

The Sacred Rhythm of Ordinary Faithfulness

There's something profoundly uncomfortable about unfinished stories. We crave resolution—the satisfying click of a puzzle piece finding its place, the final scene that ties everything together, the moment when uncertainty dissolves into clarity. Yet faith, by its very nature, refuses to grant us this comfort. Faith exists precisely in the space between promise and fulfillment, between question and answer, between now and not yet.

The Danger of Loving the Gift More Than the Giver

Consider the story of Abraham, a man who waited decades for the promise of a son. When Isaac finally arrived, imagine the meals shared, the conversations, the relationship built over years. This wasn't an infant when God called Abraham to Mount Moriah—this was a boy old enough to carry wood, to walk alongside his father, to ask questions. Years of ordinary moments: breakfasts, bedtime stories, teaching him to work, watching him grow.

Then came the test: "Take your son, your only son, whom you love, and sacrifice him."

The danger wasn't just in the act itself. The danger was that Abraham might love the long-awaited gift more than the Giver. That the promise fulfilled might eclipse the Promise-Keeper. Abraham rose early, before his wife could question him, and set out on a journey that would prove where his ultimate allegiance lay.

This is the tension we all face: God gives us good gifts because He loves us, yet those very gifts can become obstacles if we treasure them above Him. The promotion, the relationship, the answered prayer—all beautiful, all from His hand, yet none of them the ultimate thing.

The Extraordinary Power of Ordinary Obedience

The book of Ruth tells a story that unfolds not in dramatic moments but in the steady rhythm of daily faithfulness. When Ruth left her homeland to follow her mother-in-law Naomi back to Israel, she entered a season that Scripture summarizes in just a few words: "So they arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest."

What follows is three months of gleaning in fields. Three months of backbreaking work. Three months of bending, picking, gathering from dawn until evening. Ruth 2:17 simply states: "So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening."

No burning bush. No angelic visitation. Just day after day of faithful, hard work.

Yet it was precisely this ordinary obedience that positioned Ruth for redemption. Boaz noticed her not because of a single dramatic act, but because of consistent character displayed over time. By the end of the harvest season, he could say she had "noble character"—something you cannot discern in a week or even a month. Noble character is revealed through the accumulated weight of small choices, faithful days, and persevering through the mundane.

The twist? Ruth had no idea she was being woven into the genealogy of King David, and ultimately, Jesus Christ. She couldn't see the arc God was orchestrating. She simply showed up, worked hard, honored her commitments, and trusted God with the outcome.

When Scripture Compresses Decades Into Sentences

We read the Bible with the benefit of dramatic irony. We know how the story ends. We can breeze through passages that say "after this, ten years passed" without truly grasping what those three words contain: 3,650 days, countless meals, innumerable sunrises, seasons of doubt and hope, moments of joy and sorrow.

The Israelites spent 40 years in the wilderness. Moses spent decades as a shepherd before the burning bush. Joseph languished in prison for years before his elevation. Ruth gleaned for months before redemption came.

Scripture compresses time in a way that can distort our expectations. We want microwave faith in a slow-cooker kingdom. We want the highlight reel when God is directing a full-length film, and most of life happens in the scenes between the dramatic moments.

The Grapevine Principle

In John 15, Jesus uses a striking agricultural metaphor: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Grapevines are remarkably stubborn plants. Left to themselves, they'll grow along the ground, wasting energy shooting in every direction, producing fruit that gets trampled, eaten, or rots before it matures. A grapevine requires constant training, constant redirection back to the trellis, constant pruning to channel its energy toward fruitfulness rather than mere growth.

The vine dresser must repeatedly lift the branches, tie them to the support structure, and cut away what distracts from fruit-bearing. It's not a one-time event but an ongoing relationship.

This is the picture of abiding faith. Not a frantic scramble to produce fruit through our own effort, but a continual surrender to being positioned, pruned, and supported by the True Vine. When we're properly connected—when we abide—the fruit comes naturally, almost inevitably, as a result of the life flowing through us.

The Difference Between Speed and Velocity

Faith without direction is like speed without velocity—lots of motion, but no meaningful progress. You can be incredibly busy in your spiritual life, doing

many things, appearing productive, yet growing like an untended grapevine: energetic but aimless.

Velocity requires direction. It's not just about moving; it's about moving toward something. Faith paired with obedience creates spiritual velocity—movement aligned with God's purposes, energy channeled toward His kingdom.

The great cloud of witnesses described in Hebrews 11 didn't just have faith; they had faith directed toward obedience. They moved with God, not just for God. They ran with perseverance the race marked out for them, fixing their eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of their faith.

Preparing for Moments in the Monotony

Moses' burning bush moment was crucial, but it wouldn't have been possible without the decades in Midian. The years tending sheep in obscurity prepared him for leading a nation through the wilderness. The monotonous prepared him for the momentous.

We long for the dramatic encounters, the clear directives, the unmistakable voice of God telling us exactly what to do. But those moments are rare by design. What happens in the ordinary days—the days when nothing seems to be happening, when we're simply showing up and being faithful—is equally important.

Those ordinary days build character. They develop perseverance. They teach us to hear God's voice in whispers, not just thunderclaps. They position us, like Ruth in the field, to be in the right place when redemption comes.

The Ultimate Promise

Revelation 21 paints the picture of what all this faithfulness is pointing toward: "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and He will

dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God."

This is the point of everything. Not the gifts, not the outcomes, not even the fruitfulness—but God Himself dwelling with His people. The greatest privilege we have isn't seeing our prayers answered or our plans succeed; it's knowing God now, in this moment, before eternity makes everything clear.

We already have the greatest gift. If you know Jesus, you possess what every promise points toward. Everything else is secondary.

So we live with abiding faith—not white-knuckling our way through life, not frantically producing works to prove our devotion, but resting in the Vine, allowing ourselves to be positioned and pruned, showing up faithfully in the ordinary moments, trusting that God is weaving a story far bigger and more beautiful than we can see from our limited vantage point.

The harvest is coming. Until then, we glean.