

Nothing Wasted

By: Adina R. Shabe

What is my response to COVID-19 and the disruption personally and globally? As an individual who has experienced personal crises, as someone who has gone into conflict and crisis zones to minister and has walked with many in the persecuted church, sat with those who have suffered the most horrific atrocities, I have and am continuing to learn much about suffering. I am seeing the Lord place a new perspective in me, a new response to hardship than I previously had. I have personally been a missionary for almost 6 years, my work has been focused on orphans, refugees and the vulnerable specifically within or from the Middle East. Through these stories, through these circumstances, God has begun to show me that He wastes absolutely nothing. There is always hope, always peace and always joy accessible to us no matter circumstances. Paul's letter to the Philippians gives such a powerful revelation to what we have access to as Believers in suffering and how we ought to live through it. I find the more rooted I am in His word, His truth and His perspective the more unshakable I become to crisis, to plans being changed, to my life being disrupted. I want to be clear, saying I am "unshakable" does not mean I am not grieved. I am grieved for friends and family who are now quarantined at home in abusive situations, I am grieved for my refugee friends who are exceptionally vulnerable to this virus, I am grieved for those suffering in Iran and Syria. But, I am not shaken, my God, my Friend, my King is still good, He is faithful and He wastes nothing. He uses absolutely everything and there is a gift from Him, sometimes we just need to press in to receive it. In my personal life and in the lives of those within the refugee and persecuted church I have seen the greatest blessing and powerful stories come out of deep trauma. This is who our God is! Look at the history makers, those who were pioneers spiritually or in any other sphere, there was often some type of trauma or crisis around their story. Anne Frank, Harriet Tubman, Moses, Joseph, William Carey, Albert Einstein, Martin Luther King jr., Clara Barton, George Washington Carver, Lydia Prince, Jackie Pullinger, Brother Yun, the list could go on and on for pages... I feel that in times such as these there is always another storyline being written, the invitation is, will we find that storyline? Will we be a part of it?

Philippians 4:11-13 Paul writes a clear message, “Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to become content. I know how to be brought low and I know how to abound in any and every circumstance. I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” These words pierce my heart like a dagger, did not Paul serve the same God as I do? Did he not have the same Holy Spirit dwelling within him that I do? The answer is, of course, yes, therefore I can learn this very lesson for myself. So here I am, a 25-year-old student and missionary, isolated in a sweet home in a small town in Indiana, I am content, I am at total peace and I have the fullness of joy. Though my heart feels heavy for many whose lives are disrupted I know that there is an invitation for something far greater.

God is moving, He always is, but something began stirring this past year, on a global level. Underground revival in Iran, millions gathering to worship in Brazil, healings, salvations, miracles on college campuses, in churches around the world. But then this virus comes, this virus that seems to pull us away from these gatherings and moves of God...I have felt God speaking an individual and corporate invitation to His body. It is time to come away, to go into the secret place to be with Him. Song of Solomon 2:10 “my Beloved spoke to me and said, ‘arise, my darling, my beautiful one and come away with Me.” I believe there are many storylines being written by God write now, one of them being an invitation to come away from platform ministry, from being seen, from striving, from religious works-based mentality, distraction and busyness to come back into His presence, to go deep in relationship with Him and His Word. There is a call from our Savior to come away and to get rooted in Him. These are lessons that are rooted deeply in the hearts of our persecuted brothers and sisters. It has been some time since such a practice of our faith declarations have been put to test here in the U.S., but I am encouraged as I see churches and individuals arise with messages of truth and hope, as they serve others selflessly. When these things become my focus my perspective shifts from negative, depressed, pessimistic, victimized to hope, peace, joy and resting in His glorious truth. Though this virus has affected many who are personally dear to me I would consider myself rather untouched directly in comparison to others I know. I am extremely privileged, as many of us in the U.S. are, and every single day I have been completely overwhelmed with gratefulness. I am grateful that I

have a home to be isolated in, grateful for the technology that makes continuing my education possible, grateful for teachers who work hard to make that possible, grateful for that I have enough food, grateful for intentional relationships.

In closing, I am choosing to be deeply content in this season. To take it day by day, to be extremely cautious about what I meditate upon, to take my thoughts captive, to spend hours upon hours in His presence because my schedule now allows that, to develop myself and to rest. I pray for you, as you read this, that Holy Spirit may begin to call you away into new depths, into new revelation, into new levels of relationship with Him. I pray that you would ask the bold question, “God what story are you writing in the midst of a crisis and disrupted lives? What do You have for me personally in this?” I pray for an open mind, heart and spirit to hear His response. I pray for wild joy, contentment and shalom peace for you and your loved ones no matter your circumstance, whether good or bad. I pray for the grace to run into His presence to grieve in a healthy way all that’s been lost both personally and globally through COVID-19. He wastes nothing and how magnificent to serve God that can be found in both pain and joy, suffering and peace, bad and good.

Shalom Peace to You

Peace in going slow

Peace in going low

Peace in worship

Peace in resting

Peace in walking

Peace in sitting

Peace in working

Peace in academics

Peace in cooking and eating

Peace in the mundane

Peace in Him

Oh, how overwhelming is His great peace,

It is like a gentle breeze,

as a warm blanket overshadowing me,
His peace settles in the very depths of my being,
I could shout it from the rooftops,
“How joyful and splendid is Your tangible peace, my Friend and King!”