Published on *Happily Whole* (https://www.livinghappilywhole.com)

Hope in the Christmas Contradiction

December 23, 2015, written by katie



We all need a little more time and a little less complication right about now. We all need to cleanse our bodies (…*and our souls*…), flush out our emotions to create quiet minds for just a moment or two! If we want to carry on until Christmas with a spirit worthy of the real reason for this season, all we really need is some rest…some ***real soul rest*** *[1].*

~Or…am I the only one looking at my list trying to see the open end of the tunnel on the other end of

this hustle?~

We're all just teetering on a tight rope trying to keep our balance enough to appear okay. We're rushed, bursting at the seams with senseless schedules overflowing and some of us are stuck sinking in the quick sand of guilt, grief or grasping for just one more hour of sleep. Some of us feel saturated in stress to the point of snapping.

~Because 'soul snapping' is always a probability when we put our Savior on the periphery instead of in the center of this season.~

We are women…women desiring more balance and less bustling, more joy and less jousting for time we just can't have.

At least that's what I'm grasping for!--more moments etched with peace and purpose in this place where 'to dos' and daily distractions endlessly dangle from my fingertips until my head hits the pillow hard only to start over when, in what seems like mere moments, I roll out of bed.

This season!

It speaks HOPE into to my heart but then overwhelms my head with mixed messages running rampant through the courses of my mind. My soul twinkles with His hope at the sparkle of the season but then my body twists and turns, contorting my existence into an exhausted mess of Christmas chaos!

It's a Christmas contradiction! *The season is filled with inconsistencies so crisp you can almost break them like brittle branches on the coldest winter day*.

~***Christmastime***.~ An annual advent {a time of joyful anticipation}. Our God's ***gift of grace*** urges us towards peace yet somehow the world plagues the real purpose with a pace so fast we end up running a race and exhausted crossing finish line on Christmas morning.

Even surrounded by the masses, we live lonely in the holiday hustle. It's easy to wander listlessly, lost and wilting under the weight of self-expectation while festive glitz and glitter fall like snowflakes around us. Emotions run high while unrealistic ideals force us to dig deep into our pockets of social pressure.

Intending to 'make precious memories' we succumb to the struggle of simply keeping up with it all. Somehow stress and strain of overflowing days and endless demands cast shadows on the JOY of the coming of Christ!

And each day these contradictions carve out caverns between our values and the rushed reality. So we stand on the cliff, forced to either fall into a pit of self-pity or to stand confident as we actually savor the coming of our Savior!

So, you choose….***Which side of the Christmas contradiction, the cavern, do you stand on***?

Gifts….Grief and grappling for just a moment of meaning

Joy….Jousting for more of anything

Sparkle….Suffering and struggling to stand straight under the weight

Festivities….Falling lonely and filled with the ways of the world

But, wait! One thing remains. It'll save you from crashing into the seasonal contradictions!

HIS LOVE, the only real unchanging kind of saving love that won't ever contradict itself with worldly intent or action.

His love is ALIVE and what's so amazing is this: It lives IN you!

No matter what you're working through this season, ***your life has His love written all over in it!*** And we celebrate the birth of it this season! So, even in the mess and muck of it, slow down enough to savor it!

Pause your pace to savor the story He's given you! Stop the hustle so you can clearly see the other side of the cavern where your soul is safe simply because you've accepted His Son as your Savior.

And*, that saving love....it connects you to the manger*. Love personified landed as God's Son right into the mess and muck of a manger. Just like you-- In a mess, a beautiful saved mess!

If Jesus can arrive in a HOLY humble mess as a helpless babe, we most certainly can make room for our Savior in the midst of this mess!

You're connected to HIM through the manger by His unchanging love. ***YOU'RE little holiday contradiction is a continuation of HIS story through His unconditional, unfathomable, unbreakable love.*** Even in the messiest muck, in the clash of Christmas contradiction, *your soul knows its worth* because it resides deep in an unchangeable love found only in His SON.

Your soul's worth, YOUR WORTH, never changes because His love for you never changes.

Jesus: born into the mud and muck but His heart filled the whole world with love.

Our Savior loved us right through the muddiest muck of a manger and walked into a weary world then right into our hearts. So, you see? ***His loves lives in YOU.*** So, even in the muckiest of messes, you can give His love to the world around you.

When we abide in HIM, our very bodies become the INN!

Our bodies: the beautiful, humble home of a manger filled with HIM. Our hearts become the manger right where He resides, right where His love lives and shines onto a weary world in need of the Savior.

So, let's make space in the INN for Him! Make space in this season for your Savior…and shine His saving love to fill the world around you with real joy!

Here we are, right where we started: Women. Women bearing the love of a Savior. Women, connected to the manger, with ***expectant HOPE*** [2]that there is always something better before us because of Him. And that, Ladies, is why we can shine in any kind of mess.

Merry Christmas!

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