



February 2013

Dear friends,

Done. Have you ever felt that feeling? Not to be misunderstood as quitting or giving up or suicidal. Just done. Done with people. Done with noise. Done with decisions. Today I feel done, an introvert all used up in an extroverted world. My husband sensed the weakness in me. He gathered the kids up in silence this morning, got their lunches together, hushed them when they made a peep, and dropped them to school on the way to work. He came to the bedroom to kiss me goodbye and I think he whispered, "stay here." He worries about me when I hit this wall. He wants to fix it but he knows he can't.

The easy part is my work, the quiet pecking of keys as I enter receipts and pay bills. The hard part is the relationships, leaving the door open for interruptions. God has given me this heart to love people. I do not love well on my own, but through the Holy Spirit in me, I am compelled. Compelled to love, compelled to action, compelled to put aside myself for the good of someone else. I only know one speed, full throttle, all the way, like riding a four-wheeler in a wide open field. The wind blowing through my hair, the adventure, the obstacles, the mud. Today I am that muddy, choking four-wheeler out of gas and needing a loving clean up from its master.

When I read 2 Corinthians 4, God always encourages me. Go read it! The light shining from my heart is the amazing glory of God showing up in the face of Jesus Christ. Every day I am that fragile jar of clay, the power in my life belonging to God not me. Yes, I am afflicted in every way, burdened, weak, overwhelmed, alien, tired, used up. My husband needs me, my kids need me, my messy house needs me. My friends need me, my coworkers need me, my customers need me, my desk of work needs me, my vendors need me, my fellow volunteers need me. NO, wait, none of these people need me, they need Jesus in me. They need the power of Jesus; I need the power of Jesus.

The more people I know, the more exhausted I feel. Love poured out. Dying. All this grace to more and more people is increasing gratitude for God's glory. Waking up to pray for a friend having gall bladder surgery, loading the dishwasher, emailing business owners to challenge and encourage their staff, wishing a friend happy birthday, hearing of God providing food through the local church, all on this morning that I wanted to be about me. Compelled.

So, because of God's grace, we do not lose heart. Done is not an option. My outer self is wasting away. I will get more and more tired and weak and broken. (I dread that by the way.) But, Jesus is renewing my inner self day by day. I am home and hiding from people today to be renewed. My jar is all dry and poured out. I need a fresh filling of Jesus in my inner being. I need a day to be with Him. Thirty minutes will not do. Reading and praying before bed is not enough. Church with other Christ followers is not enough. A hike in His creation is not enough. Today, I need Jesus, not any people, not the television or books, just Jesus.

We have nothing to give, not in our own strength, nothing that will be pure and holy. Sure, you do it too, we all do, the push, forcing ourselves out of bed for another day, for responsibilities, for commitments, for workouts (well some of you do that), for what is expected. Guess what? We do not have the strength for the mission we are called to. We need Jesus. Everyone we love needs Jesus. We can't fix anything. God can fix everything.

So, where do we find ourselves? We are broken, weak, tired and desperate for the only real strength we can ever have - Jesus. We come to that moment where we realize our lack of control and His total control. We are powerless and He is all powerful. And through the Holy Spirit in us, we have access to God's power and God's strength.

If we do not know Jesus, we have to start there. Jesus came to give us life. We have to believe that and we have to believe He died for us on a cross to save us from our sins and to be Lord of our lives. Sometimes, it can be easier to accept Him dying for us than to surrender to His Lordship over our lives. To walk with Jesus, we have to let go of control and follow His lead. The cool thing about being a follower of Christ is that He transforms us and places the Holy Spirit in us. When we let go of ourselves and allow God to change our hearts to be like Jesus, we can access

the power of the Holy Spirit. When we meet Jesus, not just know facts about Him, but really meet Him, the Holy Spirit comes and resides in our hearts. If you have grown up in this religious Bible Belt culture but have never understood how to be in relationship with Jesus, stop now and ask Him. He will speak to your heart and lead you. He may use another person to help you understand, but the relationship is intimate, a friendship for you and Him. Your journey with Jesus is going to be different than mine and it is going to be sweet.

Once you meet Jesus and confess your sins and allow Him to breathe faith into your heart, Jesus will be your Savior and your Lord. At that point, your life is not your own. Every day you will want Jesus to keep changing you and making you look more and more like Him. The refining is a process and sometimes it will be hard and will hurt, but it will always be good. The Holy Spirit, who now lives in you, will minister to your heart and help you understand what Jesus is speaking to you and what the Bible is saying. The Holy Spirit will give you boldness and courage to live your life for Jesus and with Jesus. You will be so amazed as you begin to see and understand God's faithfulness over your life. I am still absolutely amazed and I have known Jesus for 29 years.

Then, when you feel done like I felt done this morning, we will both have the hope in Jesus to not give up and more importantly, not lose heart. We will get exhausted. That's the point. We are here on earth to give our lives away for the sake of the Gospel. Giving our lives means being in relationship with people and giving of ourselves to care for those people. When we dry up, we have to come back to the water source and be replenished in the Lord. We have a chance to fuel up with God every day, but sometimes we need a little extra measure on the "done" days.

God is with us every moment of every day and He even speaks to us in chaos. I hear Him at my desk and in the carpool line and when my kids are fighting and when the radio is belting out His greatness. But, for me, I need long doses of quiet too, so He can meet me there and minister to me in a way that is different than how He may minister to you. That's one especially cool thing about God. He's personal and He's intentional and He's ever present.

Tonight we will celebrate my father-in-law's birthday and watch our daughter in a school program. The pace will pick up again. I will return the phone calls and the emails and continue moving forward in obedience to Jesus. In my own little world, I would be a hermit and stay right here on the couch in my den, not just today but most days. However, God has more so He will fill me up and send me out again. And I will go forth with joy because I trust Him. He wants to do the same for you, too.

Yes, my soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.
Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
My salvation and my honor depend on God;
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge.

Psalm 62:5-8

Rest in Jesus,

Hebrews 13:16 "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."