



A Collection of Reflections on God's Goodness Even When Life Is Hard

Original content can be found at
[instagram.com/adventuresinrosieland](https://www.instagram.com/adventuresinrosieland).
#Godissogood #adventuresinrosieland



[adventuresinrosieland.com](https://www.adventuresinrosieland.com)

So I have been pretty open and honest over on my personal IG about the challenges I've been going through recently. And, truth be told, it's been rough. But I'm learning right now how important it is to celebrate how good God is, even when life is really hard.

You can read a bit more about my thoughts on this subject at <https://adventuresinrosieland.com/celebrating-gods-goodness-when-life-is-hard/>

Go read it to find out how the sunset changed the settings in my heart. So I am challenging myself, and anyone who wants to join me, to a daily post this month all about how good God is - even when things are really really hard. If you would be willing to join me I would love it!





Today I'm pausing to think about one of the silver linings of unemployment: the opportunity to be creative. When you have a job, it can be hard to make time for creativity. But creativity is a way of nourishing your mind, expanding your talents, and getting a tiny glimpse into who our Creator is. So here I am. I'm staining wood, experimenting with wood slices, and prepping some samples for a friend's upcoming retreat swag. I don't know how it will turn out. But I'm giving it a try. And if one of these things works, I will have an opportunity to share a sweet little handmade gift with a bunch of ladies who are seeking the Lord. Having no structure has left me feeling a little lost. But when I stop to think about it, I can see how having so little structure has been a gift to me today.



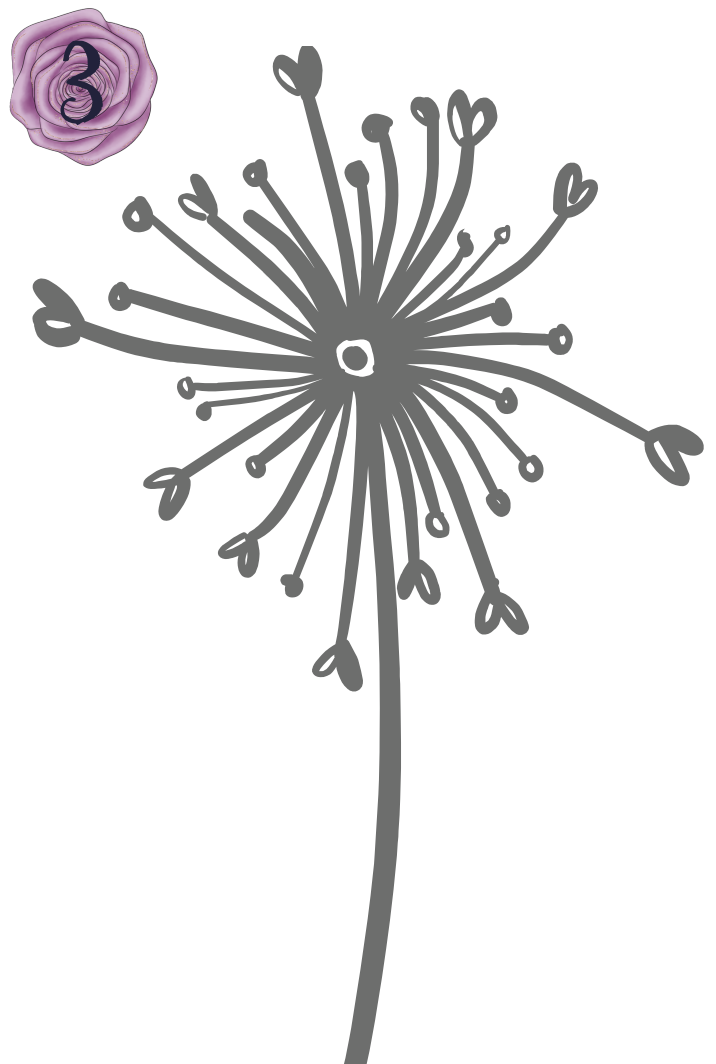
I stink at landscaping and gardening. Even potted plants struggle under my care. This year I thought "aha, I'll plant Zinnias- they are really easy to grow!" And then I went away for 10 days and when I came home the weeds were taller than the Zinnias. And my seeds apparently weren't healthy, or something ate some of them, because I only ended up with about 11 stems and they were all wiry and droopy and stuff. It was pretty much a failed experiment. And every day I walk past that flower bed, all overgrown and messy, and I roll my eyes at the 10 pink Zinnias and 1 yellow one, and I feel just a little bit more like a failure. Just like we all do when we are reminded of our shortcomings.

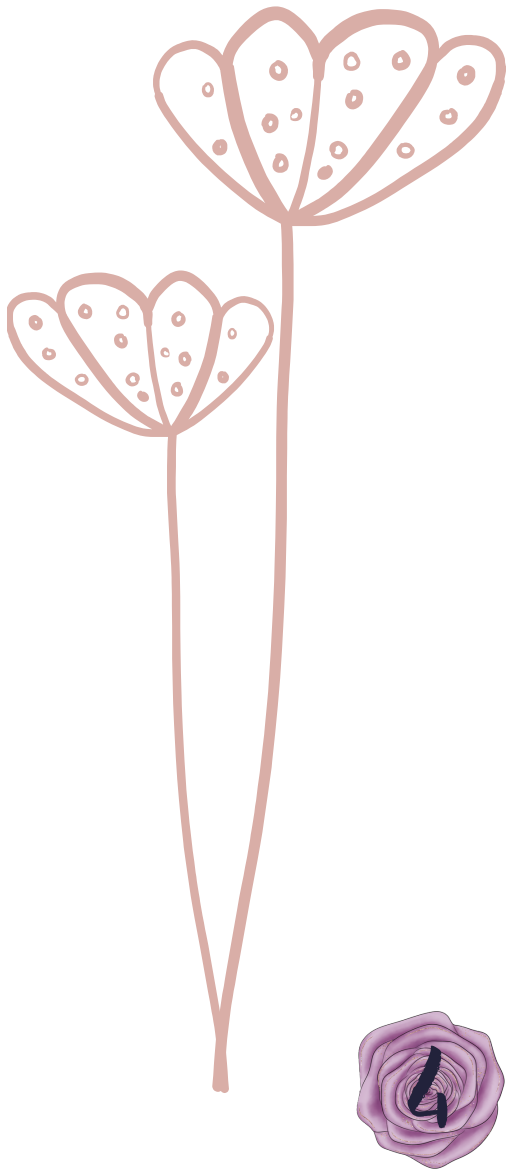
But today was different. I went out to hang clothes on the line, and there was a butterfly. And goodness, she couldn't get enough of my Zinnias. And she didn't mind me watching her either.

As I stood there and watched her flutter and flit, I realized that I was witnessing how God can use the most pathetic version of something. Those wilted, wiry, droopy, flowers, hidden in the weeds, were beautiful to that butterfly.

My life feels a little droopy and wilted and wiry and weed-covered. It sure doesn't look like what I expected. And every day is another struggle and disappointment.

All I can say is that I'm so thankful that God doesn't need us to be perfect and radiant and glorious - he does that for us.





Today started rough. I sat down and looked at my bank account and I looked at my bills and, well, it doesn't add up. I can see a zero balance in the near future. And that is scary, friend. I don't know how God is going to get me through this.

But I had several reminders today of how much he loves me.

- In the past couple of months I had two friends hire me to paint in their homes.
- in the past couple of months I had 4 friends just gave me money. (😳 what??)
- In the past year I have won several giveaways and received gifts "just because" that completely blessed me.
- I have had countless friends offering me encouragement and praying for me.

And really, that's just the tip of the iceberg. God is so faithful to remind me that he sees me, he loves me, and he has given me amazing people to show that love to me. (And if he is going to faithfully remind me of all this, I have no doubt he will also take care of my needs.)

Today alone I received this precious calendar by @fancythatdesignhouse from one of my favorite friends. She saw it and thought of me and sent it to me. It's not 2020 yet but I hung it up anyway because this page just grabbed my heart. And I got to spend time with a friend/mentor today, and she poured more love and encouragement into me, as she usually does. Tonight I'm listening to my alma mater's choir sing around a bonfire at my parents farm, with such beautiful music and laughter. And as I rocked my sweet nephew to sleep tonight I thought to myself, "This is what really matters. Not my career. Not my job status. This moment, snuggling this little guy, giving his brothers precious whispers with their own individual 'dream about...' ideas. Loving my people, and being loved by my people. Loving God, and being loved by God."

My questions aren't all answered. I still don't know how I'm going to manage my bills in the very near future. But I'm hanging in there, trusting that God sees and will take care of all these things.



Just a brief
comment
today... I'm
so grateful
that God's
word holds
all the
answers
we need.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it
again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be
evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be
anxious about anything, but in every
situation, by prayer and petition, with
thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
And the peace of God, which transcends
all understanding, will guard your hearts
and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-7





This verse. It's holding me together today and every day. Knowing that no matter the spiritual warfare going on around us, whatever difficulties we walk through, he offers to hold us close and protect us.

I love the imagery, too. The warmth, protection, gentleness, love of a mama bird holding her little chicks close. They can't defend themselves, they can't care for themselves, they can't even keep themselves warm. They need her for life.

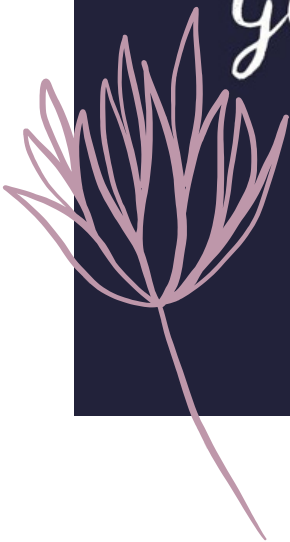
The love that is captured in that imagery stills my anxious heart.

He will cover you with his
feathers, and under his
wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be
your shield and rampart.

Psalm 91:4



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I took this picture about a month ago. It was hot and very sunny. Today, on the other hand, was rather crisp and chilly and gray and cloudy. It rained a fair amount the past couple of days and today we lived in the chill that follows an October rain.

I actually really love rain. People think I'm silly, but I do. Some of my happiest childhood memories are playing in the rain. (To be completely honest, some of my favorite adult moments were also playing in the rain.)

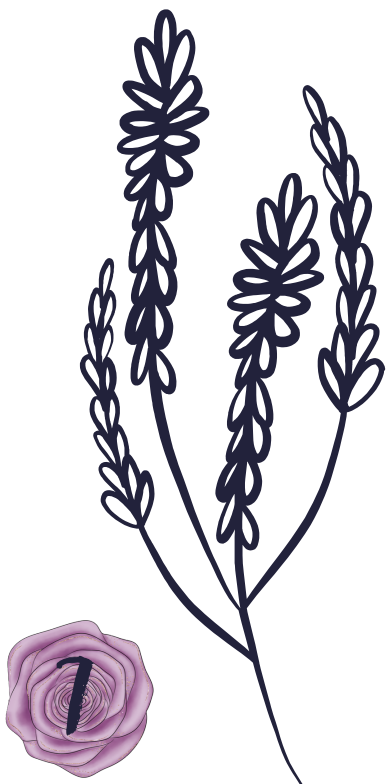
But here's the thing. As I snuggled down under the blankets tonight trying to get warm, and I scrolled through my phone's pictures, I was transported just for a second to this day. I sat on a tractor in the heat and sunshine and all was right with the world.

What was different about my circumstances that day in comparison to today? Nothing, actually. I'm still job searching, I'm still looking for projects and work to pay my bills while I continue to job search. I'm still relying on the Lord to provide for my needs.

The reason that today was harder than a few weeks ago has to do completely with the fact that how I look at my circumstances has changed. That sunny day several weeks back, I was more at peace because I saw more money in the bank and assumed I had more options than I do now. But when you get right down to it, God was sitting on his throne that day, just like he is today. The reason I feel less assured today has nothing to do with God's sovereignty and power and ability to provide, and everything to do with how I choose to let my peace be controlled by what I can see.

So closing up this rainy day, I'm choosing to lay my head down and go to sleep, GRATEFUL for how God uses both sunshine AND rain to care for his creation. And he is watching over me tonight, just like he did that day. And he will tomorrow, too.

Friend, I don't know if you are living in a sunshiny day or an anxious week or if you feel like you're drowning in the cold fall rains or you're on top of the world. But I hope you know this: God is constant; our emotions are not. Lean into God's faithful and trustworthy nature, not your anxiety and fear which are rooted in circumstances.



I was reminded tonight how sin has fractured everything. Work, even if we do what we love, is difficult. Our bodies will fail us at times. We will all struggle in numerous ways – sometimes similarly to one another, and sometimes in our own unique way. We are all fighting battles, we are all waging war, we are all hurting. Even our best days are tainted.

Possibly the most painful for many of us is the relationships we have – especially the ones that are “supposed” to be easy and smooth and fulfilling. I have watched friends go through deep valleys with their spouses, and ached on their behalf. And I’ve never met anyone who has told me that their family is perfect. Even our close friendships will often be victim to damage inflicted by one or both parties.

It’s easy to point the finger. He’s this way, she’s that way, that person mistreated me... but when I look closer I often see my own pride, selfishness, greed, and ugly heart wreaking havoc on what should be the best relationships in my life. And the hurt runs deep. The hurt I’ve caused, and the hurt I feel.

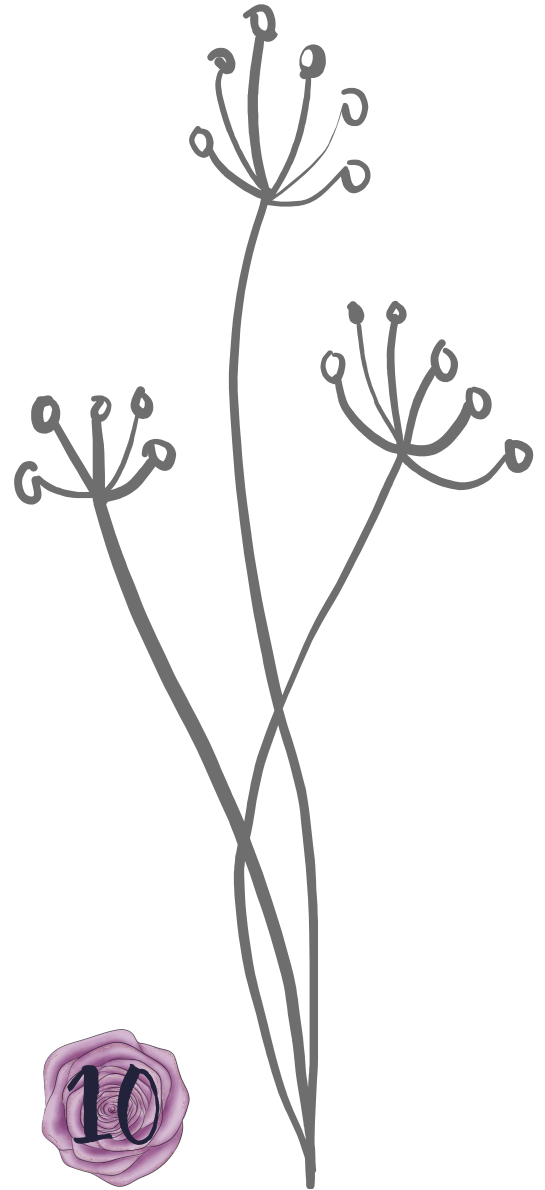
Last Friday night I got to enjoy my own private informal concert by the Genevans (the local college choir – I was in that group in college.) when they fall fested at my parents’ farm and gathered around a bonfire to sing beautiful songs, such as “Beautiful Savior”. I sat in the dark on the porch and wept, thinking about our Savior and just how beautiful he really is..

Here’s my point: We are all – every single one of us – dealing with trials and hurts and brokenness. That’s what sin has done to us. It has wrecked us. I’m so very deeply grateful for the beautiful Savior who has, is, and will set things RIGHT, once and for all.



No comment needed:





One of my greatest desires in life is to be free to help my dad on the farm. Well, being unemployed has meant that in between some of my projects and my job searching, I've had time to help dad with a couple small things. Not too much, sadly, but a couple small things. One of those things is painting a shed! I've only just gotten started, and it's a huge project for one person. But it's so satisfying to watch old paint chip off and see the bright white coverage of the primer... I don't know how long it's going to take and I hope I get it done before it needs to be started all over again.

It's not something serious and overly spiritual. It's just nice to think, for a moment, about the gift God has given me.

I need a job. Don't get me wrong. I do. And soon, as far as I'm concerned. But it's a gift from God that he has granted me a minute out of my normal life to help my dad - one of my biggest desires.

Lamentations 3:22-23 has long been a favorite of mine. It's quoted often, so you're probably familiar with it.

The next verse is just a little less commonly quoted, but it's so powerful.

"I say to myself, 'the Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.'"

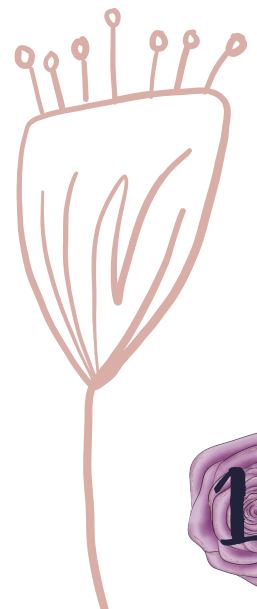
It's easy to list all the things we "need" and expect the Lord to cater to us. But what did the Israelites need? Manna and quail. For years and years and years, manna and quail. God knew what they needed. And he provided.

I think it's so easy to forget this very critical fact: we NEED Jesus. We don't need "top knots and Jesus" or "a little bit of coffee and a whole lot of Jesus"... and we definitely don't need all the new clothes and the fancy car and the success status and the THINGS of this world. We NEED Jesus. The rest of it is what he chooses to give to us, bless us with, or call us to. But HE is our portion, therefore we wait on HIM.

This waiting season I'm in has been a weird, wild, frustrating ride. Tonight I was challenged to turn my waiting heart to him, not to all the things I think I need. Sure, I should still look for a job, bc that's just responsible and wise. But I need to be sure that my heart is focused on waiting on him, not focused on employment and income and benefits and new work clothes and all the stuff.

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: the Christian life is one of learning to dance these mysterious dances that involve things that seem to be opposite but they're both in scripture. In my case, right now, I'm continuing to work out what it looks like to wait on God, and to take action to pay for my expenses. It's hard to not let my emotions get caught up in the various hopes and fears and disappointments. But I'm so thankful that every day I get to try again. Because his mercies are new every morning. And I will wait on him.

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." Lam. 3:22-24



I wanted to share with you what I got in the mail yesterday!

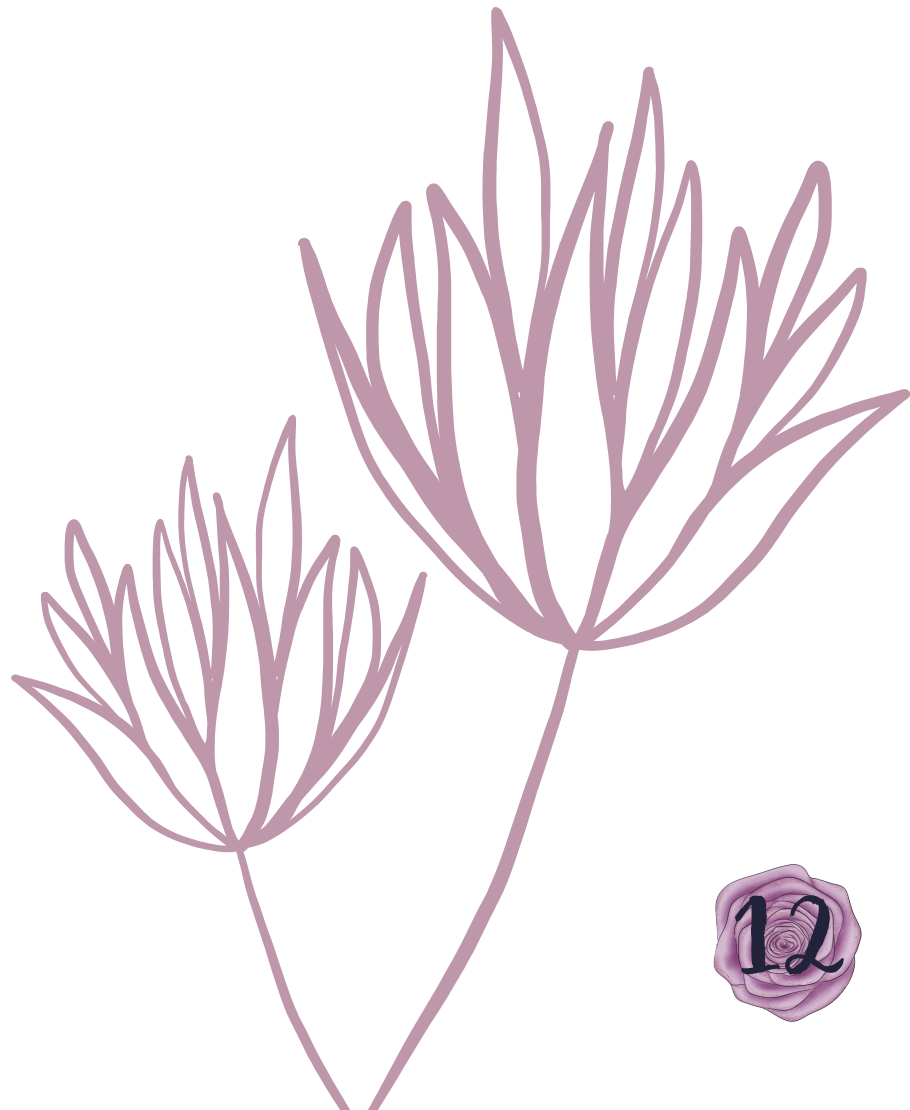
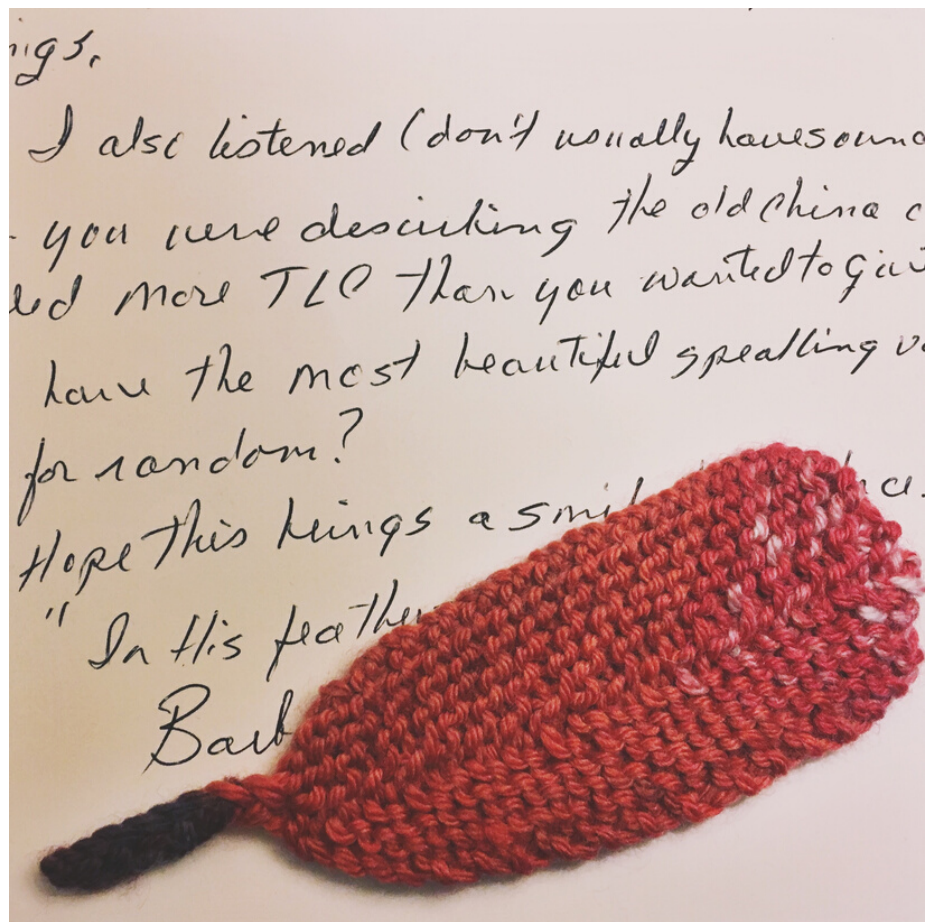
A sweet friend read what I wrote several days ago about Psalm 91:4, and took the time to write me a lovely note and send me a feather she knitted.

Listen. I'm not on here writing every day so that you'll all say and do nice things for me - I'm showing up every day because it's helping me to choose the right attitude, to give God all the glory for the good he has done in and around me, and to hopefully encourage someone else who is going through difficult things.

But it means the world to me when someone takes the time to stop and talk with me about the things I've written. And it means SO MUCH to me that someone would take the time to write me a note and send me a sweet handmade gift.

I'm so blessed that God prompts people to encourage me. And I want to thank you all for walking this crazy journey with me.

So let this just be a little reminder to you and me: let's learn to respond when the Lord prompts us to reach out and encourage someone. It might just make someone's day. And it might be the reminder that person needs that God sees her, and God loves her.



Tonight I spent a bit of time reflecting on how God has met me in troubled times throughout my life. I wrote a sweet, short story of one of those times. Read the post at <https://adventuresinrosieland.com/psalm-121-and-the-hills-of-scotland/>

Whatever season you are in, I pray God will meet you there and remind you how much he cares for you.



Psalm 121 and the Hills of Scotland



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I realized today that one of the reasons I've really struggled throughout this waiting season is because of rejection. I was rejected from my job. I was told my work was great, but my personality and love was not. (If that doesn't hurt....!) I've applied for numerous jobs and been rejected over and over. (I was even rejected from Walmart, friend..)

I know that it takes time. And I know that God has a plan. But somewhere in the process of being rejected over and over again I had let some of the whispers of the enemy sneak in and poke holes in my confidence and hope.

So today I sat down and started making a list of things that the Bible tells us about who God is, and a list of what the Bible tells us about who I am. I needed to start resetting my mind - moving away from feeling like a reject, and reclaiming a sense of a rescued, precious, redeemed, image-bearer. Not because I need to feel arrogant and on top of the world, but because the enemy was stealing my joy! And what is joy, if not rooted in truth and therefore more powerful than changing circumstances?

I'll be working on that list for a few days, I think. (And even when I stop, it won't be comprehensive!) But after a while, I came upon Psalm 34:17-18. I have clung to it a number of times in the past and it's given me strength to press on in seasons of deep grief.

As I pondered this verse tonight, I realized that, while I'm not exactly "crushed", I am a little broken-hearted. And I didn't realize how much I needed this reminder.

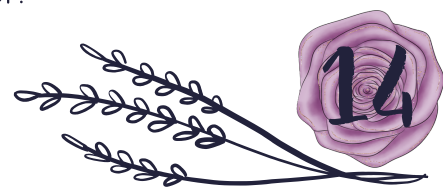
See, rejection hurts. It points out all the things that are wrong with us and makes it hard to see what's right in Him.

But even worse, rejection has lied to me. It's told me things like "no one wants to marry you" and "no one wants to hire you" and "no one wants you around".

The truth is this, though:

- God called me to singleness. And he has purpose for me in that. And my value doesn't depend on my marital status.
- Someday, someone will hire me for a job. (Lord let it be soon!) And he will have purpose for me there.
- There are people who want me around. And I'm so thankful for them!!

So while I wait for the Lord to provide, I am learning to reshape how I view the waiting period. I have to be so careful to take criticism and rejection seriously, so that I can learn and be sanctified. But I also need to know when to brush those off and have confidence in who God says I am, in his great and unceasing love for me, and in who He is, was, and will be. Rejection hurts - but it can't be the end of the story. God hears my cry, saves me from my troubles, is close to me when my heart is broken, and saves me when my spirit is crushed. If the Lord God Almighty feels that way about me, rejection from people has no power.

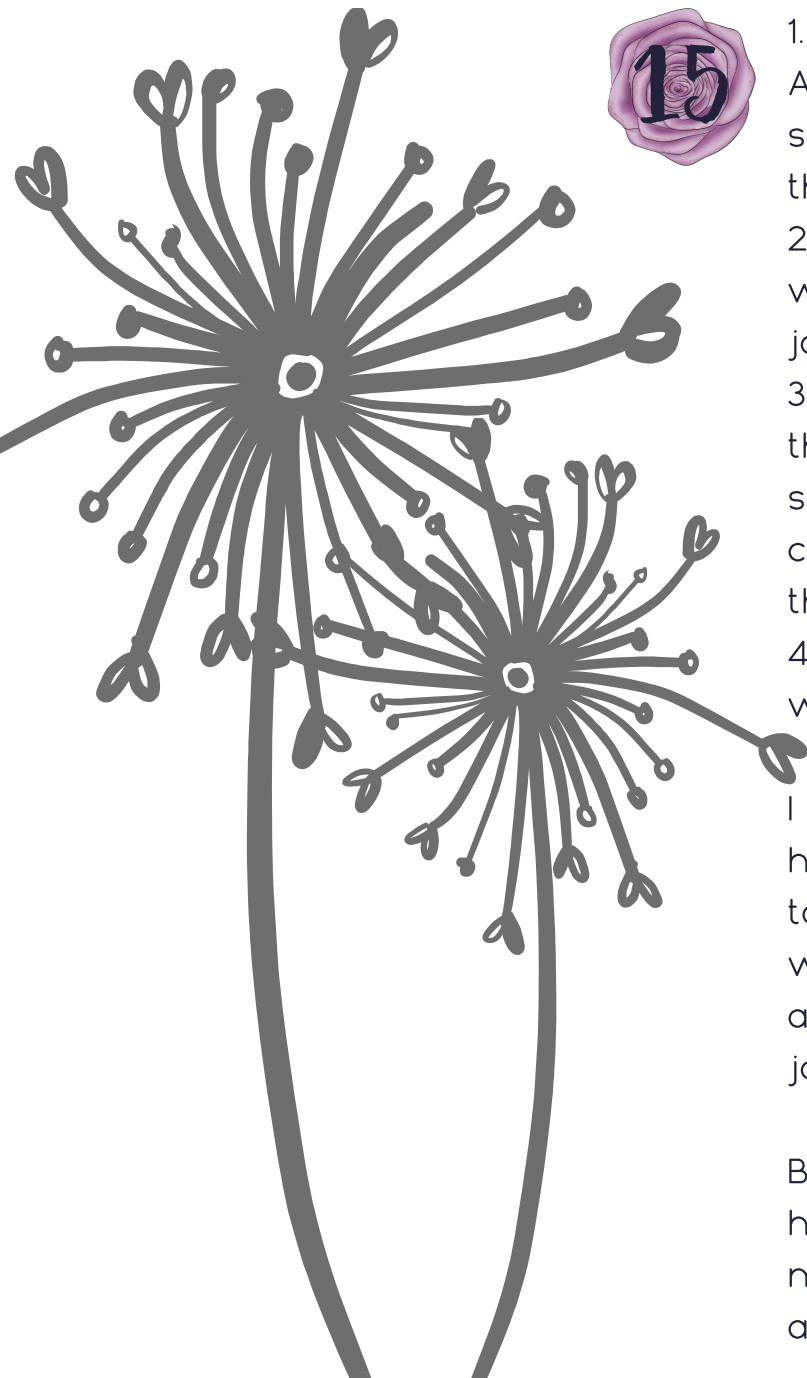




I'm posting this a day late, simply because it was hard to bring myself to do it last night. Last night I had to go sit in my parents' living room and tell them I needed money.

If you've never needed to borrow money from your parents as an adult, be thankful. It sucks.

But even in this humbling experience, I can see a few ways that show how good God is.



1. He gave me these people as parents. And they are so kind and so gracious and so willing to help me. I don't deserve them.

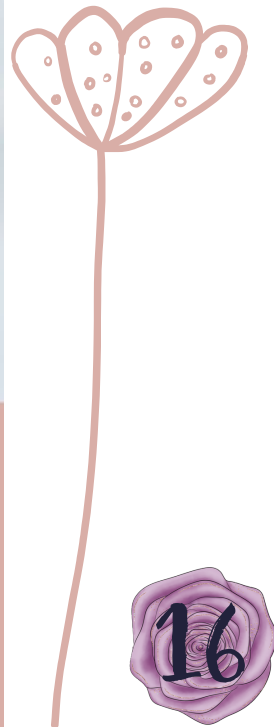
2. My mom pointed out that it could be worse - they don't have to pick me up at jail. (lol!)

3. They sat and talked with me way later than they should have, telling funny stories and bringing me to laughter. They could have rubbed it in, but that's not like them.

4. They so very sweetly said "let us know when you're ready for more!"

I could go on. But bottom line, it's humiliating and humbling and frustrating to be in this position. I struggle every day with anger, discouragement, and fear. I am NOT walking this journey with all the joy and grace and patience I should be.

But God so gently reminds me that he has this under control - even by giving my parents hearts of love, kindness, cheer, and encouragement. I am blessed.



Sometimes when we are looking for God's faithfulness in our current circumstances we simply need to look at our past experiences of God's faithfulness.

I have a friend who runs a ministry called Recognize and Remember, where she helps women learn to look for God's faithfulness in their own lives, in the lives of others, and in Scripture - so they can remember his faithfulness even when it's hard to see it.

This, therefore, is my attempt to recall God's faithfulness in a season where I couldn't understand what he was doing with my life, because I need to remember it right now.

Read the post at <https://adventuresinrosieland.com/recalling-gods-faithfulness/>

Today as I was reading Exodus 31, I was struck by how God gave Moses a huge list of very specific instructions for building the tabernacle - and THEN he said he had equipped people to fulfill those instructions.

"I have chosen..."

"I have filled..."

"I have appointed..."

"I have given..."

I imagined Moses taking in the incredible instructions God had given him. I wonder if he was overwhelmed. Or maybe he was busy thinking about who would do what, and how would he remember all those details, how long would it take, could he get the people to do it, and all the many thoughts he might have thought..

We don't know what Moses was thinking. I only know what I would be thinking. And what I would be thinking is "seriously???" How in the world am I going to do all this???"

What struck me though, is that God had been preparing the people for these commands long before he gave them to Moses. He had been working on these grown men since they were children, grooming and training them, and growing them into exactly who they needed to be when it was time to build the tabernacle.

I don't know why he didn't tell Moses about those people BEFORE he gave the list of instructions. It seems to me that would have helped. But I do know this: God's plans are never accidental. And they are never missing important parts. Everything God needs to accomplish his purposes he has already thought of and been working together to fulfill his perfect plans in his perfect timing.

So while I sit here, bewildered and frustrated and most of the time at least a little discouraged, it is a timely reminder to me that the details of my life, my income, my career, my purpose, my relationships, my gifts, my heart, my faith - none of these are overlooked or forgotten or accidental. He has been at work long before me, and he will continue to work in and through me. My job isn't to tell him what to do, my job is to celebrate that he already has it figured out, and to walk in faith and obedience.

Man am I glad he is the one on the throne, not me.



Then the Lord
said...
"I have"





I realized I've made it half way through the #godissogood challenge and I wanted to just share with you how it's going. Which is kinda weird of me since you are the one reading the posts... But hey, I like to embrace my weirdness.

So here's what I'm realizing. We have this tendency to expect quick results. We don't like waiting. Our culture is one of instant gratification. And we discover people on social media who have thousands and thousands of followers, and beautiful little squares, loads of engagement, and appear to have lots of money and a fabulous life. So when we look on from our unemployed, broke, discouraged, cluttered, sleepy lives, we feel even worse about our situation. (This isn't news, right?)

What I'm learning, though, is that the middle parts are important. All those people we look at through the little squares and comments and likes? We didn't get to see their journey that got them to that point. We don't get to observe the cluttered corners of their homes. It's rare for them to share their struggles. So we assume they have it made and we are a mess, when in reality, we are just on a different journey. We are always in the middle of learning what it looks like to "do the next thing", and gathering the courage to take that step. Whether we have followers or not, whether we have money or not, whether we have nice homes or not, regardless of age and all the other things, we are all on a journey that will have ups and downs and challenges and beautiful moments and all the in betweens.

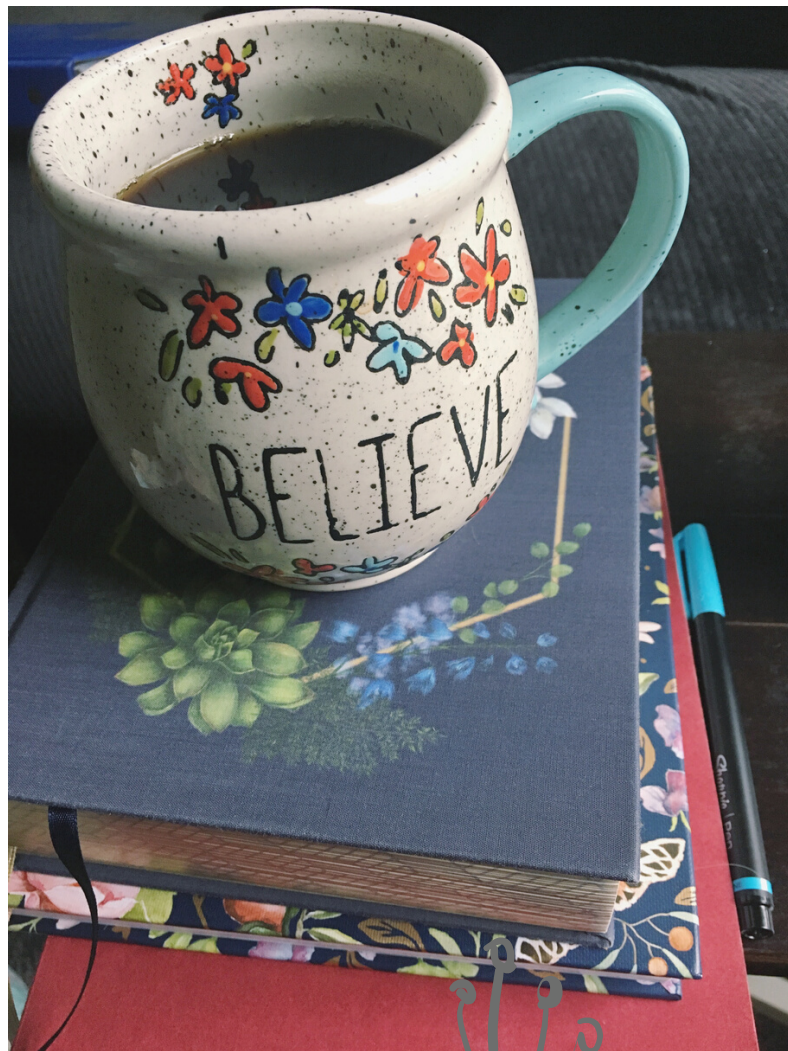
The more I sense that the "middles" are important, the more I think we should be willing to talk about these seemingly mundane and often challenging times. We need to let others in to encourage us when we need it, and we need to share how the Lord is working so that we can encourage others when they walk a similar road.

So I'd like to invite you to join me in talking more openly about these in between spaces. Share the mundane. Share the lows & highs. Let's come together and celebrate the bright spots, carry one another's burdens in the low spots, and cheer each other on in between.

I'm just thankful for time to sit and sip my coffee and read and study and rest... I'm trying to keep busy, but I'm also recognizing that one of the gifts of this season is that I can be still. And really, I think that's one of the biggest lessons God has been teaching me. While it feels like I should be fighting and clawing for my reputation, my career, my income, my pride, to see things made right that remain broken, what I keep hearing God whisper in my ear (or maybe, rather, in my gut) "Be still. I will fight for you."

And so I'm trying to keep busy. But I'm also trying to rest. To be still. To give myself permission to have quiet days, without giving myself permission to be lazy and wasteful. It's a tricky balance.

But I'm thankful for it all the same. Because, Lord willing, this season won't last too long. And then I'll be drinking my coffee on the way to work, and wishing I could curl up under a blanket and take my time. So for now, I'm thankful for the slow pace.



Have you ever had a day with lots of sweet little surprises in it? That was my day today. Today was a day of surprises, gifts, offers, friendship, and one sweet thing after another.

If I'm honest, it felt a little like God was sitting there like a dad who has a sparkle in his eye, saying, "see, I'm here! I've got this! I love you, and I'm right here holding blessings for you. Just keep trusting." It reminded me of this verse, which tells us that he will delight in us and sing over us. Isn't that one of the most incredible images of pure love? Well, today it felt like the Lord was showing me how he delights in giving us good things, in caring for us, and just in loving us.

Many days we can't really see what he's doing or where he's working. But once in a while he shows us little things he's doing. And if we just watch, we will see it. We will be witness to his powerful and loving orchestrating of the little details of our lives.

I don't have any big announcement to share or anything. I'm just thankful for the blessings I received today, the kindness of God's people, and the way he revealed his handiwork in today. It just feels like a little bit of a glimpse into his miracles, his glory.



*The Lord your God is with you, the
Mighty Warrior who saves. He will
take great delight in you; in his love
he will no longer rebuke you, but
will rejoice over you with singing.*

Zephaniah 3:17

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As I crossed my yard today, and observed all the overgrown grass + leaves + pine needles, I thought about change.

I was ready for fall. I don't love summer, so I welcomed the cooler temps and the changing leaves. I love sweaters and scarves and flannel sheets. I like drinking a cup of tea before bed. I like the reduced humidity.

But with the change of season also comes one more mess I struggle to clean up. I already did one big cleanup of pine needles, but you'd never know it. And now the leaves are getting mixed in, which only makes it harder. And my schedule is full, and it's supposed to rain. And so they'll lie there for another week or so, probably.

And before I know it, the beautiful, moderate fall season will give way to the too-cold, too-dark, too-colorless winter season. Granted, winter can be glorious too, but I prefer the less extreme weather.

And so it is with the changing seasons of life, too. Even the seasons we look forward to are full of hard things. And sometimes we aren't ready for a season and it comes barreling into our life like a surprise early snow storm. Or we wait for ages for a season, and it seems to never come. Or maybe it never comes at all because God had something different in store for us.

While the preparer in me wishes that the seasons of life didn't have to come with so many surprises and hard things, I'm convinced that the changing seasons are a gift. You see, I think the Lord likes to keep us on our toes. It's not that I think he's playing games with us - that's not his nature. But I am convinced that he wants us to depend on him and him alone, and so that means that we need to experience things that are so far out of our control that all we can do is grab hold of his hand and go where he leads us. And it's in that surrender and following that we meet his tenderness, his great love, his kindness, in ways that we can't meet them when we think we are in control. And that is a gift.

I hope that whatever season you're in, you're holding his hand so tightly. And don't ever let go. Because to be in his hand is the safest place you can be, no matter what your circumstances are.



Have you heard or read the poem by Corrie Ten Boom about the tapestry? It's worth a quick google search if you haven't, but here's one little piece of it:

"My life is but a weaving
Between my God and me... ..
And I in foolish pride
Forget He sees the upper
And I the underside."

This is how I feel. In the span of less than a week, my job prospects went from zero (including a job that should have been almost automatic, becoming unavailable for the most bizarre reason) to 4 solid leads. (4!?) Interviews have begun. Options are being discussed. Hopefully I will have a job soon!

This is great news, to be sure! But it's also both comical and a little overwhelming. I find myself pondering "what do I want to do? What's a better fit? Do I just take the first one that turns into an offer?" I also find myself just laughing, and thinking, "really, Lord? All this time, all the closed doors, and now all this?"

But isn't this the beauty of following Jesus? The Lord is always working, and we rarely have a clue what's going on. Yet when he gives us a glimpse, somehow it's far more beautiful than anything we could create. Because, while his ways are often mysterious to us, and his ways are certainly higher than our ways, the fact is that he is good. And he loves us. And he is worthy of our love, our worship, our praise.





One of the fun parts of this weird in-between season is the part where I spend time doing things I don't usually do, like cleaning someone else's house.

I wouldn't have known a little over a year ago that right now I'd have time (and be looking for ways to earn income), and the Lord was already putting pieces together for me. I signed up as a Norwex consultant strictly for the discount. Through a few surprises, a small handful of parties, and loads of incentives, I've gradually accumulated a nice big stockpile of Norwex goodies. So when I needed funds, I reached out and said I'm going to do some cleaning. And since I was already pretty well equipped, I didn't need to buy much in the way of supplies.

For the past couple of weeks I've done some cleaning at a local business. This week I've been in 2 houses cleaning, and I have another small job coming up as well. I don't know if this will develop further or not, but I'm grateful for the opportunities I've had and I'm enjoying doing something different and something that serves people around me.

I love seeing how God knew what I would need and started building it long before I needed it. It's such a great reminder for me as I think about my current circumstances and my needs and my concerns. He's not scrambling, wondering how he's going to get me out of this. He already knows. He's probably already put pieces in place. And he's surely been working on it. That's so comforting!

I also love that I have the opportunity to throw together bags of my magic microfiber cloths and head out to make magical things happen. It's giving me a strange amount of joy to see some spaces touched up, and other spaces completely transformed. I'm so thankful for this little streak of delight that God is giving me over something so mundane and simple. Just one more silver lining.



The older I get, and the more challenges in life I experience, the more I am convinced that suffering, hardships, and trials play a pivotal role in the Kingdom of God.

James 1:2 tells us to consider it "pure joy" when we face hardships of any kind. I used to just shake my head at that, not understanding how we can apply "joy" to suffering.

But here's the thing. There are aspects of God's love that I have only been able to experience in the midst of difficulty! So if I lived my life trouble-free, I would actually be living my life with a shallow and limited view of God.

I remember when I traveled in Scotland, visiting monuments that memorialized events and people in Reformation history. We would stand on the very ground where Covenanters stood firm in their faith in Jesus Christ as the sovereign Lord. They did so knowing that they faced beheadings, drownings, and other gruesome deaths, and they displayed true joy in their Savior. Their circumstances weren't as big as their love for God.

I've certainly never experienced hardships like that. But the difficult experiences I have had have taught me so much more about God's compassion and love, and have filled me with greater hope and joy than the happier and smoother times in my life.

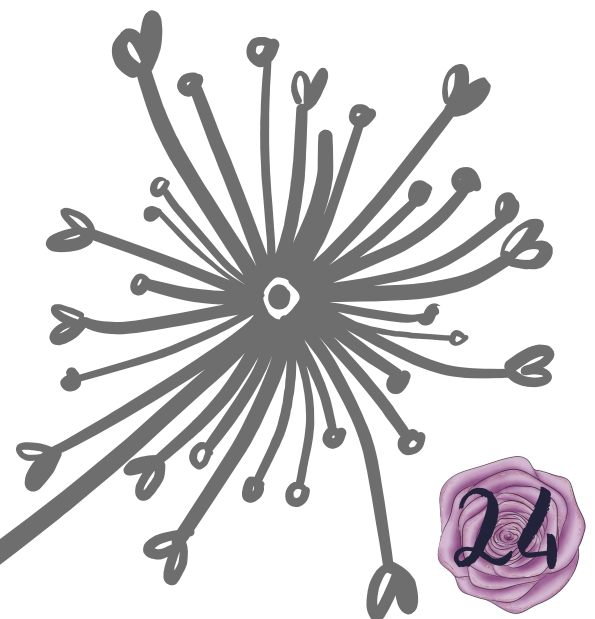
So do I wish to suffer always? Well, no. I long for easy days, no financial stress, complete sense of purpose, easy relationships, just the right amount of self-love, health and safety for all the people I love... and the great thing is, I have hope that one day all will be set right. But in the meantime, I'm learning to walk through the hard stuff and consider it joy. Not because I love hard stuff, but because hard stuff helps me love Jesus more.

If you're in a hard season today, I encourage you to pause and seek the Lord's goodness to you in the midst of the hardship. (It's there. He is faithful and he loves you.) It may not make the hard stuff any easier, but maybe, just maybe, it'll give you a little joy at the same time.

Consider it
pure joy...

James 1:2

 adventuresinrosieland.com





This little guy (C) is such a testimony of God's goodness. He's 18 months old, cute as a button, and giving us all smiles all day.

Before he was born he was diagnosed with Spina Bifida. My amazing sister and C went through fetal surgery and months and months of bed rest. He was born (for the second time, really) with a big scar on his lower back where the surgery was performed. And we waited to see the severity of the impact of his Spina Bifida. It's the kind of thing that can have massive impact or very little impact, and we still don't know what all might happen throughout his life. There's a lot of "we'll see!" involved. And not everything is "normal" - his bladder isn't right, his digestion is funky, he started walking a little later than most kids, and he still doesn't use all the words some 18 month olds use. But he's active. He's happy. He's got a big personality. He wants to do what his brothers are doing. He wants to be the center of attention. He wants to be outside, preferably on a tractor.

And every day he steals our hearts a little more.

Before he was born there was so much we worried about. We weren't freaking out, but we talked over the possibilities and prepared ourselves for some pretty severe things. And to see him now - walking, climbing, playing, hugging... and growing like a weed - it's really a miracle. The fetal surgery in itself is, as a friend described it, "a miracle of modern medicine". I'm reminded every time I see him that there will be challenges and issues in our lives, but there are also miracles, if we just open our eyes and look around and see the good things our God is doing.

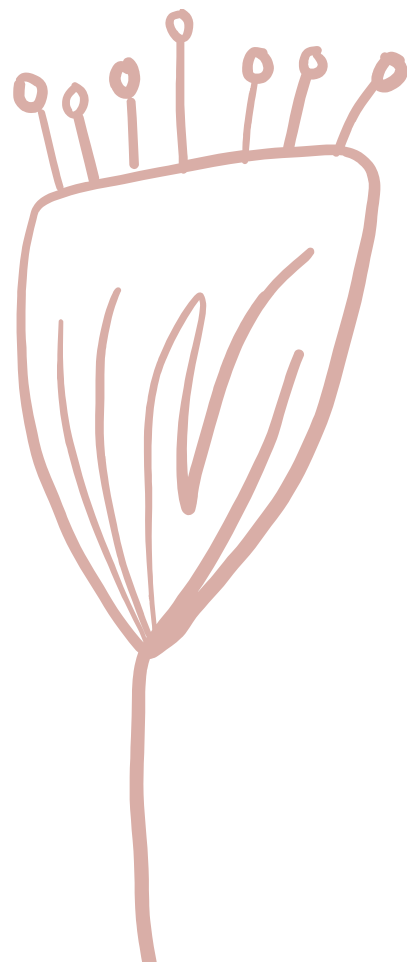
I was blessed to be able to attend a women's retreat this past weekend. It was a lovely time with a group of lovely women. The primary teachings and discussions were geared toward helping us find our beauty in Christ.

I found myself thinking a lot this weekend about beauty, and specifically I was asking myself, "why does it matter so much to me that I "feel beautiful?" I realized that it's because feeling beautiful is much the same as feeling lovable. When I don't feel good about how I look, or when I don't feel good about who I am, I don't feel lovable. (Which is exactly why I had to tattoo the word "loved" on my wrist!)

What struck me this weekend was that, since Jesus died for me while I was still dead in my sins, he loved me while I was still at my ugliest. He chose to make me more beautiful. Anything beautiful in me is because of the work he is doing in me, and the grace he is pouring out on me - and that work began while I was at my lowest, my worst, my ugliest, my most undeserving.

I knew these things to be true prior to this weekend, but suddenly I was struck with a new feeling of being loved. See, if he loved me that much THEN, and he is making me more like him, and gradually he is helping me to reflect his beauty and love, then I can embrace his love for me and be "radiant" in him. Because I am loved. And therefore, to the King of Kings, I am beautiful.

Friend, if you are anything like me, you will struggle with doubt and shame and fear and simply feeling lousy about yourself. Often. So I encourage you, from one sister to another, find your beauty in him. That's a beauty that won't fade, because his love for you has no limit, no end, no prerequisites.



Last week pretty much kicked my butt, and yesterday I was completely worn out and had something crazy happening with my stomach. I spent most of the day in bed, snuggling in my comfy mattress, head buried in my soft pillows, keeping warm and cozy and experiencing the comforts of home. And I'm not gonna lie: it was glorious.

I'm just grateful that I have a nice home to live in, hot water, appliances, a nice place to sleep. I'm not wealthy, I can't afford much luxury. But, then again, isn't my life "luxurious" when compared to most of the rest of the world?

Bonus, it's fall. That means flannel sheets and afghans. ♥



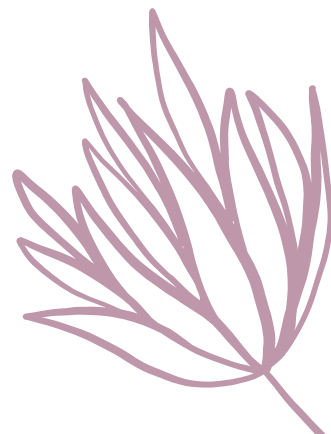
Over the past year or so I've had the special privilege of holding story time with these boys. It's become such a special thing to do with them! Together we have journeyed through made up lands and met ravens, a blind boy with a cat/horse/knight friend, a girl with a courageous heart, a boy who was delivered to an abbey as an infant, a troupe of girls who live in the woods, a prince, and more. We jump when a character shouts, we get still when they whisper, and we laugh when the deep voice I'm using for a character is too deep and it makes me choke but once I've started I can't really change it...

This picture was taken this past summer, because I didn't get one tonight. But I read to them while they ate their supper. I was having a rough day, feeling discouraged and sad, and I needed some cheering up. Recently when I talked to my sister about some of the challenging emotions I've experienced lately, she said "you can come over here when you need some cheering up! The boys will love it." So tonight I called her and said "what are you guys up to? Can I come read?"

An hour later we were deep in the woods outside of a woodsman's hut, wondering what sort of creature he had hidden behind his tall, wooden fence. And I was snapping out of my funk.

Sometimes it's important to take stock of emotions, so we can be aware of whether they are getting the better of us. Mental illness is real, friend. But sometimes we just have to realize that life is tough and we have bad days sometimes. And sometimes, we just need to get outside of our little bubble and do something fun and special and watch how the sad bubble just sort of pops.

Reading to the boys didn't fix all my problems, but it added a great big dose of joy to my day and reminded me of how privileged I am and how loved I am. Next time, we will discover the creature behind the fence. And we will continue the journey of keeping a book secret, saving Pa, restoring the prince to his throne, and punishing the evil sheriff and lord who are trying to overthrow the throne. The only thing missing is the rest of my nieces and nephews.



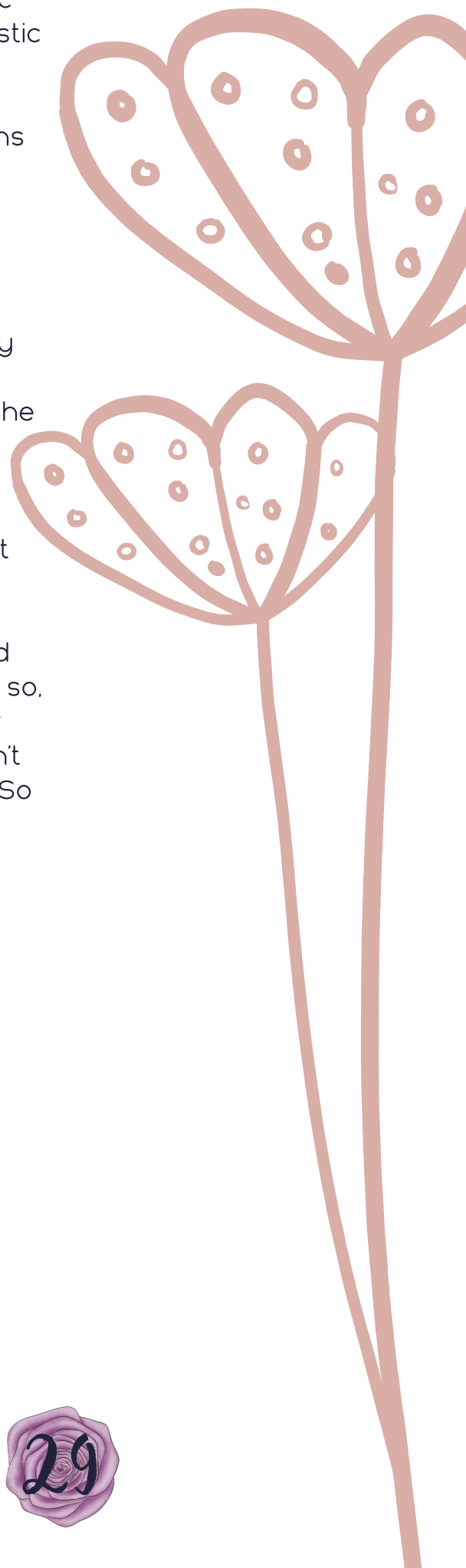
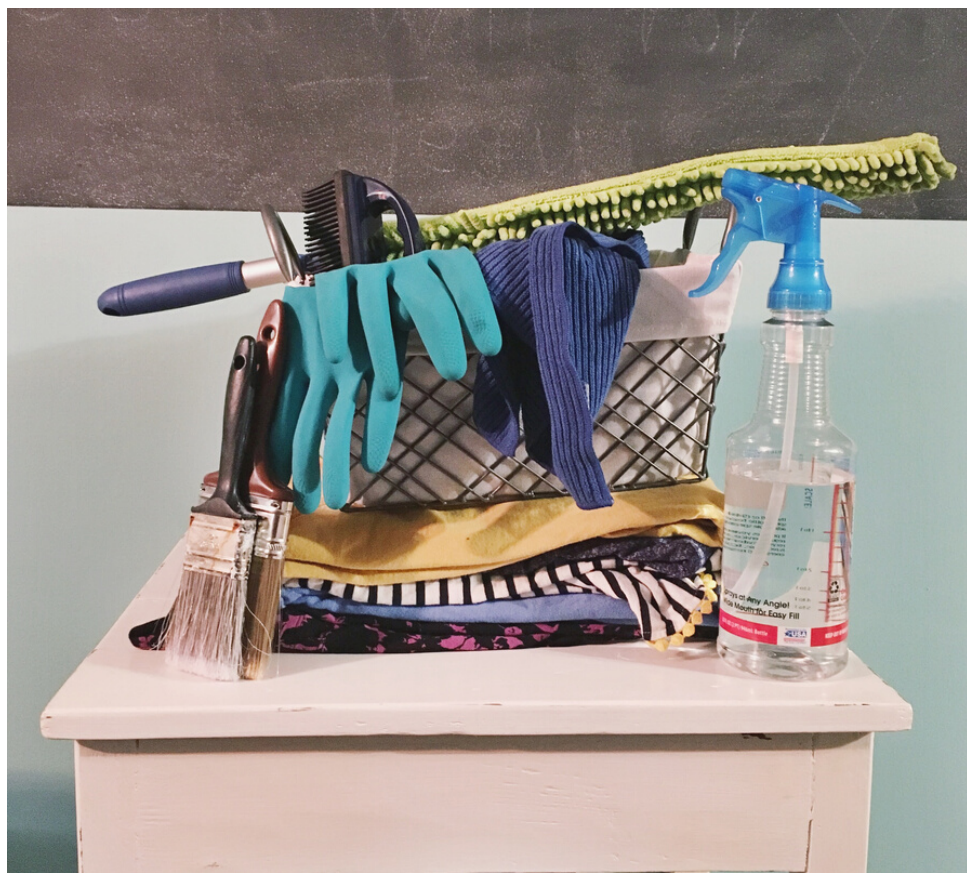
Did you know there's such a thing as a "Domestic Assistant"? Today I jokingly said "I should be a Domestic Assistant. Just help people who are managing their homes but need help with a project."

And then I came home and googled it and it turns out I wasn't as clever as I thought. That's actually a thing.

But truthfully, I'm so grateful for the people who have let me come into their homes, their businesses, their lives, and entrusted me with projects.

Today I scrubbed appliances for someone so they could sell them. Tomorrow I'll be scrubbing a kitchen. Not long ago I painted rooms for a couple friends. In the past I've helped purge closets, organize storage areas, run errands, grocery shop, and even prepare dinner. (Although I'll admit, I don't think I should promote my dinner-making services, haha!) A friend mentioned last week that she has some cupboards that need to be emptied, scrubbed, purged, and organized.

This isn't the first time money has been tight and I've wondered how God is going to provide. And I am so, so grateful for the people who generously hire me for the random jobs they don't have time for (or just don't want to do), because it is a tremendous help to me. So thank you, to all you wonderful people. ♥



Last year when my hard drive AND my backup drive failed, I was crushed. So very many pictures were lost. I may be able to get some of them back someday, if I can afford to have the drives rescued. But I also may have to let them go.

So imagine my joy when I charged and restarted a couple of old phones and found some treasured photos on them!

This photo was taken one of the last times my mom visited her sister in the Alzheimer's wing of a local nursing home. It was such a hard visit in so many ways, but there were also some moments of tenderness and peace. As my mom gently held my aunt's hand, I snapped a photo hoping to capture the memory.

Here's the thing. This photo is over 2 years old, but I haven't had a chance to deal with the content on that old phone because I've been too busy. But now, even though every day feels a little unpredictable and I go in a number of directions at a moment's notice, I find that I have room in my life to take care of some little things like dealing with the old phones.

So this is a silver lining to the cloud I didn't want. I didn't want to lose my job, and run into closed door after closed door as I look for the next job. But here I am. Learning to wait on God and trust him to provide for my needs. Learning to rest and grieve for the things I've lost, and balance that with hard work and income-generating opportunities. And just like that, a sweet treasure appears on an old phone, reminding me that God cares. He cares for the big things of my life, and he cares for the little things of my life. And in his timing, he sends little blessings my way to encourage and sustain me.



I love the Psalms. If you haven't spent much time in them, change that ASAP. Like now.

One of the reasons I love them so much is because they capture the whole spectrum of human emotion, offer examples of crying out to God and asking him where he is or what he's doing or how long it will take to answer. BUT they always loop back around to praise him for his goodness, his power, his love. The pain and fear and struggles are real, but in all things, God is still God, and God is still good.

This Psalm begins by asking God "Please hear me when I call to you. Give me relief. How long before you act?" (my paraphrase), and it ends with "I can rest and sleep now, because I trust you." (Again, my paraphrase.)

There have been a million moments in the past several months where I've had to talk to God like this. I've asked him so many questions, and I am still waiting on answers to most of them. And I realize I may never have answers to some of them. But I know this: God is still God, and God is still good. He will take care of me. He will love me. He will provide for me. So I can rest in him.

Whatever you're struggling with today, cry out to God. Then rest in him.



*In peace I will lie down
and sleep,
for you alone, LORD,
make me dwell in safety.*

Psalm 4:8

