

ORDINARY PARADOX

Shyla Salmon

“But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us” (II Corinthians 4:7, ESV).

Sometimes I get so focused on Sunday spiritual experiences that I fall into a trap. I place God in a prayer closet or a church building where I can experience His presence. Then I leave that place and I rush. I stress. I go about my daily routines without gratitude while focusing on myself. I live life trying not to inconvenience myself. I don't stop to notice the sunset. I don't pause to make a connection with someone. “I've got too much to do,” I tell myself. I'm too tired. I forget that Christ is all around and inside of me.

Then, by His grace, God reminds me that He was human too. He ate and cried and sweated. He made friends and He lost and laughed. He prayed. Just like me. The amazing stories we read in Scripture happened to ordinary people on ordinary days. These people were willing to pause from their routines and notice the beauty of Jesus. They asked Him to interrupt their ordinary lives with help and healing, and He did. When Jesus worked miracles, He usually did them on streets or boats, not in a church. So why do I expect all of my miracles to happen in a church on some grandiose scale?

It's true that God is a Spirit, and He does bless us with amazing spiritual experiences. But it's important to remember that God's expressed image, Jesus Christ, was a human being. Jesus was an ordinary person from an ordinary family living with the divine Spirit of the Father in Him. Jesus, both God and man, was a paradox of ordinary and extraordinary. If God was human, then surely He wants to be part of my human moments. He knows about the bills and the family conflicts. He has felt everything I feel. He knows I am both flesh and spirit as He was.

My ordinary moments are illuminated by the grace of God when I pause to let Him into them. When I stop chasing Sunday experiences, I can walk in the power that comes with offering my ordinary life to Jesus Christ, the power that comes from living in gratitude and surrender.

So while I am living in this flesh and blood, I'm going to take solace in the fact that Jesus was once flesh and blood too. I'm going to take time to feel the heat of the sun and hear the roar of the ocean. To feel the fear and awe that comes from looking at an endless body of water. I'm going to take time in the day to show love to someone who needs it. I'm going to let God into my day-to-day activities and watch Him do what only He can do.

I'm going to stop waiting for the magical moments to show up because every ordinary moment of my life is already filled with the presence of the living God. How spiritual is that? How magical? It's extraordinary.