and blesses his path].

Philippians 3:13

Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.

Day 8

Is He Talking to Me

Matthew 9:22

Jesus turned around and, seeing her, He said, Take courage, daughter! Your faith has made you well.

Being caught. You know exactly what I'm talking about. That feeling when you thought that you almost got away and now you've been caught. Not only have you been caught by the one person who you didn't want to take time away from, but He is CALLING YOU OUT PUBLICLY. In front of everyone. In front of all His followers and the whole entire crowd. He wants to know what you did. You have been caught. You half expect to be reprimanded for taking something without permission and then not owning up to it right away.

As you look in His eyes though, you are lost in an ocean of love and gentleness that you have never known before. That ocean of love is rippling with kindness that is so mesmerizing you could just melt. The scariest part of it all is that He sees you. You are being seen right now. He looks at you like He knows. He looks at you like He knows every secret, every lie, every dark twisted path you've walked on. He looks at you like He knows the crazy things you've done to feel whole again. And yet, there isn't a look of disgust on His face. As He questioned the crowd around Him to ask who has taken power from Him, you realized that He knows it's you. You've been caught and so you own up to it. You finally throw in the towel and recognize that He knew it was you all along. Why allow this charade to go on for any longer and take up more of their time. You really didn't mean any harm. You just wanted to slip away. But His response shakes you to your core. He doesn't warn you to never take what is not yours, or tell you off for rubbing shoulders with the kind of man of God that He is and being the lowlife in society that you are. He doesn't rattle off some scripture to you about touching not the anointed of God and doing His prophets no harm. Because He is God. Instead He sees you and not only that. He calls you the most precious name that means the whole world right now - daughter.

Fireworks go off in your mind and adrenaline begins to course through your body as you forgot what it was like to be seen like this by a man. You forgot what it was like to be genuinely loved. You forgot what it was like to have a man look at you for the beauty that you are. And for the first time in at least 12 years, His words envelope around you like an embrace. Daughter. He calls you daughter. Not the bleeding woman. Not the woman with the issue of blood. Not the outcast from society. Not the sick one. Not the anemic one. Not the incurable woman. Not the infertile woman. Not the divorced woman or the sick one or the one with too many problems or the one who has mental challenges. Just simply daughter.

The world stands still for a minute as you digest His words. They warm your soul. You smile. He smiles back. There is a beautiful exchange that only you and He understand. You turn around with the greatest treasure and the fullest heart.

He sees you. He continues to long to see you. He wants to meet you and warm your heart and embrace you. He wants to call you daughter. He calls you friend. He wants to go on walks with you and whisper beautiful things about your future in the midnight hour.

He's calling you. Will you hear His call?

Let me pray with you:

Jesus you are so in love with your daughter. I know she loves you too. I know she wants to go deeper. Thank you for dying for her so that she can have an intimate relationship. Master, teach her to be still and know that you are God. Show her what it's like to have those beautiful moments with you when time stands still and it's just You and her. Show her the vastness of your love - the extent of the ocean. Help her to know your heart for her and the world. May she carry your warm and contagious love in her heart and share it with those she meets.

In your beautiful name I pray,

Amen.

Zephaniah 3:17

The Lord your God is in the midst of you, a Mighty One, a Saviour [Who Saves]! He will rejoice over you with joy He will rest [in silent satisfaction] and in His love He will be silent and make no mention [of past sins, or even recall them]: He will exult over you with singing.

Day 9

Worth the risk?

Luke 8:48

Jesus said, "Daughter, you took a risk trusting me, and now you're healed and whole. Live well, live blessed!"

Trusting God is such a huge risk. Trusting Him in the everyday is a risk. But even more so, trusting Him with the most delicate parts of us - like our pain is an even greater risk. You may be reading this bleeding woman's story and like me maybe you think she had nothing to lose trying Jesus right? After all, she had tried so many other people. Can one more person really hurt?

I want to challenge you my sister to step inside the shoes of our bleeding sister. Because she had been dealing with this condition for so long, you would think that someone like her would become a little jaded. And rightfully so. Nothing was working! Nobody had a cure! So why is this person any different? I want you to think about the areas of your life that you have given up on God with. Let's think about the areas that you may still be holding onto because you don't need any "help"? God is saying it's time to let go because there is a blessing in the risk taking. There is a risk in trusting God. The risk is that He might not heal you the way you want to be healed. The risk is that the broken parts of you might get further broken down into tinier pieces and that pain may be too much for you to handle.

But when you have those thoughts, remind yourself that they are actually fears. You know that fear doesn't come from God! So you speak back to the enemy and let him know that God will never test you beyond what you can bear. So if he's allowing pain, it's because you can bear it. If He's allowing the crowd of people to laugh at you and call you names all while He is still walking, it's because He knew that your miracle was hinging on your ability to trust God and block out everyone else. Do you trust Him? 100%?

Let me pray with you:

Dear God, trusting you can be difficult, especially when we are so used to trusting no one else but ourselves. But Lord, you desire us to let go and so would you teach my sister to trust you with her finances. Would you teach my sister to trust you with her marriage, her

friendships, her children, her career, her schooling, her mountains that she's facing right now. God, you don't have any grandchildren, only sons and daughters. So we have to build up our relationship with you ourselves. And good relationships are built on trust. Teach us to trust you Lord.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust God from the bottom of your heart;

don't try to figure out everything on your own.

Listen for God's voice in everything you do, everywhere you go;

he's the one who will keep you on track.

Day 10

Walk It Out

Mark 5:34b

Go in peace and be continually healed and freed from your distressing bodily disease.

Be continually healed. I used to wonder why Jesus said that to her. Why did He tell her to be continually healed? If He had healed her, that's it right? There's nothing else to do. She's free? What does it mean for us to walk out our healing?

When we read stories in the bible of healing, sometimes it seems like God purposefully waits until the situation is so bad before he steps in. We think of Lazarus who had been dead for three days before the master attended to Him. He does this so that He can get all the glory. He does this so that there is no doubt in our minds that it is God who heals and not anyone or anything else. So then, it's possible to be made whole but then because we were not walking out our healing, we don't remain whole.

After all, it is by faith that we received our healing to begin with. So is it not by faith that we maintain our healing? When Jesus heals us there needs to be no part of us that doubts that it was He who touched us. Because what happens when we begin to doubt is, our testimony begins to change and the glory shifts from God to the doctors or from God to first responders or from God to whatever else we want to attribute our wholeness to. Once our testimony shifts from God to these other things, we begin to put our trust and confidence in these other things and not in God. Once we put our trust in other things other than God, God begins to remove His hand of protection and provision from our lives because what we are essentially doing is making those other things idols. The Lord makes it clear that we shall have no other gods before Him.

Once the Lord removes His hand of protection and provision and sustenance over our lives, we become open targets for the enemy. And all of a sudden we find

ourselves in places that we didn't anticipate being in. We find ourselves no longer whole. We find ourselves no longer well. I'm reminded of the Israelites in the land of Egypt. Egypt was a place where the people of that land served many gods. But because the Israelites were in that land, God was with them. The bible says that the Hebrew women, even when they would give birth, they would give birth quickly. They wouldn't struggle to give birth. God was with them even in their captivity. Finally, when God led them out of Egypt and they crossed the Red Sea, what Phaoroa and his army failed to realize was that the reason the Israelites were able to cross that sea was because God was with His people. When they tried to do the same thing, God simply had Moses lift up his stick and the waters began to surge and rage and the Egyptians died.

When we fail to walk out our wholeness by giving God the glory, we create idols for ourselves and remove God's hand of mercy, protection and sustenance from our lives.

Day 11

I've Got Somewhere to Go!

Mark 5:23-24

And begged Him earnestly, saying, My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, so that she may be healed and live. And Jesus went with him and a great crowd kept following Him and pressed Him from all sides [so as almost to suffocate Him].

I love technology. It's amazing the things we are able to do now with the advancement of technology. We can visit far places because of the inventions of airplanes and jets. We can video chat with people who are hundreds of thousands of miles away. We can connect with people who felt lofty and out of reach at one point in time because of social media.

The thing that I find very strange though is that the technology that has come is supposed to make our lives easier. We don't have to wash clothes or dishes by hand if we don't want to because we have laundry machines and dishwashers. So one would think that because we are less busy, we have more time to spend with our loved ones and be more present.

But this could not be farther from the truth. In our day and age we are more busy than we have ever been. We are being sucked into this time warps where time is the currency and many of us are so broke.

So what do we do when our plans are interrupted? What happens when something distracts us momentarily from our destination? Jesus was on His way to Jairus' house to heal his daughter for she was dying. And here comes this bleeding woman with her problem that she also wants to be addressed.

Jesus' reaction is pivotal. He isn't annoyed that someone stopped Him to ask Him for change. He isn't frustrated that someone is standing at His door trying to speak to Him about what they're selling. He isn't angry that someone is getting in His way and stopping Him from doing what He was originally planning to do.

Sometimes God brings people down our path who would be seeming to interrupt our day. They seem to be getting in the way of where we are trying to go with our busy schedules. The Bible says that God orders our steps so could it be that some of these people are actually sent by the Creator of the universe but because we are so busy, we miss our moment. I wonder if our reaction would be more like Jesus' what we would be able to accomplish? Could we stop for a moment and buy food for a beggar? Could we stop for a moment and witness to the sales person at the door? Could we stop for a moment and tell the lady at our cash register that she's doing a great job? Could we stop for a moment and pray with the man who has been sick with cancer next door?

God moves in these moments. He moves in the moments that we decide to stop and press pause. The next time someone interrupts your day, what will your response be?

Let me pray with you:

God thank you for being involved in our lives. Thank you for moving in our lives if we allow you to. I present your daughter to you once again that you would interrupt her day for your glory. Would you speak to her loudly in her spirit when she is to press pause to minister to one of your children. Thank you that you were never annoyed with interruptions but that you welcomed them. They have given us a platform to see what a Spirit filled life looks like. Be glorified in our lives we pray. In Jesus name I've prayed, Amen.

Scriptures:

Matthew 25:40

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Psalms 37:23

23 The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.

Day 12

Twelve

Mark 5:25

And there was a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years...

Every word that is mentioned in the bible carries a powerful significance. The bible takes the time to mention the amount of years that this bleeding woman had been suffering for. That number is twelve. We know through scripture that twelve carries the meaning of completeness. Twelve is the number of wholeness. Twelve is the number of power and authority. Isn't that just like God to make her whole on year twelve?

You may be in a place today where you may feel like circumstances and life has beaten you down and rendered you powerless. You may be in a place where you are not feeling whole or complete. You may find yourself in a place where the pieces of your life are not only broken but they are broken and they are also missing. That place where you are in right now is a place that you are but isn't a place where you will be. By the power of the Holy Spirit that is at work within you right now, I declare the restoration power of God to divinely do a work in your life and heart to bring you to the place of power and victory that you are meant to be daughter! You are a princess. You are reigning with Christ. You are no longer powerless but powerful.

God sees all the years that you have been sitting lame and waiting for someone to pick you up. But it is time for you to push past the crowd, with the help of the Holy Spirit, and reach for your wholeness by faith. The first few steps may be difficult. As the bleeding woman was reaching for Christ, many people recognized her as that woman with that infirmity. But she didn't care, she kept pressing toward that mark. It was difficult to take those few steps but she was desperate for wholeness. Twelve was her number and her time to get whole. Today is also your twelve. Will you be whole?

Let me pray with you:

Day 13

Undisturbed and Untroubled

Luke 8:48

And He said to her, Daughter your faith your confidence and trust in Me) has made you well! Go (enter) into peace (untroubled, undisturbed well-being).

Untroubled, undisturbed well-being. Do these words sound like water to your soul right now? People are searching high and low to be able to keep balance, be untroubled and undisturbed. Do you really understand what it means to be untroubled and undisturbed? It means that nothing shakes you. It means that the world is falling apart around you, the sea and storm are raging but you are standing rock solid because you know the God who can command the sea and say "Peace be still."

This is what God's peace is. Most often we think it is some zen or aura that hits us and all of a sudden we feel this beautiful stillness - this does happen but not often. Usually, God's peace starts with an action. We have to first ENTER into it. It is 100% OUR choice. We can choose to enter into the peace of God or we can choose worry or fear instead.

What you and I fail to realize at times is that the fruit of the Spirit (peace being one of them) are exercises. If we ask for peace, God will continually put us in situations where we must practise exercising peace over what our flesh wants to do. Let's say you are running late for work and you realize there's an accident on the road. There's no way in or out. You have two options. You can panic and become frustrated, hot and bothered. Or you can enter into the peace of God. That peace is readily available to us. He said in his word, "My peace I give you". He wants us to take it. If a friend offers you a gift, it's yours to receive. But you must put your hand out to receive it. There's an action on your part to receive. The same goes for peace. We must enter it.

Do you think the bleeding woman never again had another problem in her life? Do you think she lived happily ever after? Let me help you understand this. After Jesus healed her, He gave her peace. Why? Because she was going to need it. He knew that there would be other obstacles that would come her way that she would need that peace for. He knew that the healing is beautiful and it is received but without the peace of God, she could go back to a place of defeat instead of victory. Her life from now on would be forever changed. She was used to a different kind of lifestyle before and now that is all changed. With change comes uncomfortability. She was going to need that peace to carry her through the

uncomfortable change and new found freedom that she was about to experience. She was no longer an outcast, she was free. Which means she would have to look for work or try to find herself a suitor to settle down with. Whoever she may have been married to at one point most likely would have left her because she was always unclean. So although she has been set free, she is about to step into a new season where she will need the peace of God and so Jesus gave it to her for her to take and to enter into.

What season are you in or are you about to step into one? Have you chosen to enter into God's peace in this season? Have you chosen to hang onto peace like it is a lifeline even though your boat is being rocked so hard that you feel you might fall out? Know this my sister, as long as God is in your boat, you will not fall out nor will you sink. God is the master of storm and all you have to do is be still.

Psalm 46:10

Be still, and know that I am God.

John 14:27

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Mark 4:39

And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Day 14

The American Idol

American Idol is a TV show that airs in North America. Now there are many countries and regions that have their own version of the famous singing competition. The idea is to sing your way through judges and be the singer with the most votes and you win. Sounds easy right? You become the American Idol when you win, or so they say.

What interests me about this concept is the fact they chose to use the word Idol. This is not a word that we use often in our day, however that doesn't mean that we don't have them. It simply means that we may not be aware that we have them. How easy is it for our pain and the baggage we carry to become an Idol. An idol is anything that we run to to give us security and safety. It is the thing that we think about more than anything and it is what we identify ourselves with. For some of us, our pain is an Idol. We don't know who we are without it and if that idol is taken away, well where would our identity be? Where would all the pity be? Where would my circle of friends go? Because the people I've surrounded myself with are the people who also identify with my idol of pain.

So my question for you today is what pain and baggage are you carrying that has become your idol? What pain are you nursing and what pain do you enjoy having with you to the point where it has become a part of you? Maybe originally this was not the case. Maybe when you were initially going through the hurt and the pain you didn't want the pain. But then as time went on you became comfortable in your pain and soon people began to identify you by your pain. Then you began to look for other people who also are wallowing in the same pain as you. Have you ever heard the saying "misery loves company?"

When we look at the bleeding woman we see a woman who had lived with a disease for many years and it had become her identity. The difference between this woman and some of us is that this woman had come to a realization that she didn't want her pain to be her comfort any longer. She didn't want to be part of the group of people who were considered outcasts anymore. She believed she could get out of this rut and she wanted out. Sometimes we find ourselves in situations where we think that maybe what we are going through is meant to be the person we are. Have you gone through a rough experience lately? Maybe lost a spouse? Had a terrible car accident? Living with a disease? Is this the end of your story? No absolutely not. Jesus said, I've come that you might have life and life abundantly! So when we make the pain little gods that are our crutch we make that pain our everything instead of God. There was a time that I had gone through a molestation. I carried that pain for years. That pain became my go to and I told myself that I wanted to move past the pain but I realized ultimately that I really wasn't willing to part with my pain because I had become comfortable with this new normal. I had become comfortable with

being an abused woman and I felt the weight of that daily. Anytime someone treated me wrongly even on the road behind the wheel, I would relate that to my phone and think that the reason I was being treated badly was because of the pain that they could see in me. But that was a lie from the pit of hell. I wanted to wear my pain on my sleeve and here was Jesus trying to draw me out of it.

Eventually I had to make up my mind to get well. Enough was enough! My pain did not define me and it doesn't define me. Yes, I've gone through pain but there is a healer. He wants to give me beauty for my ashes. Where I felt I was dead, He wanted to resurrect me. I threw aside my idol of abuse and welcomed the light and grace of God to carry me everyday. In some ways, accepting the grace in exchange for my pain was not easy but it was healthier for me and I'm stronger today because of it.

Has your pain become an idol? Are you nursing your pain? That idol is actually a distraction from where God wants you to go. Throwing it aside is the only way you can follow Jesus. Get rid of your idol. The devil would like for you to remain in darkness and worship your idol. God is saying, let go and step into the light.

Let me pray with you:

Dear beautiful Saviour, thank you for living an exemplary life. Thank you that you are the God who desires for us to have full and abundant lives. Thank you that you want for us to walk in light and in love and not get stuck in darkness making our pain an idol. Thank you that your word is light. Shine your light on every dark corner and crevice of our lives today. Let us be in partnership with you as you remove the obstacles that prevent us from reaching our full potential today. Thank you Lord. Amen

Scriptures:

John 10:10

The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have *and* enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows].

1 Peter 2:9

But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

Exodus 20:3-5

“You shall have no other gods before Me.

Day 15

I Tried Prayer - It didn't work

Luke 8:43

And a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years and had spent all her living upon physicians and could not be healed by anyone...

What are you waiting on God for? What is it that God has promised you and you are patiently waiting on Him to come through for? I want to encourage you today that whatever you are waiting on God for, trusting in Him is not a waste of your time. Sometimes it may feel like it is. It may feel like your energy is being misplaced. It may feel that maybe if you have taken half the amount of energy that it takes praying for this *one thing* that if you had taken that time and poured it into something else, you might have your solution or at least a quasi-solution that could possibly make you happy in the meantime.

That's exactly what Abraham did. He thought about helping God or more like helping himself. He thought that maybe if he could have a child in the meantime while He waited for God to come through in His promise, He could be happy - and have a backup plan. And of course we all do this. Because, you see, waiting for the believer does not just mean standing around twiddling your thumbs. No! Waiting in the bible is completely different. Waiting means trusting and believing and holding on to the promise, constantly renewing your mind and consecrating yourself unto Him. This takes work! This means that trusting and believing even though you have not received the answer to your promise yet. And God expects this of us.

I want to encourage you today because faith is the substance of things hoped for. That means that God knew there would be times that we would be hoping for something that hasn't come through yet or that cannot be tangibly touched or felt. And yet God is not sleepy, nor has He forgot.

You may be asking yourself how it's possible that a woman could touch the hem of His garment and be healed instantly and some others like Abraham have to hold on and wait on God for the promise that has been spoken to them ages ago. Here is your encouragement right here: God is all about timing more than He is about you getting what you want- sorry! He will use this time that you are depending on Him to draw you close so that your desires become His desires. He will change your desires to be more like His. By the time He blesses you with His

promise, you are ready to receive His promise and to walk in that promise and its fullness.

The fullness of the promise is just as important as the promise itself. The fullness of the promise brings about a peace, joy and beauty in the Holy Ghost.

Now when you pray for what God has promised you, pray that you would be ready to receive it and that it would be in the fullness that He has planned for you as you hold on with certainty, unwavering faith and hope.

Let me pray with you:

Dear Father, Thank you for your daughter's journey. Thank you that her life is a beautiful garden that you are planting and pruning and sowing your seed into her life. As she is holding onto you concerning the promise you have given her, may she not get weary in the arduous job of waiting. May she not become nonchalant in waiting. But may she remember that the waiting is what is bringing about the good that you desire to see in her. May she remember that the waiting is developing the character that others will glean from for generations to come. May you put within her a stillness that comes from the deep waters of your Spirit - and may deep call unto deep. Amen.

Hebrews 11:6

For without faith it is impossible to please God. For whoever would come near to God must necessarily believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him out.

Habakkuk 2:3

For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

PART 2

**THE BROKEN
WOMAN**

Day 16

Untitled

This next series of devotionals you are about to read is to be read along with the following passage in the bible. Embark on this journey with me as we learn from this broken woman. I assure you there's something in it for you.

Luke 7:37-50

37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." 40 And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."

41 "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." 44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." 48 And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 Then those who were at table with him began to say among[a] themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" 50 And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Day 17

I Like to Sit at the Back

Luke 7:44

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

Many of us can relate to walking into church and wanting to sit at the back. What is it with wanting to sit at the back? We know that all are welcome to sit anywhere in the sanctuary. We know that church is about celebrating our God and not about us.

So why the back of the church then? Is it that it's a safe zone? If things get too heated and the preacher starts preaching about us, we can slip out unnoticed. Or maybe it's that we don't want to be bothered. We just want to come to church and leave without anyone asking us where we've been or asking us to join the church or making a comment about our clothes being too short, or too tight or too colorful - or too black. Sometimes we sit in the back because we don't feel like we are clean enough to sit in the front of the church - as if that can be seen with the human eye. In our minds we have this twisted notion that the front of the church is for the righteous and holy people and the back of the church is for sinners. We wouldn't dare go to the front for fear that attention would be drawn to us and to our sin. People know that our lives aren't exactly the cleanest. We just want to come to church, get our Sunday fix and go home. Don't ask us any questions about joining a church, or about getting involved. We don't want any of that.

What causes us to take a back seat with God? Now I'm not talking about the literal space of the church. I'm talking in spiritual terms. Many times we are driven by fear. But what are you afraid of and where does that fear come from? Are we afraid that drawing close to God means Him exposing all of our dirt and our filth? Are we afraid that it might hurt too much? That when He begins to sweep away the layers and layers of dirt, He might grimace at what He finds underneath? So we sit in the back. We keep God at a safe distance. We do our weekly routine to keep God from getting angry at us - as if He's a little god that needs to be appeased.

There is a woman in the Bible who decided one day that she needed wholeness more than she needed to be accepted. She didn't care that people would stare at her as she walked to the proverbial front where Jesus was. She didn't care that

her dirty laundry was being aired out for Him to see. She approached God that day and laid all of her dirty laundry at His feet. She cried and cried. She cried because of the internal struggles she was dealing with. She cried because of the painful traumas she was carrying with her that she could not speak of for fear that people would reject her. She cried at his feet because of the abuse and the bruises that she carried on her tired and used body. She finally decided that she didn't want to sit at the back anymore. She ran to the front and threw herself at His feet. She didn't care what "they" said anymore. She didn't care what "they" saw, if they were watching or not. All she wanted was to be loved just as she was. She didn't care about what the repercussions would be after she finally got up and walked home; whether they wanted to stone her, hate her, jest and jeer at her, or call her names. She did not care. Nothing mattered more in that moment, than surrendering and loving the One who loved her more than any other man she had been with.

And the best part of it was that Jesus just let her. He let her cry. He let her love Him. He let her pour her love on Him. He actually enjoyed it because this was her form of worship. He knew her entire history. He knew the day she was born. He knew how one thing led to another and how she found herself in this broken mess. He also knew that everything in her life depended on this moment right here. And He wanted to help her pick up the pieces again and become the woman He had created her to be.

Why are you still sitting in the back girl? Get up and run to the front and meet Him there. For you, that might be a special place in your house, on your living room floor, in your prayer closet, in your car or maybe even at the altar of your church. Wherever that place where you meet God may be, He's waiting with arms wide open for you to offload. Don't sit at the back anymore. His arms are wide open.

Let me pray with you:

Daddy, your daughter has been sitting at the back because of fear, or lack of time or uncertainty. But God I pray that as she begins to read these words, may your healing waters flow over her mind soul and body, washing the deepest parts of her that only you know. Wrap her in your arms of love. Hold her close and whisper to her the love you have. May she know that she is loved with an everlasting love today and always. Amen.

John 4:23

Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

James 4:8

Come near to God and he will come near to you.

Day 18

What's He worth to you?

It was custom in those days, that when a Jewish host was entertaining guests that he/she would ask to wash the feet of the guest and offer water for whatever animals they might have been visiting with. It's kind of like when a guest visits your home nowadays and you offer to hang their coat, take their shoes and offer a glass of water to drink. Typically when this is done, it is considered good manners right? How could Simon have missed this?

Here is Jesus the Messiah and ruler of the world (although very humble ruler I might add), in your home and you don't even offer him water to wash his feet? Come on Simon! Have you ever heard the saying that says, "familiarity breeds contempt?" Sometimes when people feel they know you too well or that they know your type, their reverence and respect for you or the position you hold start to wane. The bible tells us that Simon was a Pharisee. Some commentaries read that he invited Jesus to his house, not out of honor and reverence, but out of curiosity and some even say hostility. It's amazing that no matter the condition of your heart, your actions will speak louder than words. The fact that the Messiah was not offered anything to clean his body is one thing. But here comes this woman who does just that. Not only that, but she takes it a step

further. She brings out this beautiful white flask and after crying all over Jesus' feet, she dries his feet with her long gorgeous hair. And then she takes out her flask and pours her fragrant expensive oil all over his feet. How expensive was the oil you might ask? According to calculations, the cost was roughly around 300 denarii, which is the equivalent to about \$20,000 US Dollars. That's a lot of money to pour on Jesus. But for her this was obviously so worth it. She didn't pour the oil begrudgingly. She didn't pour it wondering how long it would take her to replace the oil? She wasn't wondering how much she would have to work to be able to recover the cost. This was her act of worship. She just broke it and poured it out.

This made me think. When it's time for me to give to God, what is my attitude? Am I thinking about how I could have used this money to pay off some credit card debt? Am I thinking about how this money would have been nice to have to be able to splurge a bit on myself because after all, I've been working so hard! This man in front of her meant so much more than the gift she was bringing. In fact, by her tears, it was evident that she didn't even feel worthy enough to be bringing such a gift because of her past. But Jesus loved her much and forgave her much. This was her offering as a result of that. Jesus desires this same attitude every time we come before him. We shouldn't allow the amount of time we have known God to breed an attitude of skepticism or contempt like the pharisee did. Our posture should always be like this woman: here is everything I hold value to. I lay it down before you.

Let me pray with you:

God thank you for being always willing to walk life's journey with us. Thank you for this woman's life that is an example to us all. Just because we may have walked with you for some time does not give us the right to be "too familiar" with you to the point where we forget about the significance of who you are. May you always be precious to us and in our sight. Amen.

Day 19

You Just Missed Him

Luke 7:39

Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw it, he said to himself, If this Man were a prophet, He would surely know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching Him - for she is a notorious sinner (a social outcast devoted to sin).

In the times of the Bible, prophets were also called seers because they could see and hear directly from God and of things pertaining to the future. When the king of Israel had a problem, he would go and see the seer or the prophet and listen to what the Spirit of the Lord was saying concerning a particular situation. God would use them as mouthpiece unto the people and often times when the Spirit of God would come over a man, he would prophesy deep oracles that even he knew not of. From this passage of scripture we see clearly that the Pharisee didn't understand how it was possible that a man of God could want to be near such an unclean woman. Because the Torah instructed that these kinds of people were considered to be people that could defile a man - let alone a whole prophet! There was an entire religious ritual that was to be completed by the one who had touched an unclean woman.

And here was Jesus, this so called prophet - allowing this prostitute to not only touch him, but to kiss his feet and her filthy tears were all over his feet; she was using her hair as a rag. It's no wonder that the Jewish people missed that Jesus was the son of God. He didn't come to them in the form that they knew. He didn't appear as some prophet that was lofty and high and too holy to be touched. He was having dinner and lunch with prostitutes and tax collectors. And all this was totally against their "bible". Jesus was claiming to be God - and yet was breaking the very holy word that God gave them. Liar! Or so they thought!

What if Jesus isn't what we know or what our understanding thinks He is? What if the Jesus that we perceive in our brains isn't biblical or accurate or is one sided? See the Jesus that many of us know is so merciful and kind that what we do isn't a big deal because of grace. The Jesus that some others of us know is just waiting to hit us over the head with a big stick when we make mistakes. The Jesus that some of us know is a second class citizen of God. As if God the Father is actually God and Jesus is a lesser version of God - not God incarnate. The Jesus some of us know was a person who lived and did some miracles but is now gone. So when Jesus comes again to collect us, His bride, some of us, like Simon will not even recognize Him because our view of what Jesus is supposed to be or looks like in our mind's eye is only a very partial view of who He really is.

Here is the amazing thing about the person of Jesus Christ though. If our hearts are in the right place, we can learn deep revelations about the person He was in the Old Testament - because Jesus is all over the Old Testament, the person He came to be in the New Testament and the person He is to you right now. And there's more. As you walk through your journey in life, Jesus will purposefully choose to reveal to you different sides of His person depending on what your spirit needs for a particular season.

God doesn't change - that's true, but he is an amazing, multi-faceted God. In one season of your life, Jesus is Your shepherd - leading you His sheep. In another season of your life He will be your healer, fixing and mending your broken heart - Jehovah Shama. In another season of your life He is your teacher - instructing you on how to navigate difficult relationships to be the best mentally healthy person sound relationships can bring.

What Jesus does your mind and heart know? Will you recognize Him when He comes again? Will you have learned the multi-faceted nature of God through the seasons of your life? Or will you be like Simon, confused and confounded and so sure of himself and so wrong. We can't actually blame Simon of not recognizing Jesus because it's so easy to miss Him. We can get so caught up on one side of His person - and that isn't who He is entirely.

Let me pray with you:

Jesus, thank you for the opportunity to know you more and more each day. Thank you that if we allow you, you are revealing different sides of your person on a daily basis. Show my sister what side of your person you are revealing to her today. Show her what side you are revealing to her in this season. Make it plain to her what she is to learn from your personality - how she is to grow to become more like you and in your likeness. May her heart be open to receiving you in your entirety. Thank you that you break every boundary and stereotype in our minds so that the person we become can be a world and generation changer. In your unparalleled name I pray.

Amen

John 1:10-12

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Day 20

Untitled

Luke 7:37

37 Now there was a woman in the city who was [known as] a [a]sinner;

I often wonder about this passage of scripture. This woman was known as a sinner. Why this intrigues me is that if she was known as a sinner then what about everyone else? Were they not also known as sinners? What made this woman's sin so much worse than the average Joe Shmoe who lived in this town? What caused this woman to be seen as such a wicked person while everyone else was a saint? Was it because of her lifestyle of prostitution? The bible says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Which means that in the Lord's eyes all sin is sin. So long as you live on God's green earth it is impossible to be sin free so why then is this woman's sin looked at as so much worse than her neighbour? Maybe they may not be sleeping with men for money but they too were guilty of something. So I repeat the same remark that Jesus did: He who is without sin cast the first stone.

We have a terrible habit of rating sin. We manage to convince ourselves that because we didn't kill anybody, we aren't as bad as that guy who kills people for money. But is that godly? Is that how God views sin? Does he see sin in degrees? Or is that when He sees sin He sees the stain and the effect of sin on our lives?

God sees our sin. That part is true. He sees the next person's sin also. But the only difference between you and the next person is that you have the blood of Jesus that is continually washing it away and cleansing. You see, the purpose of the law was not to rank our sin. The purpose of the law was to show us that we could never measure up. If we can never measure up, shouldn't that give us a humility to not rank our sin against other peoples? Shouldn't that soften our hearts towards people who can't see the light? Shouldn't that force us into a place of wanting to share the good news of Jesus in whatever way we can with whomever we meet?

Not only should the law show us how filthy we are, but it should point us to the amazing and awesome power of grace. And now maybe we can understand why Jesus says that He who has been forgiven much, loveth much. I want to love Jesus much. I don't want my idea of sin ranking to put me into the deception of thinking that I'm not that bad; or that I only need a little grace. We are all sinners, saved by grace. All sin hurts the father. If that's true, and it is, then our lives should be mirrors of grace and truth and light. A deeper understanding of my sin, helps me into a humbling appreciation for the cross. Let's continue to remember that we are ALL sinners saved by grace.

Day 21

Untitled

Luke 7:37 - 39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

Thoughts. What are you thinking about in this moment right now. Where is your mind at? How many times a day do we think thoughts to ourselves. We think about whether we turned off the stove or how we just got a speeding ticket when everyone else was speeding too, or what we are going to make for dinner because there's nothing in the pantry and everyone is tired. It is very very possible to be reading this article on this page right now but your mind, your emotions and even your heart is far from the words that appear in front of you. The brain is such a powerful and complex organ. It is the central control system of our entire beings. Our thoughts are what lead to our actions. Is that why we're supposed to watch what we think? Huh?

The blessing about our thoughts is that until we freely reveal them, no one knows what is contained within them. There is no tv screen that we wear on our forehead that tells people who we feel about them. Our thoughts are our own.

They are private. They belong to us and no one else. Until Jesus appeared on the scene.

In the Old Testament we read about the children of Israel constantly having to obey the law and failing miserably. They had a list of dos and don'ts if you will. But when Jesus came to earth he challenged the law. He said it doesn't matter what you do because everything starts with your thoughtlife. It matters very little that you paid your tithe if in your heart you are wishing you didn't. It's better you don't because God loves a cheerful giver. God is saying if you're gonna do something, make sure you do it with your thoughtlife and heart in check.

You see, Simon the Pharisee didn't fully understand who he was having dinner with. And maybe he never fully let on that he didn't believe who Jesus said He was. But his thoughts sure did. His thoughtlife ratted him out!

So what are you thinking about? If you can show me your thoughtlife, I can show you what you value most. What do you spend most of your hours being occupied with? Are you occupying most of your mind thinking of ways you can make more money to buy the beautiful space you've been eyeing? Is your mind occupied with how to advance your career to prove to everyone that you're doing better than they said you would? Are you busy thinking about how you can find a man who can love you or maybe love isn't that important but having one is - so where all those men? Or maybe your mind is busy trying to figure out how you're gonna make it through the days of changing endless diapers, cleaning vomit off your clothes, doing laundry, washing dishes and keeping your head above water enough to remain sane? Where is your mind at most of the day?

Let me ask you this. Where would you like your mind to be most of the day? The bible says in Romans that we have to actively work hard to renew our minds. Doing this is our form of worship - because God knows it takes work! He knows it isn't always easy to think about what you're thinking about. He knows it's easier to worry and judge than to trust and rest in God. He knows these things and He's so gracious that He meets us where we are at. But that doesn't mean we should be doing our homework.

You see the Pharisee had no clue that Jesus was watching a TV screen into his mind and many of us forget that He's still the same God yesterday today and forever. He has a plain view into our thoughtlife. So today let's think about actively trying to think about what we are thinking about. And not just stop there! Let's be active participants with God in helping our thoughts be under the submission and control of Christ. What that means is that when we have thoughts that aren't in line with who God has said He is and that He can do what

He says He can do or who we are in Christ, we have got to quickly check ourselves.

That means saying to our spirit on the inside of us that God I don't have to worry because God is constantly supplying my needs. It means saying to ourselves that I don't have to cheat the system like everyone else because I am aiming to live a life of integrity. It means reminding yourself that you are not going to watch those movies or go to those places because you are the righteousness of God in Christ. It means reminding yourself that even though your marriage is in a difficult place, He is faithful to bring your marriage out of the darkness because He is a deliverer and is faithful to the end. It means telling yourself that although school seems harder than you can bear right now, that is a lie of the enemy because you can do all things through Christ who is your strength.

So what are you thinking about right now?

Let me pray with you:

Dear Father in Heaven,
You are so good. Thank you that you are always trying to get us to a place where we are more like you. We know that in this world we are constantly being bombarded with things that will cause us to doubt your existence, question who we are in you and believe the lies of the enemy. But God today we rise to the challenge of accepting our lives in you. We rise to the challenge of rejecting the status quo and laying a hold of your life and modelling ourselves after a life of integrity. We trust in the promises that you have for us and know that we can never be put to shame for you are our rod and staff. Help my sister today Lord. Help her to think about what she's thinking about and to be mindful of the enemy's tricks and to refuse to fall into the potholes of the journey. Thank you for the grace that you are flooding her life with right now.

Amen.

Romans 12:2 - 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Matthew 5:28

But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

PART 4

THE

PROPHETIC

WOMAN

Day 22

It's Go Time

The next few devotionals will be taken from Matthew 26:7-15.

A woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

8 When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. 9 "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

10 Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 11 The poor you will always have with you,^[a] but you will not always have me. 12 When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. 13 Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

The word of God says that we should not live by bread alone but from the very mouth of God. We should long to be sustained by the very breath of God not by food. Which, if you think about it, is quite funny because it's food that sustains us isn't it? Food is what nourishes our body and brings strength and vitality to our muscles to be able to go about our day. But the Word of God is teaching us that food is great but it's not all. We should desire God's word the way we desire food.

If you or I were to go without food for a certain amount of time, we would be hungry and starving. After some time, our body will definitely let us KNOW that we haven't eaten and that it needs energy. This is what God is saying should happen to us with His word. After going without His breath in our spirits for awhile, we should feel hungry, spiritually that is. We should literally feel like we are starving.

Now when I say the Word of God, I'm not simply talking about the written word of God, I'm talking about the word of God for your life right now - some would call it the "rhema" word; or the right now word. What is God saying concerning

your life right now? You can't live without knowing this. Well, you could, but you would be like a ship without a sail.

Whoever this mysterious woman is here in the gospel of Matthew, she understood what God's word was for her for that day. She knew what it was that she must do. Something compelled her to do what she did. She was operating out of the prophetic whether she was fully aware of the implications or not. When the disciples expressed their disappointment, Jesus cautioned them that what she was doing was so much deeper than giving to the poor. What she was doing had eternal and generational depth and meaning. She may not have known that she was preparing Jesus for the very imminent brutal death He was about to face, but one thing she did do was align herself to be used by God at the right place and time. When we do this, we are able to operate in higher realms. We are able to fulfill the prophetic as desired by God. We are able to fulfill God's desire for us because the Bible says that when we commit our way unto Him, He causes our thoughts to become agreeable to His will. How awesome is that?

When we are agreeable to His will, we are able to walk in the prophetic. We are able to do just what God has intended for our lives each and everyday.

This is probably why the bible says if we walk by the Spirit we won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh. We will fulfill the desire of the Spirit. This woman's sacrifice had a prophetic seal on it, even though it seemed ludicrous at the time. What is God asking you to do today? What is God driving you to give today? Where is God leading you today? Commit your way to Him that you may walk in the prophetic - that is that you may walk hearing and operating under the hand of the Lord Almighty. If you do this, you will be amazed at how God puts people and circumstances in your path to be His mouthpiece.

Let me pray with you:

Eternal Father, thank you that you long to use us no matter what stage of life we are in. Sometimes when we are so busy, we cannot hear what you desire for us. Help us to be in agreement with your plan for us. We desire to operate under Your hand. We desire to live by the rhema word of God, daily. Thank you Lord

that you are leading my sister to live a life that has prophetic and eternal implications. Glory to Your name.

Amen.

Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Proverbs 16:3 (AMP)

Roll your works upon the Lord (commit and trust them wholly to Him; He will cause your thoughts to become agreeable to His will, and) so shall your plans be established and succeed.

Galatians 5:16 (NIV)

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Day 23

Do You See What I See?

Matthew 26:8

8 When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked.9 "This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."10 Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me.

When Jesus was here on earth, it was as if the disciples were babies and had to put themselves in a place to learn a whole new language. They were trying to forget everything they had come to know as truth and follow the Truth. The way they had grown up and what they had come to understand as the norm is what Jesus was turning completely upside down. So they were constantly in this space of asking questions and trying to understand how they could do the things that Jesus was doing. They wanted to heal like He was healing. They wanted to deliver people from demons just the way He was. And sometimes they struggled.

They struggled because they were used to seeing the world through their own lenses. They were used to seeing things through the eyes of carnality and flesh. And although they were fully human, they also had a spirit that was to now being made alive in Christ. We are like them in many ways - maybe it's part of the reason why their stories are recorded. And in this passage of scripture, I wonder if you can take a moment and try to see yourself. Are there ever times that God asks you to do something, and yet because it doesn't make logical sense, you want to follow your logical patterns of thinking? All the disciples wanted to do was sell the expensive perfume and make money - not for themselves (or so they claimed) but for the poor! That's a worthy cause isn't it? After all, the Lord

asks us to take care of those marginalized in society and at the time those were the widows, orphans and the poor.

So why was Jesus able to respond the way that he was? How could he rebuke them for wanting a good thing?

It was because they weren't seeing things the way Jesus or the prophetic woman for that matter, were seeing them. Paul also prays that the eyes of our spiritual understanding would be enlightened. It's because when we are walking in our flesh, even when our flesh wants to do good, the good that it wants to do can be contrary to what the Spirit is asking you to do. The disciples were not even thinking about the burial or death of Jesus. They were focused on "the here and now". They were caught up in trying to get it right and do good. Little did their spirits perceive that the time that they had with the Christ was running out and getting shorter and shorter.

You want to be able to live your life in Victory and not defeat. The next layer of being able to do that is living by the Spirit. It is seeing the world through the lenses of God. Allowing the Holy Spirit to continually be ministering in your Spirit on a daily basis. Not just in the mornings when you are doing devotionals but when you are at work behind your desk, when you are on at the grocery store in the checkout aisle and when you are on vacation with your girls. Jesus desires that we would become one just as He and the father were one! That's huge! That's asking us to be so close knit that we can see things not with our natural senses - because that is so limited, but to see things with the senses of the Spirit of God.

Unfortunately this takes more work because the physical realm is natural to us. We were born into it. The Spiritual senses take time in developing - through prayer, reading of the word of God, listening to sermons, meditating on scripture, being in the company of believers. It all sharpens our senses.

Let me pray with you:

Dear God,

You are amazing in that you understand the duality of being human. That's what makes you the ULTIMATE high priest. And we love you for that. God help my sister today. She cannot live this life successfully without you. She desires to be lead by you, uplifted by you, encouraged by you, cradled by you. She wants to

be more like you. She can only do that with your leading. We want to see things the way you see them and be able to decipher between spirit and flesh. Give us boldness to act when you call. Amen

Ephesians 1:18

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,

John 3:6-7

Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Day 24

You Make Time for What's Important to You

Matthew 26:11

For you always have the poor among you, but you will not always have Me.

I used to strongly dislike - I won't say hate, because my mom told me that it's a strong word - but strongly dislike when people would use this phrase on me: You make time for what's important to you. Because sometimes, I honest to God felt like I was a victim of my time. Sometimes I felt like it wasn't in my control. There was just so much to do and so many places to go and people to see. It's not my fault that I can't get to the other stuff right? Wrong!

The phrase is absolutely true. If something is important to you, you will find a way to make it work into your schedule no matter how busy you are. Or you will find something to cut out of your life so that that important thing can have more space. When I read this scripture, it jumped out to me. I almost feel like Jesus was saying to the disciples "HELLO! I'M RIGHT HERE! This is where you've got to be focused. The other stuff will always be there!"

Let's be honest, the dishes will always be in the sink, the floors will always need to be mopped (especially if you have little ones) and the toilets will always need to be cleaned. That's the reality of the life we are living in. But do we have time for what's really important? Are we making our time alone with Him our priority? Or is it somewhere on our to-do list? "Lord! We will connect tonight after work, I promise!" But the new TV series that you've been dying to watch is on. "God I will wake up early tomorrow morning and we will have just me and you time." But you didn't go to bed on time because you were watching tv late so now you're too tired to wake up extra early for prayer, so we hit the snooze button and back to the sack! "God! We are on retreat! Today it's all about me and you." But your phone has been ringing off the hook with problems upon problems from one person to the next. Here's a harsh reality. You are not Jesus. You CANNOT fix

everyone and everything. Not even Jesus tried to do that when He was on earth. He was busy about His father's business. So how about you? Are you about your father's business?

God is saying this morning that the things you want to do are not bad things, but they will ALWAYS be there. Developing ourselves in the Spirit is a time that we need to make as a commitment. You may be wondering where to start. Do you read the bible? Do you pray? Do you worship? Do you meditate? There are so many things that you could be doing in your one on one time with Jesus. There are so many tools - including this devotional - that are geared towards getting you on your way. But regardless of what you decide to do - actually do it my friend. It takes dedication. It takes commitment. It takes focus. But you make time for what's important to you right?

Let me pray with you:

My Lord and Father,

I thank you for my sister that is trying to make time to be committed to you. Let your Holy Spirit be a gentle reminder to her to fix her eyes on you daily. In this season you are teaching us to walk by the Spirit. That is a hard thing to do but we want to please you. So let our desires become melted to yours so that when we go a day without your presence, we feel it in our spirit. Thank you for meeting us where we are.

Amen

Luke 10:41-42

But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

Matthew 6:19-21

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Proverbs 4:23

Watch over your heart with all diligence,

For from it *flow* the springs of life.

The Prophetic Woman II

The next few devotionals will be taken from the following passage of scripture in Mark 14:3. It is the same story as the previous scripture but it is told from a different angle.

3 While He was in Bethany [as a guest] at the home of [a] Simon the leper, and reclining *at the table*, a [b] woman came with an alabaster vial of very costly *and* precious perfume of pure [c] nard; and she broke the vial and poured the perfume over His head. 4 But there were [d] some who were indignantly *remarking* to one another, "Why has this perfume been wasted? 5 For this perfume might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii [a laborer's wages for almost a year], and *the money* given to the poor." And they scolded her. 6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; why are you bothering her *and* causing trouble? She has done a good *and* beautiful thing to Me. 7 For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you wish you can do something good to them; but you will not always have Me. 8 She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial. 9 I assure you *and* most solemnly say to you, wherever the good news [regarding salvation] is proclaimed throughout the world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

25. Learning to Release

Mark 14:5

5 For this perfume might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii [a laborer's wages for almost a year], and *the money* given to the poor." And they scolded her.

They scolded her. I wonder what kinds of things they had said to her? "You foolish woman? What are you even doing here? This is not a place for your type. Get away! You are wasting this because you are seeking attention. Shame!" I can only imagine the things they said to her. They probably thought she was a fool for giving what she gave.

When it's time for tithes and offering in our churches what do we give to God? Do we give God our best? Or do we give God the scraps of what we have left over? Do we give according to revelation, or do we give what our brain feels lead to give? From the above scripture we can see one thing is clear: this woman gave according to revelation. She gave what God had asked her to give and she gave willingly.

We see the same patterns of giving through some of the greatest people in history. Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his only son. He gave up Isaac as a sacrifice after waiting a lifetime to have him. And he gave him up after sending Ishmael away. Isaac was all he had. When Solomon had finished building a tabernacle for God to dwell, he gave and gave until he could give no more. That night the bible says God visited him and asked him that anything his heart desired, he could have. So what is it with God? Does he want us to just give because he wants to see us lose?

On the contrary, I think what God is trying to teach us is that we should never love anything more than we love Him. There is nothing that should mean more to us than him. My father always used to tell my siblings and I as children that we should never hold onto anything too tightly. Because we are just passing through. This earth is not our home, but we are just renting it for a bit. If we

never hold onto anything too tightly, when the master requires it, it is proof of where our love really lies.

Ask yourself this morning, God is there anything I hold too tightly? Teach me to release and let it go, just as the woman with the alabaster box did. It is said that the perfume that she poured on Jesus was worth a man's whole year's wages. What it would take someone to earn in a year, was gone in just a few minutes. But it was her sacrifice. And Jesus SAW her. He saw the how much she must have valued this perfume. And yet she was willing to act out of obedience and God blessed her as a result.

Let's pray together:

Eternal father,

Daily, we are learning how to value what you have given to us. We can see that everything is a gift from you and that freely you give and so freely we must also give. Help us God when we want to hold too tightly to the things that we really shouldn't. Let our treasure be in heaven. We know sometimes it may hurt to release things unto you. Sometimes it may make us a bit uncomfortable - as we know the woman with the alabaster box must have felt. But we know that you are worth far more than rubies or diamonds or any amount of money. Thank you for your sacrifice. We love you.

Amen.

26. What's that in your hand?

8 She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.

Have you ever been in a space of mind where you felt like you had another gifting than what you had? I know I have been there. Sometimes you can envy another person and think life would be easier if you could do _____. You fill in the blank. I've heard people tell me that they wish they had the gift to be able to sing. I've heard people tell my friends that they wish they could act or draw or paint. And the list goes on.

Here's the thing. If you were able to do those things that you wish that you could do, God would still require those giftings from you. Sometimes people say, I wish I had the gift of music so that I could sit and just play all day or sing all day or use the gift for myself. If that's the pattern of thinking, then you're missing the point.

The point of the gift God gave YOU is so that you could make the most out of it with what you've got - whatever that gift is. This is why when Jesus tells the parable of the talents, the master was angry with the servant that did nothing with his talent and hid it in the ground. That's like saying, "God, I hate that you gave me the gift of teaching. So I'm just gonna pretend like it's not there and work really hard in other areas and maybe you will like what I've done." But God is saying, what do you have in your hand? What gift have I given you? What is your talent? You may not have what that other person has, but what I'm requiring of you is what is in YOUR hand. And if you learned how to use that gift to the best of your ability, you would be shocked on how you could be a blessing to those around you.

See sis, the woman with the alabaster box didn't have much to give to Jesus. But she looked at what was in her hand. She thought to herself, "this is what I've got. I'm gonna release that and maybe it will bless Him."

So what's in your hand? What can you do with what you've got? You may not be able to paint, but you can cook. You may not be able to cook but you are an amazing administrator and event planner. You may be terrible at organizing things but you have got a gift with media. What is in your hand. Work with what you've got. Don't let the enemy fool you and tell you that what you have isn't good enough. You could end up spending most of your life wishing you were someone else. And how profitable is that for yourself or the kingdom. Love the real you boo.

Let me pray with you:

God my sister is desiring to be able to use the talents she has in her hand. Sometimes she may not even know where to begin. I pray you would bring people along her path to help push her into her destiny. Or maybe she is doing

exactly what you've called her to and she's feeling a bit dry, fill her up and send your springs of refreshing over life right now. Wherever she may be, reveal to her the next step so that she doesn't get trapped in the enemy's lies or end up stuck.

Amen.

Matthew 25:14

29 "For to everyone who has [and values his blessings and gifts from God, and has used them wisely], more will be given, and [he will be richly supplied so that] he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have [because he has ignored or disregarded his blessings and gifts from God], even what he does have will be taken away.

27. When there's Pain in the Offering...

Mark 15:5

For it was possible to have sold this perfume for more than 300 denarii [a laboring man's wages for a year] and to have given the money to the poor. And they censured and reproved her.

There's an old song by Matt Redman that goes like this:

Blessed be Your name

On the road marked with suffering

Though there's pain in the offering

Blessed be Your name

Every blessing You pour out I'll

Turn back to praise

When the darkness closes in, Lord

Still I will say...

There are times when there's pain in what we give. I know this is not a popular message but it's in the bible so I have to tell you about it. It's the TRUTH! It isn't always that when we give our best to God that we feel an overwhelming joy in our hearts. To be honest sometimes we feel like the disciples did. Sometimes we think like, "Gee..maybe I really shouldn't have put that in the offering basket. I could have used that money elsewhere."

One thing that we have to remember is that God is constantly looking at our heart. He doesn't care so much for the amount. What He cares more for is what condition our heart is in when we give. Are we really excited about giving? Sometimes we struggle to tithe. Sometimes we may struggle to offer to God what is his or what He is requiring of us. Sometimes giving HURTS! And I've got news for you my friend, sacrificial giving may hurt. It's a sacrifice - this means it COST you something.

I love what David said in this scripture: "But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them." In other words, David is saying, I need to give to God my BEST. That's what the difference was between Cain and Abel's sacrifice. Because think about it. They both gave...so what's the big deal. But what God was pleased with was the fact that Abel gave his BEST.

Don't get it twisted, God doesn't need your money. But what He does want is your heart. Your ability to say to God that NOTHING is more important to me than you. And anything you ask of me, I will gladly give to you. In the early church, Christians were selling their property because they felt lead to help sustain the church in this way. I'm not saying go sell your car, unless of course God is leading you to. What I am saying is that the next time it's time to give to God, whether a tithe or an offering on top of your tithe, be lead by God. Be ready to say to God, you know what, here is my demonstration of my love for you. I will give you what you are asking of me today, no matter what it costs.

Sometimes, God isn't asking for your money. Sometimes He's asking for your time. He may be asking you to spend a little extra time with your neighbour who is having trouble preparing meals because she just gave birth. Maybe God is asking you to spend a little extra at the grocery store and prepare a meal for her family. Maybe God is asking you to spend a little extra time and offer to weed your neighbours garden. Maybe God may be asking you for a season to take some of the extra over time shifts you work so that you can have extra cash to spend at the spa and instead give that time to helping out at the church's annual VBS. I don't know what God is calling you to, but whatever it is, give Him your best. Even when it hurts.

Let me pray with you:

Heavenly Father, everyday we are growing and maturing through you. We are learning to let go of the things on earth that consume us and to remember to keep our eyes on you - heavenbound. Teach us to remember that giving when it

hurts is sometimes part of our Christian walk to. Help us work through that pain and remember that it brings joy to you when we are obedient. Amen

2 Samuel 24:24

But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.

Matthew 6:21

For where your heart is, there your treasure will be also.

The Miserable Woman

28. Baby Steps

The next devotionals will be taking a deeper look into the life of Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth.

Ruth 1:6

Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in Moab how the Lord had visited

His people in giving them food.

Here's a bit of background to the life of our next woman. Here is Naomi who was a Hebrew woman. She got married and because of the economic downturn, her husband thought it wise for them to get out of town to a place where there were resources. If we dig a little further we discover that part of the reason the

Hebrew people were suffering at that time was because they were in a time of moral decline. The judges were doing their best to rule the people and bring them back to God but the people wanted to be like their surrounding nations.

So long and short, Naomi and her man pack up their two boys and head towards Moab. Whether God had told Elimelech to go or not is another study for another day. While there, Elimelech died. The sole breadwinner of their family, the one who ultimately thought it a good idea for them to move to a brand new place among foreigners died. Now what on earth was Naomi to do?

Have you ever found yourself in a situation that was totally out of your control and before you knew it, things started to make a turn from bad to worse? That's exactly what was happening to Naomi. Anyway, her sons get married to two girls from Moab. And even though her husband is dead, she's thinking to herself that at least she has her sons to take care of her and provide income. So it's not so bad.

Then her sons die. Hello.... God! Are you seeing what's happening here? I have done everything to serve you right! I have obeyed those in authority over me even though I may not have agreed with their choices. I have been a rule follower all my life. And this is the thanks that I get? What have I done to deserve this. My husband is dead and so are my two boys.

In those days there was no such thing as welfare or food stamps. There was no such thing as EI or any government provision. If the provider of your home was dead, then you gotta find an uncle or someone to live with or else you are going to die a slow death of malnourishment. Not to mention you are in a foreign country!

Sometimes we find ourselves in situations that were not our choice. We find ourselves in places that we didn't choose to go. We sometimes find ourselves in a debt that we never borrowed from in the first place. We did nothing to deserve it but we are just...here. What do we do when life is dealing so harshly with us? What do we do when things start to spin downward and out of control? Do we allow suicidal thoughts to enter our minds? Do we turn to the pleasures of life to

try to numb the pain of what we are going through? Sometimes those pleasures may not be a bad thing. Maybe shopping makes us feel good so we go do that. Or we turn to food, or excessive exercise. Whatever it is - we find something we turn to help us to forget the pain we are experiencing. It's not that these things are bad. It's the motive behind why we do what we are doing.

You see sis, even though Naomi was seriously hurting and in pain and grieving and her whole world had just turned upside down by no fault of her own, she made an exit strategy. She didn't give up. She didn't allow her circumstances to drown her. She made a choice instead to retrace her steps and see where it is her family may have gone wrong. She heard that if she could return home, then maybe she may find some way to work and create an income for herself.

But returning home meant facing the pain she was trying to get over. Let me tell you, choosing the high road isn't an easy. It sometimes involves hard work and pain. She had to journey all the way back home! She had to face her relatives who were going to ask her of her husband and sons. It was going to bring back her dark memories that she was trying to move past.

But that's ok.

Sometimes all God wants is your decision to put one foot in front of the other. You may not know how you're going to make it through tomorrow, but just put one foot in front of the other. You may not know how your rent is going to be paid at the end of the month, but put one foot in front of the other. You may not understand how this divorce is going to work itself out but put foot in front of the other. You may not know how you're going to be able to finish school when you have no funds in your account and a family to feed at home, but put one foot in front of the other. You may not be able to see how you can make it another day through this pregnancy but just take baby steps and put one foot in front of the other. You may not be able to see yourself going through another day facing your infertility but God says, baby steps. Jehova Jireh, your God will provide in a way that will blow your mind. He is perfecting you in this time of weakness because it's during your weak times that He can fill in your cracks with His strength. If you will allow him that is. Baby Steps.

Let me pray with you:

God help! My sister may be in a place where she feels like she's drowning. She wants to walk on water with you but trusting you instead of looking around her is getting more and more difficult. Help her to remember your promise to provide when the water is in over our head and the sea is raging so loud. Help her to see you in the storm. Help her to know that you are just beginning to write her story. In taking baby steps, she is choosing hope. She is choosing you. Minister to her right now in her quiet time. May she sense your presence in her room right now. Amen.

Isaiah 43:2

When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.

2 Corinthians 12:9

9 but He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you [My lovingkindness and My mercy are more than enough—always available—regardless of the situation]; for [My] power is being perfected [and is completed and shows itself most effectively] in [your] weakness."

29. Winds of Change

Ruth 1:8-9

But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant that you may find a home and rest, each in the house of her husband! Then she kissed them and they wept aloud.

All my life I have been a person who has thrived on change. I love change and fluidity. I hate it when things in my life feel stagnant and are not moving forward.

I've always been of the notion that life is constantly changing and we must change with change. The person who refuses to change is often left behind and their attempt at moving forward can become futile and irrelevant because the world has already moved on. So one must adapt to the change or remain the same - it's either or.

So it has always amazed me that we as human beings resist change so much. And the reason we resist change is because change is uncomfortable. I won't lie and say that all change is good change. Some change is awkward and even, dare I say, down right scary! Change means that there's a possibility that we might look stupid, foolish or ignorant in this new arena we find ourselves in. Change sometimes means that we may have to learn new pathways and form new relationships - and that all takes work. Work that frankly, sometimes we would rather not put in at all.

As Naomi is blessing her two daughters-in-law she is telling them basically that change is here. They had to learn to adapt to the change. The reality was that all three of their husbands were dead and life must move on. And maybe for the first time, it occurred to them and reality set in, that life will never be the same again. This season is what we call the season of transition. It is a season that I have learned to become very very comfortable with because the Lord has forced me to walk through it many times. When we are in the season of transition we are oftentimes restless and impatient. We want a quick result and when we do what we can to get a result and our efforts come out futile we are often frustrated. So sometimes to avoid being in this place of frustration, it is easier to resist the change.

Naomi gave her daughters-in-law a bitter pill to swallow and told them to go back home, find new husbands and settle down and our bible tells us that they all wept bitterly. Have you ever wept bitterly when the winds of change began to blow? Have you ever felt like your soul was being ripped in two because everything you've ever known is about shift into another dimension and you are SO not ready for that shift? God is telling me to tell you today that you are to embrace the winds of change. Although they are blowing your direction and you

have tried to brace yourself to be strong in the wind, He is saying to surrender to Him. There is power in letting go. Letting go does not mean you are lazy and sit down and do nothing, but surrender means you are actively pursuing God without pushing your own agenda on Him and limiting Him to fit into your box.

Ruth and Orpah cried because change is painful. It's okay to cry. Crying doesn't mean you don't trust God. Crying means you are human. It means that you are acknowledging that it may be uncomfortable and you may be entering into a time where you may have to start all over again. You may have to rebuild your life all over again. To the woman who is reading this who has moved her whole life to a new country because God said go and you are weeping for all that you left behind, God says He's got you. To the woman reading this who has been denied entry into the college that you've longed to go to and God has closed that door, God says He has a better plan. To the woman who has been served divorce papers from the only man she has ever loved, God says trust Him. To the woman who has been told that she has an autoimmune disease and that she will be on medication for a long time, God says surrender, He is your healer - not just physically but emotionally too. To the woman who is learning to love again after being hurt over and over, God says don't be afraid, He is the lover of your soul. To the woman who is about to give birth and fear is setting in, God says to surrender, fear is false evidence appearing real. To the woman who is saying goodbye to her children as they head off to college, God says, it's okay to cry - He is your comfort.

Let me pray with you:

Heavenly Father, thank you for change. Change is a part of life and in your word you call them seasons. Help us to know when our season is about to change and to embrace the winds of change you blow our way. Help us to find you in the still small voice that you are speaking to our spirits. Help us to not resist you, but to continue to embrace the new things you have in store for us.

Amen

Ecc. 3:1-8

To every thing there is a season,
and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to get, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time to love, and a time to hate;
A time of war, and a time of peace.

30. Committed

Ruth 1:15-17

¹⁵ Then Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; turn back *and* follow your sister-in-law." ¹⁶ But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people will be my people, and your God, my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord do the same to me [as He has done to you], and more also, if anything but death separates me from you."

Commitment. The one word that so many of us run away from. We are so scared of the implications of committing ourselves to someone. It's also funny how our brains have been wired as a culture to automatically think of commitment as from one lover to another. But is that the only kind of commitment there is? Scripture teaches us that it is certainly not! David was so committed to Jonathan that they took oaths to protect each other till the bitter end. Paul was committed to Timothy and to pouring into him all that he could for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. And of course Ruth was committed to Naomi.

What is it about commitment that freaks us out though? Why are we so afraid to commit? Usually the fear of commitment comes from a place of fear. It is the fear of being hurt. Sometimes it is the fear of the lack of return on investment. Other times it is the fear of loss. The bottom line is that most of the time our lack of commitment is driven by fear. And we know that fear is not designed by God nor does it come from Him for the word of God tells us that He never placed that inside our spirits but rather we have power and a sound mind. So why do we hold back from being committed to sitting under the feet of someone who can pour into us, teach us, mold us and help us to get to where we want to go? Sometimes it is pride. "Nobody deserves to see our brokenness," we lie to ourselves. "It is a privilege to know me, ok!" So we shut out even the closest of friends and fend off commitment.

One thing I love about Ruth is that she realized that since marrying her husband, lots had changed for her. She left a whole lot behind to become one with him. And along the way, she had developed a bond with her mother in law. They had faced the shrill shriek of death together. They had been through hell and high water. And now was the time for them to part ways but Ruth FOUGHT hard to keep the bond they had formed. She was committed to Naomi. She refused to be a lone ranger and to go back to her home. She desired to continue to stick like glue to the woman who she had grown with. She begged her not to send her away because she saw something in Naomi that she believed was better than whatever was waiting for her back at home.

So my question to you is this: What are the relationships in your life that you are committed to? I'm not talking about romantic relationships - but relationships with other women. It could be a mother-in-law like Ruth, but it also may not be. It may be a relationship with a girlfriend who has moved away and distance has made it harder to stay connected. I believe deep down in my spirit that God will bring along other women for us to walk the journey of life with.

They are meant to prune us, shape us, help us to reach the destiny that God has for us. These women are supposed to be our tribe. We are to grow with them as they grow with us and it is beautiful BUT it is also very hard work. It is not easy to be committed to someone outside ourselves. And like Ruth we often times must fight to maintain that commitment because life gets busy and hard and sometimes awkward. But when that happens, we ask God to remind us of the purpose of our tribe in our lives. The girlfriends, aunties, mothers, sisters that have been placed in our lives strategically are to journey life's windy paths with us. It takes work not to push them away when we feel hurt, dissatisfied, annoyed or frustrated with them. And I'm SURE that there are times that Ruth felt that way about Naomi too and probably vice versa! But she was committed to being a sojourner with her. So who are the people in your life that are worth fighting for? Maybe it's high time you go after them. Call them up and go for lunch, catch a movie or hit up the mall together. The activity is not important. Invest yourself into other people. After all, people are one of our greatest riches.

Let me pray with you:

Lord, many of us have been hurt by other women. So sometimes we run from being connected to women. Would you point out the people in my sister's life who are meant to help her grow and reach her fullest potential. Would you make it plain not only to her but also to those that are to walk with her. I pray Lord, that in the face of adversity, You would help her to remain committed. Remaining committed to people who have been sent by You means being committed to our growth. And growth is always good. Thank you for answered prayer.

Amen

2 Timothy 1:7

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity *or* cowardice *or* fear, but [He has given us a spirit] of power and of love and of sound judgment *and* personal discipline [abilities that result in a calm, well-balanced mind and self-control].

1 Samuel 20:17

17 Once again Jonathan swore an oath to David because of his love for David. He loved David as much as he loved himself. 1

31. Keep Calm & Carry On

Ruth 2:1

Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's a man of wealth of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

When we read the story of Ruth we stumble upon Boaz and it seems quite romantic doesn't it? I mean here is this woman who has lost everything. She's been grieving the death of the man she loves and out of nowhere comes this wealthy man who is a distant relative of her husband's father.

When I first read this the Holy Spirit reminded me of how He is a God of intentionality. Our circumstances are not an accident. We don't just happen upon things and there is no such thing as fate - especially as believers. God has a way of putting people in our path to lift us up in our moments of destitution and sadness.

But something even more potent that God placed in my heart was that Ruth was ready for her blessing. Now imagine if Ruth was too bitter from the fact that her husband had died, to put herself in a place where she could be humble enough to receive the new blessing God was bringing her way. Obviously, God wanted to turn around a sad situation in her life for her good but she had to be in a place where she was willing to heal and move forward. Healing is a choice. We can choose to be whole or we can choose to stay where we are. We can choose to forgive or to remain in bitterness. We can choose life or we can choose death. It's totally up to us!

Now I'm not saying that healing doesn't take work. OH gosh does it ever take WORK! It takes so much work. But the feeling of being whole far outweighs the work. It far outweighs the brokenness. It far outweighs the pain. And it all begins with a choice.

I remember a young lady in my young women's ministry came to visit me. As she sat across from me in my living room, she began to tell me about how she felt spiritually sick and longed so much for healing and wholeness. I was reminded of the question Jesus asked the lame man,

“Do you want to be made whole?” I used to wonder why Jesus would ask that obvious question! Uhhhh of course Jesus! I want to be made whole?

But now I no longer wonder. I asked this lady sitting on my couch the same question. And the reason I asked was because I wanted her to understand that although healing was readily available to her, it would take work to walk it out. It takes work to continue to think the thoughts that God has for you and to create new neurological pathways in your brain despite the pain or trauma you have experienced.

As I read the story of Ruth and her kinsman redeemer, some things become very clear to me. The first is that God brought Boaz into her life to be a blessing not only to her but to her family. The second thing is that she was ready to receive the blessing God had in store for her because she chose to walk towards the journey of healing and wholeness. Because of that choice, she became a part of the lineage of Jesus.

Will you make the choice to be made whole today? Who knows what God has in store for you if you would only choose life.

Deuteronomy 30:19

I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live,

John 5:6-8

When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

7 “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.” 8 Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” 9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

32. Good Rep

Ruth 2:11

Boaz answered her, “I have been made fully aware of everything that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people that you did not know before.”

When I was a kid growing up, you couldn't get away with very much. Internet was dial up and phones didn't come with touch screens and only had one game you could play on them - snakes; that is if you were fortunate enough to have a phone. When I was growing up children played outside in the sun and playground. They enjoyed listening to music and TV was a treat! When you did something wrong, you could be sure that one of your aunties or uncles in church would report you to your parents and you would hear about it later that night. Things have changed now, partly due I think to the information age. Kids are much more distracted by their digital screens. Nowadays we deal with issues like cyberbullying and online self-image. Our reputation is what we tell people it is. We can make up a whole lifestyle and post about it. People believe what they see because it's what we sell them.

In Ruth's days it wasn't like that - not even close. Your reputation was your reputation. If you were caught doing something you shouldn't have done, the penalty could be as severe as death. There was very little room for an opportunity to present to the world who you were because your actions spoke for themselves. Ruth made the decision to stay by her mother-in-law's side and I'm not entirely sure what prompted her to do it. The Bible paints Ruth as a hero of faith which leads me to believe that what she did was a very noble and kind thing - and probably a very rare thing. It still is a very rare thing today - to find a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship that ebbed and flowed like theirs did. However, I think much of

the beauty of their relationship was owed to Ruth for the decision that she made to not abandon her mother-in-law but to stick by her side even though that meant that she may never get married again. She wasn't exactly hanging out at the singles' parties anymore. She was busy and now devoted her life to looking after Naomi. Naomi was probably well advanced in years and we know from this story that she wasn't exactly the life of the party.

Ruth's decision to stick it out anyway and be devoted to her mother-in-law became her reputation. It actually became the story that people knew her by. She was the woman-who-followed-her-depressed-mother-in-law-back-home girl. What a way to be known! She was the woman who chose a HARDER life just so that she could extend an olive branch to a person in need. So I ask you today, what does your reputation say about you?

The thing I find interesting about this story is that it doesn't sound like Ruth was preoccupied by being the stellar daughter-in-law of the year - she just was! She wasn't striving for perfection - she was just being herself. Her motive and her heart were in the right place and because of that she was honoured and respected.

We shouldn't do the God-honouring things because of what people will say or what they will think about us. We should do the God-honouring things because that is what it means to follow Christ. It means that sometimes we are put into difficult circumstances with awkward and frustrating people and God wants to know what we will do. We are not here on earth just to take up space. We are to be a GENUINE blessing to those around us. We are to be genuine in our love, genuine in our smiles, genuine in our encounters with people and genuine in our faith. That is the kind of reputation we are supposed to have. That is the reputation that Ruth had that preceded her. Her reputation landed her spot in the lineage of Jesus. How amazing is that? And only because she took the road less travelled and did it with a humble and beautiful spirit. So I ask again, what does your reputation say about you? The beauty of God is that when we come to Christ or rededicate ourselves, we have an opportunity, by grace, to reinvent who we are by our choices, actions and lifestyle. I pray that today, you would be Spirit led - not flesh led; and that the Spirit will lead you to places where your glorious reputation would shine before men.

Let me pray with you:

Today Lord, I thank you for your child and the opportunity they have to become new again - all things are made new in You. I pray that you would help us to radiate the love that you

have all around us so that our reputation will be people that love you deeply and love others the same - even when it's challenging. May we strive to chase after you and not after the image we want others to see. Amen

Matthew 5:16

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Hebrews 10:36

You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.

33. No Such Thing as Luck

Ruth 2:2-3

2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor."

Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter."

There's a common ideology in our culture, especially in the West, that when good things happen to you that it is up to chance or luck. I am here today to challenge you, that as a believer that simply does not exist. There's no way that the God of the universe who is concerned about the most finite details of your life would allow you to whimsically float through space as things just happen to you. That couldn't be further from the truth. Here in Ruth's story we see a prime example of this.

Ruth is realizing that her and her mother-in-law need to eat - as humans do. They had no man to provide for them and so between the two of them, someone had to provide.

Because Ruth was younger, the obligation fell on her. So she tells her mother-in-law that

she's going to go try and find some leftover grain in someone's field. The Israelites were instructed by the law of Moses, that when they owned a field, they were to always leave a bit of grain on the field for the poor to also be able to come and glean and find something to eat. So Ruth, having no source of income, decide that she's going to take it upon herself to see what grain she can find being left behind. In this process, she just so happens to land in the field of Boaz who is a distant relative of Naomi's husband. What are the chances?? Like honestly what are the chances? As we read later on in the story, it's clear that Ruth had no idea who he was and Naomi didn't know where Ruth would end up.

The Bible says that the Lord directs the steps of the righteous. He's constantly leading us and guiding us. When good things happen, although it may appear to be random, it's never ever random. When terrible things happen, although they may appear to surprise us, they are never random either. We don't live arbitrary, aimless lives. We live lives of purpose that are God-driven. The next time you hear someone comment on how random something is in your life, remind them that nothing in your life happens at random, no matter how it may appear. God is constantly lining things up for us to bless us, grow us, teach us and train us to be more like Christ.

Today as you walk through your day, be at ease and take comfort that your life is in the hands of a very capable God. He is where your joy is found and He is where your rest is. When something challenging comes your way today, remember to thank God. When something beautiful comes your way today, remember to thank God. He uses everything for His glory.

Let's pray:

God what a powerful and majestic God you are. I thank you that my life is not an accident nor is it by chance. I thank you that you are constantly working for things to work out for my good. Even though sometimes I don't understand the blueprint for my life or know how things will shape up, I choose to trust in you and find my hope and joy in you. I choose to be thankful for the little things. I choose to look for you in my day today and find what you are up to. Thank you that as I look back on my life, I can see your hand at work all through it. I now know that you are faithful, especially when I've walked away from you, you remained a consistent God. I give you room to do what you want to do with my life. In your precious and holy name, Amen.

Proverbs 16:9 NLT

We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.

Proverbs 37:23

The LORD makes firm the steps of the one who delights in him;

36. What's in my Hand?

Ruth 2:7

So she came and has continued from early morning until now, except when she rested a little in the house.

What kind of focus and determination does it take to be able to hear what God is telling you to do and go after it with all your heart - not some of your heart, and not based on your comfort level, but ALL of your heart? So often we are hoping that God will give us a glamorous plan for our lives: our name in shining lights, a level up on the chain of command or an explosion in our business. But are we listening to His instruction on what is the next thing? Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi was old! She didn't have the same energy Ruth had to be gleaning in the fields. She had gone through the staggering plight of loss, grief and now was trying to rebuild her life at an old age. Let's not also forget that Ruth had also been through the same things. But Ruth took it upon herself to be the provider for their family. After all, if she didn't, then who? Ruth persisted in doing the right thing, even when she didn't see a bright future ahead. She knew that she could glean in the fields, as was custom of the Jewish people, but it's improbable that she knew what that would lead to for herself. She just decided to do what she knew was right. She decided to do the next thing.

How many of us is God calling to just do the next thing? For some of you that may mean waking up in the morning and putting on coffee for your spouse and getting your kids ready for school. For others of you, it may mean visiting your grandmother in the Seniors care facility with some flowers. For some of you, it may mean cracking open your Bible for a bit of hope in the middle of a crazy day. And for others, it may mean reminding yourself that you are a child of God and saying "no" to the alluring call of temptation. Wherever you find yourself, may Ruth's story encourage you. She was just doing the next thing that she knew was right. There is a blessing in that. God requires His children, not only to do what they

know to be right, but also to do it with all their hearts. Doing what is right doesn't mean it's easy. But the favor of God finds you in your quest to honour Him and in your desire to be in righteousness. Righteousness is right standing with God. It is this very principle that his throne is built on. So don't always look for the big glamorous moments to be what is purpose fulfilling. Purpose is also in being obedient to the voice of the Lord - no matter how menial that thing may feel.

Let me pray with you:

God I thank you that you have graced my sisters with the ability to do that which they've been called to do. It is just a lie of the Enemy to make them believe that they don't have what it takes to continue doing what you've called them to do. As Ruth was gleaning in the fields, I imagine it wasn't easy to do that thing she had purposed in her heart to do. But not only did you give her strength and grace, you put your favor on her and blessed her because of it. I pray for a blessing over my sister reading this this morning. May you endow her with the favor from on high to do what you have called her to do.

Colossians 3:23

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.

2 Timothy 4:7

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

37. A Culture of Generosity

Ruth 2:6-7

She is the Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from Moab. She came and asked my permission to pick up the grain our harvesters leave behind and gather *it all into sheaves for herself*. Except for one small break she has been here all day, working *in the field* from the morning until now.

As mentioned before briefly, it was important to God that the people of Israel were known for certain things. Amongst being known for worshipping only one God (which was rare at the time), He also desired that they were a people of generosity. His law stated that those who were wealthy enough to own fields or plots of land, should never harvest all the crop and keep it alone. He required that they leave some of the crop on the outer perimeters of their fields for the foreigner, stranger or immigrant. What a beautiful God we serve?

God's ultimate goal was to transform these people to be a spitting image of who He is. He is a generous God. It's not just a characteristic that He has, He IS the definition of generosity. From the very beginning in the creation of the world, to the oasis of the Garden of Eden to sending His son to die a gruesome death so that some may know Him, we see how His desire for us is to experience His generosity.

When was the last time you recognized the *generosity* of your maker?

When was the last time you actually thought about how blessed you really are? We make a habit of noticing all the things we don't have, all the things we need more of. But do we make it a habit to adore this generous God? Do we see his threads of compassion in our lives or better still, are we even LOOKING to see His generosity? Reading through the book of Ruth, whenever I get to this point, I always am amazed at how God not only is this way, but He desires for us to be that way too.

This also tells me that it's not in our sinful nature to be generous. It's not in our human nature to share what we have - especially when it's not just out of our surplus.

What if God is calling us to be givers? When is the last time you blessed someone with some fresh fruit? When was the last time you gave someone a few extra hours of your time who

really needed it? What about the last time you tipped the waiter, even though the service wasn't "outstanding".

God calls you and I into lifestyles of generosity. We need a change of heart, mind and attitude so that we can actually be what He's called us into: A Kingdom of kings and Priests. Good priests are self-sacrificing. Good kings are generous.

Take time and reflect with the Holy Spirit. Ask him to show you areas in your life where you could be a little bit more generous with your resources.

Let me pray with you:

Sweet Spirit, thank you for inviting us into an opportunity to honour you with our resources and our time. We pray that as we learn to be generous, may we enjoy exhibiting your character. May it not be something that we do to try to manipulate our "bank" in heaven, but may it come from the deepest sincerest place in our hearts. May those on the receiving end be blessed a result of our obedience. Amen

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Proverbs 19:17

Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.

Day 38

An Invitation to Dine

Ruth 2:13-14

13 “May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord,” she said. “You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servants.”

14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar.”

One of the beautiful and simply extraordinary elements of the Bible is the ability to see a story within a story. Many have written about how Boaz is a representation of Christ and this passage echos the prophetic within my soul when I first read it. Boaz (Christ) is inviting Ruth (us) to come and dine with him at his table. You see, when you read the story of Ruth, you should literally see your very own life in her story.

Ruth was a woman who had no status. She was an immigrant to a new country. She was not a virgin (considered not really marketable in that day). Worse still, she was a widow, what the world would perceive to be someone with emotional baggage and to be grieving. Yet, she is here at this wealthy man’s table where he is inviting her to come and eat with him. He’s inviting her to share a meal!

In those days, to invite someone to share a meal was considered to be a very intimate practise. That is why it was so offensive for Jesus to be eating with sinners. It was as if, by nature of His conduct, He was inviting these people into deep levels of his vulnerability. When one sits down to share a meal, one’s guard is down and relaxed. It is a time to be joyful and enjoy the beauty set before you. Like Boaz, Christ is inviting you everyday to eat of His table. He wants to have communion with you. He wants to fellowship with you and enjoy your company. He offers Himself as a meal to even be consumed.

He says to you that He is your bread and your wine. He was broken for you and His blood poured out for you. We are foreigners to the cross. We have baggage and dirt and filth. We have made ourselves enemies of the cross with everything that we have brought to the table and yet He wants to engage and eat and sup with you and I. He says that He stands at the door and knocks and will come in and dine with anyone who opens.

Today, even though you may feel like you've gone through a lot to get to where you are right now, He wants you to know that you are invited. You are invited to come and commune with Him at His table again and again and again. In fact, He wants you at the table every single day. When you set aside time from your busy schedule and sit down and pour out your heart before Him, you are nourishing your spiritual body with His bread and wine. You are to remember the sacrifice that it took for Him to be able to give you such unparalleled access to grace to be able to move and have your being.

The communion table is waiting for you. He's holding out a piece of bread for you to take, eat and dip in the vinegar.

Let me pray with you:

Father, today we accept your invitation to a lifetime of communion at your table. No more eating junk food. We don't want to feast at the tables of gossip, procrastination, idleness and fame. We want to eat from your table which is all that we need to give us the ability to not just exist but to thrive. As we eat from your table, as we dine with you, we are being transformed more and more into your image. Thank you for the change that has already taken place.

Amen.

Revelation 3:20 TPT

Behold, I'm standing at the door, knocking. If your heart is open to hear my voice and you open the door *within*, I will come in to you and feast with you, and you will feast with me.

Day 39

Safe

Ruth 3:4-5

When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do.” “I will do whatever you say,” Ruth answered.

Naomi took one look at Ruth and decided that it was finally time for her to marry. She saw that within her, she had the capacity to love and be loved once again. Ruth didn't protest but believed and trusted in her Mother-in-law and in God to provide. She followed Naomi's advice and laid at Boaz's feet. Remember, Ruth was a foreigner. She was as Moabite. So, there were elements regarding this culture that were new and possibly even strange to her. In Jewish custom, this was a proposal for marriage. This was a woman's way of saying that she was available, ready and willing, if the man so chose to take the next step.

Ruth had trust in her mother-in-law to guide her in the right direction. Trust was not built in the mere vapour of a day. Trust was built over time. Ruth opened up her heart to allow her mother-in-law in. Her mother-in-law then was in a place to advise her to on how live a prosperous and secured life.

So many of us are missing out on the wealth of deep relationships because our pain has become a huge part of our identity. But what if God was asking you for more than survival. What if God wanted to use someone to change the trajectory of your life? Would you allow them in? Would you allow them to speak into your life? Would you trust again? What if God wanted to start a new chapter in your life? Would you let Him? Would you open up your heart to a completely new possibility? Maybe for you it's not marriage, but it's starting a new business, moving out on your own or leaving that toxic relationship. There are people that God brings into our life from time to time to help shape us and sharpen us. Sometimes they will make us feel uncomfortable but they are there to help us to leap.

This life that we lead is supposed to be a Spirit led life. So, if you don't have a woman like this in your life, a woman who is filled with the Spirit and who would love to see you thrive,

ask God to bring one. And when He does bring you one, you must be willing to trust again. You must be willing to go through the process of being vulnerable. Vulnerability makes room for growth. Without it, growth is difficult and arduous. If you want to be like Ruth, you have to learn to let go of the past, smile at the future and be ready to leap even when it feels a little scary.

Continue to seek God and He will give you all that you need. Even if it's that extra bit of courage to take that gigantic leap of faith.

Let me pray with you:

Lord I thank you for my dear sister. I ask that you would begin to open up her eyes and heart to the possibility of loving in a new way. As you give her the strength to move on from the things that want to hold her down, I pray that you would teach her to grab onto the grace that is readily available for each day. The days when it feels impossible, remind her of the certainty of your unfailing and patient love. Thank you for all you have done to set her free. Amen.

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

2 Corinthians 5:7

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

Day 40

Redeemer

Ruth 3:9

“I am your servant Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer^[b] of our family.”

One of my favourite names for our Lord is “Redeemer”. There was a time in my life when I was feeling so discouraged and plagued by the weight of all that I should have been doing for God. I was tormented by the idea that I had wasted so much of my time doing things that were not going to count towards eternity. When I sat down to actually think about the years I spent worried about things that are of little value I was saddened. Then I heard the Lord say through a friend of mine, “Ask the Lord, your redeemer, to redeem the time that you’ve lost.”

Maybe that’s you today. When you look back over your life, you have regrets from mistakes that you’ve made. Maybe you wish you could turn back the hands of time and get back that time.

Well today I have great news for you. Jesus is known as the Redeemer. It means that He, the one who invented time in itself, can actually give you back the years that you’ve lost. He can do it by causing the years that you’re living to be more effective than if you had had that time to begin with.

You are not the first or the last to have regrets of the time. I want you to know that the great apostle Paul, who wrote most of the New Testament, didn’t even take the time to look back and regret. So there’s no time for “if only”. There’s only the present.

Make a decision in your heart right now and ask God to redeem your time. Ask Him to redeem your life. Ask Him to give back to you all the years that the locusts have stolen. Locusts can symbolize anything that has eaten away at your value and time.

The Lord is so faithful. Even in our mistakes, He still remains faithful. What you can do is ask God what He wants from you in the time that you’ve got left. You can make the most out of your life now. That’s exactly what Paul did. When Jesus met him on the road to Damascus, he asked the Lord two questions: Who are you and what would you have me do?

It's time that you asked the Lord those questions yourself. I'm not necessarily meaning to ask Him about the lofty purpose of your life. You can start with something small like, "Lord what would you have me accomplish this week, month or within the next 3 months?"

You would be surprised that He would answer you, give you strategy to move according to His spirit and draw you close as you move. God is your redeemer. Let Him do his job and redeem your time.

Let me pray with you:

Heavenly father, I commit my sister into your hands. Her whole life is sitting in the palm of your hand. You are the great God whose vastness none can understand or even compare. You are the God who dwells in the most radiant light we have ever seen. Lord I ask that you would comfort my sister as she redeems the time she has lost. Remind her that her that you are not God who is a victim to time, but time is a tool that you created and is subject to you. May you reign down your presence in my sister's life even as she reads this book. Speak to her the words that only you can. Amen

Joel 2:25

"So I will restore to you the years that the swarming [\[a\]](#)locust has eaten,
The crawling locust,
The consuming locust,
And the chewing locust,
My great army which I sent among you.

Isaiah 43:1

But now, this is what the LORD says-- he who created you, Jacob, he who formed you, Israel: "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine.