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Living a Life You Never Expected

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God's always creatively crafting loveliness in these crazy, messy lives we live. At least I know it's in my long list of messes where I learn so many of my soul-lessons. It's in my ugliness where His artistic talents transform burdens and unexpected blendings [1] into blessings. Especially lately. [2] Just when I got lost in my own life, His redeeming work revealed itself in a whole new pretty pattern.

Yeah...a pretty pattern. **Out of the mismatched, messy pieces of me...** [3]

But, I understand...***it's hard to see the prettiness when we're all caught up in our pettiness***, when life seems like a series of daily stressors instead of possessing even a small, beautiful purpose within the whole pattern.

For me, sometimes it's easy to slip into feeling raw instead of redeemed. Especially when I let my mind wander the wrong way. Focusing on the tight spaces, sharp turns and dusty roads I've walked suffocate me even now in this life I never expected to live. I'm guilty of standing here isolated, wallowing in my new roles as second-time-wife and step-mom. After so many untrodden paths I've faced, unfamiliar courses I've raced, I can lose myself in feeling utterly unprepared and sorry for myself. I wrongfully wonder why God thought this particular pattern would work.

Right there in the raw wrong way, I see only scars in my stitching and my life feels like a series of so many changes that I'm blinded to seeing His crafty hands redeeming me at all! From wife and new mommy to homemaker and caretaker; from wide-eyed and hopeful to widow after cancer killed Kevin [4]; from single and completely satisfied to daunted and, dare I say, a scared single mom dating; from remarried and new wife [5] to home manager for seven and step mom [1]. From struggling to see who I am after all my mixed up messes to now: ***paused and, I think, finally finding peace.***

Through His redeeming lens, I'm just starting to see who He wants me to be in this little ole' life of mine. But maybe like you, for a while I'd gotten lost, become listless and grown weak. I tried to piece together the pattern instead of leaning on Him every stitch of the way, not trusting Him to make sense of the whole scene. My fabric lost its strength...HIS strength.

Lost in a life I never expected, I made a mess by subconsciously trying to control too much. ***I attempted to create the fabric of family life I'd once envisioned instead of depending on God to redefine the cloth and colors.***

You see, blending families doesn't fit into the pattern I always envisioned for my life as a mom and wife. But, when second chances came around, I worked hard to make it happen. I worked hard to create a loving atmosphere at home, posted encouraging verses on the walls, read devotions out loud, created rules fair for everyone (or at least attempted), wrote love letters for their homemade lunches and built bonds with each one. But, ***strangely, the well-intentioned one stitching it all together was the one falling apart at the seams.***

That's what happens when we try to redraw our own patterns, isn't it? Our strong hands work hard with genuine, loving intention yet inside we feel fragile. We pour ourselves out in our mission fields but allow our own armor to get weak. And just maybe that's our own personal form of....pride. Ugh. Yeah, ***pride is people-pleasing that meanders too far from Him.***

So, in the blessed mess of blending [2]***a new family and attending to each one's needs, I'd forgotten who really strengthens my seams.*** Have you done it too? Taken things into your hands without talking to Him?

So, I'm working at unraveling my own weak stitches, seeing His hand's craft more clearly and fully surrendering to His strength in this new piece in my pattern! I'm once again ready to embrace the unexpected. And so I don't lose the essence of myself, I'm still seeking ways my old, traditional soul can survive in our new, modern family pattern. (Like this recent attempt.) [6]

I realize that all along my life's way, ***He's already equipped me to live this unexpected life***! And I'm equipped only when I'm walking alongside Him to hand me all I need each day.

So yeah, when life twists and turns and you wonder how you ended up living this life you never expected, look towards Him for perspective. It’s only through Him you’ll live the prettiest, mismatched pattern you’ve ever experienced.

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