



## courage for those in dread & resignation [part 2] :

This post is not for everyone. And friend, I hope it's not for you, but if it is, hold on and press forward: There's light and freedom at the end of it. If I were with you I would hold your hand as we step forward and tell you it's going to be okay. It is. But even better; He is with you – at your elbow, within your blood, breathing life into your lungs. So here we go.

This is about those situations and circumstances we've written off as hopeless, the ones we've pushed away to the farthest corner possible because they're filled with blackness and despair. Those ones where we're convinced that nothing good is coming of it; the enemy has stopped our ears and imaginations to all truth and covered our thoughts in that area with bleak resignation.

Part of the problem is that we protect ourselves by willful blindness. We turn off our vision in those areas – we can't avert our eyes exactly, the trauma or pain is too close – but we can numb ourselves to seeing it. *It's too much to deal with right now. I don't know what to do anyway.* The voices are too loud and the disappointments are so crushing, it's too much to face so we refuse to do so.

We don't even tell ourselves it won't get better, we just accept this as our new less-than reality. We wanted more than this, sure, but well, it wasn't to be. "More than" was not for us. "More than" is for a select few – the rich maybe, or the immensely talented, or the highly favored, or those who were brought up in perfect families with all the right opportunities.

We think maybe it's temporary and that we'll come back to it later when things are easier or safer or clearer, but they never are because we never dealt with them to make them so. And when life started to ease up in the slightest we were so elated by the reprieve we could not imagine losing it by going back to deal with the dark place.

We wouldn't really have lost the reprieve, of course; that was fear talking. And us listening.

So we live in blackness – not everywhere, of course, but in this one area we've given up on. Other things are mostly okay, and because of the contrast between darkness and light we don't realize the amount of grey that bleeds into our areas of bright color, like so much ash blown by the slightest breath of wind.





The areas near our resignation are soot-smudged and tainted, shadowed by mediocrity we accept by default because of their proximity to the blackness: A hard relationship with a child that bleeds onto all our parenting. A leadership wound that taints our desire to serve. An old trauma that kindles fear into any new experience.

And we get used to this, and stop thinking about it. We have accepted it like the smells in our house and the hum of the refrigerator. With enough time, the blackness is so integrated that, should someone question it, we eventually argue on its behalf. We make excuses, defending what the enemy has done in this part of our lives with our own justification, rationalizing away all the insecurities it bubbles up in us. Because, hey, this is our normal. And if our normal isn't okay, we must not be okay.

And we have to be okay, because we know the blackness doesn't get any better – and if we admitted it was supposed to be better, than we'd have to admit we were wrong to accept it in the first place.

Accepting it has been easier. We kicked against that dark shell for a while but it was exhausting, and when we gave up, it covered us like a blanket soaked in chloroform.

*It's okay, the enemy hissed. You just rest here. And we did.*

You're thinking, I hope, of a situation in your life that has been covered in this kind of darkness. Maybe you're thinking of a multitude of them. **You need to know that the enemy will do anything to distract you from acknowledging it, and then admitting that the blackness is not okay.**

He will fight you every step of the way. And yes, fighting back is exhausting. But if you think about it and just peel back the thinnest layers of his lies to you, you'll realize that the blackness has been sucking the energy and strength you've wanted to give to so many other areas of your life that have been tainted by the shadows of the other issue.

It takes a brave person to hack away at the darkness, to admit the emperor has no clothes, to acknowledge that our acceptance of despair has been an agreement with the one who hates us rather than an agreement with the God who loves us.

It takes one brave thought. One honest admission. One strong moment of clarity to start kicking at the hardened blackness.





We start to think truth. We think, *Hey – it wasn't meant to be this way*. And a flake of crust loosens from the darkness.

We think, *I'm not going to make excuses anymore about this. This is wrong*. We start to agree with God. *I'm not destined to live like this. God didn't die for me to be "less than" in my life*.

You realize you *are* the rich, the immensely talented, the highly favored, the one with the perfect Father who gives you all the right opportunities.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places**, even as **he chose us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and blameless before him. **In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us**, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

– Ephesians 1:3-10

But then it gets sticky, and all of our paths diverge in their own directions. Relationship issues have their lies to be confronted and healed, lifestyle choices have another set of lies that have to be confronted and healed. Past trauma has its own set of lies that need untangled. And the overlap from one area to another can seem overwhelming and complicated.

This is when we ask Him for the One Thing.

Just one, and He is a gentle, precise teacher. He will give you the most important thing to tackle that you are ready for. He doesn't waste any time on peripherals, but He will also only confront the strongest lie that you are ready to handle.

It's likely the enemy will immediately compound his efforts and lie to you about this because he's terrified you will realize you've been locked in a prison with the key in your possession the entire time. He will tell you it's too much, you can't handle it, it's too painful, you're just not ready. He knows that appealing to our laziness and exhaustion with excuses and rationale works. And he will keep trying it until he realizes it doesn't work on us anymore. So we have to not allow it to work.





We have to ask God, *What is the One Thing?* And He tells us.

Maybe the One Thing is a habit we've held onto that has hurt us or our family. We may suddenly realize (or already know) there are a whole host of related habits that are also bringing decay into our lives. But, no matter – He has given us the One Thing, so we acknowledge it.

*Yes, I did/believed/accepted that. Yes, it was wrong. Yes, You made me for more.* Big, deep breath. You did it. Now what?

It depends. Some of us might be tempted to run back to despair and excuses here because the issue at hand really is more about someone else's choices than ours, and we know we can't change them. If this is the case, there is good news. Ready? You don't have to change them. What you've already acknowledged has moved mountains – not only in your life, but in this other person's life as well. You have moved a barrier out of the way. You've peeled a layer of darkness away and light is emanating beyond – the grey areas nearby are cleaner and brighter already.

As the darkness begins to lift, the Lord allows us to see strength that was won in the hard place.

*O you who love the Lord, hate evil! He preserves the lives of his saints; he delivers them from the hand of the wicked. Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.*

– Psalm 97:10-11

*Jesus, I'm praying tonight for the one who is running out of hope and needing to hear Your words. We command the enemy to be silent, the lies to be crushed, the attacks and accusations to dissolve into nothing.*

*We release peace and wisdom and the ability to hear You again, louder and stronger than before. I pray that we will walk and think and speak in ways that agree with You and Your word, instead of capitulating to the enemy and his lies. Show us how strong we are, how we are more than overcomers. Help us to not pave the way for the enemy's plans with foolish, hopeless words. We are shutting off that path and building the road that takes us forward by reading Your word, and agreeing with it.*

*For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

– 2 Corinthians 4:6

