



A Lenten Mosaic - Living In Grace Lent 2020

**Devotion for Saturday,
March 28, 2020**

By Erin McAuliffe

I want to start out with a verse from the Old Testament. It's a very simple, short verse that doesn't even mention faith or grace, yet it has everything to do with my journey to the faith I have and the grace I received :

Proverbs 22:6 - Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.

I believe there are many definitions for the “right” way. Manners, rules, and obedience come to mind but also training your child in the Lord. I was raised in the church. From singing in the children's choir to being involved in any and every youth activity and being “forced” to go to church every Sunday we were in town. I may not have understood every sermon...or even paid attention to them (sorry Jody), but nonetheless I was there because of the way my parents raised me. What intrigues me about this Proverb, however, is that it says "when they are old, they will not stray." Not that they will never ever stray once we train them, but that when they are old, they will not stray. Almost as if we are undoubtedly going to stray but after some time, when we are older, we will come back to the right way. This is exactly what happened to me.

Many people know my story. Even though I was raised in the church, I was led astray by addiction and other self-harming behaviors. Eventually, I fell to rock bottom. But what I've come to find is that rock bottom is a solid foundation on which to build. And I truly believe that my faith was that rock at the bottom. When everything around me was crashing and burning and I was falling deeper and deeper, the faith that was instilled in me as a child caught me.

Faith is believing before seeing, trusting and having confidence in God. This is such a hard concept sometimes when we live in a world of instant gratification and control freaks. I should know; I'm one of them. But what was so great about hitting rock bottom was that I had no other choice but to have faith and trust God. Faith is not easy and the outcomes are usually not quick, but I think faith is a test of our love for God. Our willingness to put our self and our circumstances aside and let God take control and let God live in us. Galatians 2:20 says, "and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." When we live by faith, we are allowing God to live in us and accept the sacrifice that Jesus made for each and every one of us.

That's exactly what I had to do in my situation. I decided I wanted to live for Christ not all of the poisonous worldly things. And when I made that decision, that's when I truly started to see and understand God's grace. I had messed up so badly but God was there, showing his grace by forgiving me and seeing me still as His daughter, not as my mistakes. God's grace and our faith in Him is what makes us right with Him. The rest of Galatians 2 says, "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if justification comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing." My understanding of grace is that God is always willing to give us grace but it should never be meaningless or for nothing.

There's a song called "Holy Water" by We the Kingdom (that I highly recommend) that completely sums up my understanding and belief of grace. "I don't wanna abuse your grace. God, I need it every day. It's the only thing that ever really makes me wanna change." That

is such a powerful and meaningful lyric to me. I believe God gives us grace because we are human, because we make mistakes no matter who we are. He also knows our heart and our intentions. Each day we should constantly strive to be more Christlike, to set our mind on Him, and live a life that would be pleasing to Him.

Our faith will only continue to grow with every experience no matter how small or big. But faith should always be the foundation on which we stand, build, and grow. Faith rescued me and God's grace gave me a reason to live a new life.

Isaiah 7:9

If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all.

1 John 5:4

And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith.

Prayer

Lord, what you ask of my life seems so right.

It is how I want to live,

following your Son, Jesus, so closely.

And yet I fail so often to stay on that path.

I cannot do it alone, loving Lord.

I need your help and guidance.

I need to remember your love for me,

and I want to remember

how very much I need you in my life. Amen.

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