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From Brokenness to Blessing

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On the night He was betrayed He broke bread and gave thanks. (ref. 1 Corinthians 11:23)

He GAVE THANKS.

I just let that sink right into my soul for my mind cannot grasp it. It lifts me up in awe and wonder at how I might carry on in His earthly example if He so selflessly gave gratitude out of betrayal. Jesus offered Himself up. **He turned betrayal into blessing.**

Is it possible, for me, I mean? How do I give thanks in the wake of betrayal, belittlement or brokenness? How in this humble human life can I transform grief into gratitude?

Jesus did. Gave thanks when He thought...no, He KNEW He'd die a death... a MURDER to save the world of men and women walking in sin. The Son of God and He knew He'd lay His life down with utter pain and passion. But first, He was betrayed, beaten, bashed, broken and then hung before anyone

wishing to watch. His passion endured the pain for His purpose….our eternity!

Again, I let it sink in, trying to rationalize it. In all that preconceived pain and betrayal, what did Jesus do? He **gave thanks**. He broke bread. Bread. The very sustenance of life. He shared the sustenance of life in gratitude as He prepared for painstaking anguish to complete His Father's plan for all people.

It so sweetly and succinctly says it all about this beautiful Savior of mine, The Lord of my life offering a love that never fails…ever…even in death. (You know, He's yours for the taking too, right? He offers sustenance and eternity to you too.)



Let's look a little longer into how Jesus' act of unselfish gratitude gives us guidance today. It's the sacrifice, of course, but there's also something about why living in gratitude regardless of circumstance offers a life of abundance in Him. Christ showed us how to give thanks in His darkest hours. He knew what eternity offered and where every detail of His life and death would lead Him. What's more is He did it all to share His inheritance of eternity with you and me!

Christ prepared for pain and suffering by giving thanks to complete God's plan to save us from sin, from death in our dirty sin. **All because HE LOVES US SO**. He showed us how to live in gratitude even when the world's got us on our knees or we feel restless in the spec of space we inhabit here on earth.

So, if this life is all to reach eternity in the wake of Jesus' act of sacrifice, how can I NOT give thanks in and for my own betrayals and brokenness?

It's in that thought where I can transform grief into gratitude. It's in the knowing there's greater purpose than the waters I walk through now. It's in faith that I give thanks.

Trials and tribulations offer undeniable ways of bringing us closer to Christ who says, 'GIVE THANKS IN **ALL CIRCUMSTANCES'** (ref. 1 Thessalonians 5:18). Give thanks in ALL things. Not some things, not happy times, sweet moments or simply blessings of this life. But, to **give thanks in ALL THINGS because gratitude in the wake of tough waters teaches us to stay close to HIM.**

There it is again! The sweet understanding where I make sense of grief, widowhood and weariness……I've been blessed to live closer to Christ through each restless and weary day!

The only way to **really live** is to live in Him, learn from Him and rest in the joy of gratitude for each opportunity to come closer to Him.

The everyday, the down and dirtiness of my own broken ways. This life, MY life, where instead of gratitude I take little things for granted. My harried life filled with weariness at the end of the day. Etched with exhaustion playing out as impatience in the presence of my two most precious gifts. My two little girls looking into and up at an impatient, exhausted mama.

Yeah, true, as a widow I feel weary. Each household decision, every day's overflowing schedule, an eternity of crumbs, crying and unexpected costs. Single mom-hood heavy in my heart. School decisions, discipline strategies for these little daddy-less daughters and hearing the battle cries of these beautiful young siblings.

Is there an end in sight? How long is this tunnel and how much more endurance must I muster up?

But, soul be still!

The Word says, God says, 'Be still and know that I am God' (ref. Psalm 46:10). This stillness reminds me all these daily difficulties exist to bring me to my knees and to deepen my needs. They are part giving thanks for **ALL things** that bring me closer to HIM and closer to who He wants me to be.

Because, see, when we look up from a position on our knees we see that HE fills our needs with abundance! With more than we can ever ask for.

All the little, hard things that line our lives line them with the purpose He preconceived. Jesus showed us first how to love, give and give thanks in something as simple as bread…as beautiful as the bread of His body….the bread that sustains our lives.

I press my hands into the hard work He's given me and I give it all back to Him. With abundant thanks!

Now framed this way, I see the blessings of widowhood and single parenthood, the ironic blessings bestowed alongside a life filled with loss unexpected. This truth leads me to His table filled with the bread He broke for you and I. The table where the bread and body gives life, gives me eternal life. And so I give thanks!

Friends, life is hard. We were never promised perfection this side of heaven's gates. But we were promised His comfort and wisdom when we seek it. And we were promised eternity! So, let us all give thanks! Each time we gaze at piles of papers and lists to do, each time we look into needy faces or dirty sinks, each time we feel restless or weary, give thanks because Jesus gave thanks even when He was betrayed and carried to the cross.

This I believe for each of us……..we too, with His help, can transform any brokenness into blessings and live a life of abundant gratitude!

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