

Saving Grace

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something
more

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Dedication

To my beautiful daughter, Anneli Grace, and my lovely wife, Keeli: Thank you for the inspiration, encouragement, and love. Wherever we go, you are my home. As we ascend from glory to glory, our best days are never behind us. I love you.

Preface

What gift can I bear to convey the adoration I long to show? How does one effectively articulate the unexplainable depth of affection for another? Can any object tangibly express love in its purest form? Without the risk of being thrown away, lost, stolen, rusted or burned, I wanted to give my daughter her story. The emotions of being a father overwhelmed me with a creative barrage of thought and imagination. I wanted to communicate my love with a story. Her story.

Before her birth, Anneli Grace won my heart. We believed that our child was destined for a specific time for a specific purpose. Within a month before her conception, Keeli and I, a couple that had not been married a year, received prophetic words from people close to us.

“Get the nursery ready.” This word, given by Keeli’s father, had been delivered previously to a variety of married couples, some who had years of trouble conceiving. Each time this was spoken to a couple, they would conceive days later.

A friend told us, “Don’t be afraid of what’s in the womb. It’s from the groom and there’s plenty of room.” We were preparing to sign a lease for a more spacious home. However, we still did not think we would literally have a baby so soon after getting married.

On a trip to Boston, a woman known for transforming an entire nation prayed for us. She was praying that we, too, would transform nations.

I worked late one Friday afternoon and drove an hour and fifteen minutes to our little round home from the office. Upon entering, Keeli was waiting for me with a card. It was a round card that read:

“We live in a little round house and soon you’ll see a little round belly.” We immediately began to weep tears of joy. That week, Keeli had three dreams about being pregnant. To our surprise, the prophetic words and dreams were accurate.

Before we discovered we were having a girl, we gave our baby the nickname *Nations*. Without breathing a word about our expecting, Anneli’s very existence ushered blessing into our home. Promotion ensued and provision was abundant. Then, when my wife, Keeli, was five months pregnant,

she had a serious accident. Her car flipped three times, tumbled through three pear trees and broke through a fence. As the accident unfolded, Keeli fervently prayed. When the dust settled, a witness pulled to the side of the road and approached the totaled vehicle. Shaking, he was frightened that he may find death in the wreckage. Keeli opened the door for him, telling him that she was alright. At the sight of the broken side mirror, she walked away from the automobile without looking back, avoiding the risk of stirring fear of what could be. For precautionary measures, she was taken to the hospital.

Working an hour and a half away from the hospital, I drove to meet my wife and her parents. I discovered the details upon entering. Astonished, we proceeded to have an ultrasound. It was that moment we saw our girl, healthy and strong, unharmed by the accident.

Weeks later, I told Keeli that we should expect angelic visitations as they occurred frequently in the Bible. Her back, still in pain from the wreck, withheld her from having full rotation. One morning, I woke up to get ready for work. Keeli said, "You rubbed my back last night." I told her and am telling you that I did not. I am a heavy sleeper, often waking up in the same position I fell asleep. Keeli continues to describe how her back was rubbed where the pain resided and how she felt fingers go from the top of her spine down to her tailbone. Thinking that I was being sweet, she just enjoyed the massage and didn't say a word. Sure enough, her back was healed. She regained full mobility and rotation. Whether Jesus Christ or an angel, a miracle happened and I slept through it.

I had the honor of delivering Anneli on February 2, 2012 at which I had the privilege of telling her face to face, "Anneli, you are blessed." Each day I see her, I am reminded that I am blessed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my daughter, Anneli Grace. She has shown me the bottomless soundings of a Father's love and is the inspiration behind this allegory. I would like to thank my wife, Keeli, for being patient, kind, and loving in all that I do. I would like to thank my parents, Jon and Janet Fawcett. Since I can remember, they encouraged the development of my creative skills. I would also like to thank Keeli's parents, Kermit and Becky Harpold. They sowed their time equipping me as a believer. They treated me as their son, even before we became family. To my sister and sister-in-laws, Emily, Summer, and Heather, I appreciate their prayers and love. To all who have been a part of supporting Something More Ministries, I thank you for believing in the call God has placed on my family's life. Finally, I want to express my thanks to Jesus Christ. He is the source of all creativity and has given us access to heavenly realms of imagination.

Revolt

Once upon a time, a King decided to create a brave new world and fill it with His Light and color. Every blade of grass was perfectly fashioned. Each tree stood to attention, bearing ample fruit to those who would rest under its shade. From every angle, the panoramic view was breathtaking. The warm, dynamic landscape was saturated with the sounds of waterfalls that cascaded over the rocks, generously providing momentum to the rivers that ran into the glass seas that rested beneath the vibrant clouds in the distance. The countryside was covered in gardens that yielded healthy crops in rich soil and gentle breezes contributed relief from the warm air.

However, among all of the extravagant beauty that challenged the limits of imagination, the King valued His citizens among all else. The King was a protector who honored the freedom with which He had given His people. As the masses put their faith in Him, nobody was sick, hurting, or lacking any good thing. In the beginning, He was loved by all.

The King delegated tasks to the people to multiply the Kingdom's territory. Each role was carried out with passion, diligence, and efficiency. Vivid color spread throughout the land as the Kingdom's territory expanded and multiplied.

Scorched with darkness, the bordering lands of the Kingdom yielded no life but that of creatures that resisted the Light of the King. The most notorious of such creatures were the blackbirds. They were scavengers of the land. Strong in number, the blackbirds were hidden far away from the Kingdom and were unknown to its citizens. The blackbirds plagued the darkest corners of the earth, erasing the sky's visibility while mindlessly ravaging the land of all food and resources. Without a protector, nations became prisoners as shades of gray covered the land.

In service to their perfect King, minimal mistakes were made by the citizens of the Kingdom. But the King looked upon His people with unmerited favor. It was understood that any mistake was immediately pardoned. Though He never begrudged the Kingdom's citizens, a small band began to verbalize resentment and blame towards the King for their own mistakes.

Propaganda began to fill the Kingdom. False literature twisted the Truth of the King's sovereignty reading:

The King is in control! You made a mistake that He could have stopped. Who's at fault? Why do we need His pardon? He should beg our forgiveness for allowing our error to occur. Be your own king, build your own kingdom, and show His Majesty that we don't need Him anymore.

The lie was repeated so much, masses began to fall into deception. They began to question the King. He tried to reason with them, explaining that it was for the sake of freedom they were given dominion over the land. He explained that it was not His desire to control them but to empower them. Even so, the people didn't want to accept responsibility for mistakes and regarded their King as a tyrant. Mutiny ensued.

Refusing to listen, a great multitude rebelled and rejected the King. He longed for the citizens of His Kingdom but His blessings were taken for granted by ungrateful hearts. Knowing they could never dethrone Him, there was a great exodus as the masses abandoned their utopian paradise.

The Light of the Kingdom still resided in the insurrectionists. As they traveled through the Kingdom's gates, the Light they carried could still be seen until it disappeared over the horizon. What they did not realize was that the Light would fade when separated from the King's presence.

The people settled in a foreign land and built a new city, one they believed would outshine the Kingdom of their origin. This city was called the New Capital.

Built from a heart of mutiny, the city pooled to build monuments intended to embarrass the King. The city was known for violent rhetoric, exploits and heresy. Bathed in the pride of self-centered accomplishments, the city recklessly spiraled out of control. The lack of order and justice led to an unruly state of affairs as resources diminished. Families rationed their food and thieves pillaged whatever they could. Many grew ill with no access to treatment. Streets were filled with corruption as neighbors turned on one another. Alliances were formed to combine what assets they had in order to defend the spoils of their plunder. Often, alliances ended in betrayal, fueled by the corruption of greed. What began as a great undertaking was no achievement to boast of. The New Capital was torn apart by its own people and reduced to rubble. War ensued, violence arose, and peril was at every turn. What color remained had faded and the Light grew dim over the city. Then, one day, the Light disappeared. All color was gone.

After the people abandoned their King and established a new settlement, they found themselves disarmed and unprotected for what was ahead. Unsuspecting, the sound of enslavement was heard

beating in the distance. The streets grew quiet as they looked towards the rushing sound. Until this moment, they did not realize the degree of protection granted by the King. As the Light faded, the wicked blackbirds emerged from hiding and covered the sky.

It was an invasion of darkness. They soared overhead, enslaving people to a world of shadows. Screams and panic filled the streets as the masses ran for cover. Even the most cunning and superior leaders grew weak in the presence of the fowl. For the first time, they knew fear. Realizing what their betrayal had produced, terror and dread was harbored in the hearts of each individual. After the blackbirds made their initial sweep, the streets were locked down with the eerie sound of flutters and squawks. The New Capital conveyed the appearance of a ghost town. Residents were confined to hiding indoors for fear that arousing the birds would usher further calamity.

In hopes to appease the chaotic mayhem created at the blackbirds' rousing, people sacrificed their voice for silence. Birds sat perched at attention, as if on guard, on every street, on every structure, at every door. The slightest sound would throw the invaders into a frenzy so violent the buildings would shake and the deafening sound of calamity would drown any reassuring hopes of survival or rescue.

The birds pillaged and plundered all that remained. The only weapon that could defeat the evil fowl and free the people of the blackbirds' tyranny was the Light they once knew and regrettably neglected.

Rescue

The Kingdom grew silent. The sounds of its citizens echoed in the memory of those who stayed. Each day began with hopes of homecoming. The King awaited such a return. In spite of their wrongdoing, He was eager to receive them back into His Kingdom.

As the world turned from the King, only a few remained loyal. A husband and wife were counted among the King's allegiant. The King called them to His courts to commission them for a daunting task. It would require them to venture beyond the borders of the Kingdom on a search/rescue mission to offer an invitation of return and a promise of peace to those who rebelled.

Upon entering His courts, their eyes locked with His. They quickly noticed the King had pierced His own hands to the point of bleeding. His palms and fingers were covered in blood. In awe to see their King bleed, they began to weep. They approached and He laid His left and right hand over their hearts.

"I mark you with my blood so the people will know who sent you. This gives you my power to heal the sick, raise the dead, and destroy oppression against overwhelming odds. My blood is a sign to the people that I don't want theirs. I just want them home. Now go. Everything you need will be provided. I will be with you in Spirit." They left His courts and stepped out of the Kingdom's gates with a fresh crimson handprint over their hearts.

The desolate environment was uninviting. The unforgiving terrain was beaten by the wind that carried the static howl of torrential storms that were brewing in the distance. It was no longer warm or peaceful. The sense of war and contention was thick in the brooding air. The contrast was stark but they pressed on, arm in arm, disappearing into the gray fog.

The withered landscape was just as dark as the sky. As time passed, the only remaining color that shone was the crimson handprints that marked the couple. As they scaled the jagged rocks, the fog began to lose its density. Suddenly, they found themselves staring across a barren wilderness and, on the edge of the horizon, the silhouette of the New Capital with a dark ominous cloud overhead. They did not realize it was comprised of countless blackbirds.

As they began their descent from the peak of the mountain, a stark upheaval sprung from around them. A horde of blackbirds fluttered in panic from their resting place. The couple froze and stared at the

terrible spectacle. As if in ceremony, the birds encircled the couple in flight. The husband and wife held one another with their backs facing their adversaries. Meeting the blackbirds' threatening advance, the couple ran into a cleft in the mountain and picked up stones, hoping that striking the birds would prove effective in dispersing their attackers. As they turned from the crevice to hurl the rocks they had gathered, the blackbirds suddenly squawked in unison and fled in retreat until they could no longer be seen. The couple then realized that before the first stone was cast, the blackbirds noticed the crimson marks on their chests.

They continued in the valley. Swarms of blackbirds parted as they marched through the desolate land. The blood carried the scent of the King's authority, reflecting Light in a dark world, and kept the blackbirds at bay.

Despite the darkness that covered the land, a child was born to the couple who would be instrumental in restoring Light to the world. They appropriately named her Grace. She accompanied her parents through foreign lands to tell people news that was too good to be true: Light has come.

On one occasion, the family encountered a small band of people. Their settlement rested on the outskirts of the New Capital. These individuals escaped the ferocity of aggression in the society that was carried away on the shoulders of rebellion.

As the runaways described their experience, the couple listened intently as the wintry air cut through the layers they wore over their royal garments. Grace was held close to her mother's heart as the King's mark gave warmth to their child.

"Our decision to join the exodus was made under pressure. The leaders of the revolt were shrewd and promised a future that only the King could provide. Rumors, fabrications, and lies twisted our perception of Truth. Without a doubt, we were manipulated and blindly followed. In our defiance, we sentenced ourselves to a wasteland. We invited exile. Suddenly, everything became complicated. We lost our standard of decency. Our closest friends joined the mutiny. We conformed. We feared rejection from others and abandoned the King. We aren't the only ones who escaped the New Capital. There are others who are scattered throughout."

The faces of these runaways were sad. Their voices were flat with sorrow. Sickly and pale, their eyes were lifeless and black, as if their bodies were hollow shells. They were victims, full of regret, ridden with shame, and bound with deep remorse.

"Why didn't you return to the Kingdom?" the couple asked.

Unaware of whom they were speaking to, they replied, "We can't go back. Our insurgence would surely require our blood at the hands of the King."

Upon hearing this statement, Grace's father pulled back the layers that were keeping him warm, revealing the King's bloody handprint across the chest of his royal garments. The runaways fell backward as the crimson glow seized their attention. Their grim, tight faces loosened as their jaws dropped in disbelief. Without a word, they reached out their hands, one by one, and placed it over the King's handprint. Their eyes closed and they took a deep breath as they felt the warmth of the Kingdom for the first time in years. Strength filled their body, their appearance transformed, and when they opened their eyes, vivid color filled them like pools of water.

Their vibrant eyes suddenly became fixed behind Grace and her parents. "What do you see?" Grace's mother asked.

"I see a beacon of Light in the distance," one pointed.

“Follow it home,” Grace’s mother replied. “Nothing can replace your absence in the Kingdom. The King has been awaiting your return.”

The camp immediately dropped their things, left their tents standing, and began to run as fast as they could towards the Light of the Kingdom. They did not grow weary or faint for the remainder of their journey. Days later, the Kingdom had its first homecoming.

Reconcile

One night, Grace’s mother had a dream. In the dream, the New Capital, constructed by those in revolt to the King, was brightened by blue sky, colored with celebration, and filled with sounds of jubilation. It looked like a replica of the Kingdom. The dream continued with another scene.

Grace was alone, separated from her parents, surrounded by a dark, poisonous fog that moved with fluidity through the air. Just as the suffocating cloud enveloped Grace, she began to sing. As she sang, Fire proceeded to erupt from her mouth, consuming everything. The dream ended with her mother waking up, unsettled by the visions.

The next morning, Grace’s mother began to share her dream with the family. As she described her vision of the New Capital, the family was stirred to see salvation in the dark city.

However, Grace was unsure. What if something terrible should happen? Rumors of war and contention filled conversations that the family had with runaways that escaped the New Capital. Her mother assured her that no harm would come upon them.

“When everything looks bleak, you have the power to change the atmosphere,” Grace’s mother told her. “You simply need to open your mouth and sing.”

Grace contended that she was not marked with the King’s blood, although contact with it had sustained her health and strength. Her mother explained, “The King promised that everything we needed would be provided. He provided us with you for the journey. We believe you are necessary to the success of this assignment.”

The family set out towards the New Capital. As they approached, the dark cloud over the region began to come into focus. Like the scales of a serpent, the body of blackbirds ebbed and flowed like ripples in an ocean. Like a breathing monster, the birds moved as one. The couple remembered their encounter with blackbirds in the mountains. They shed the layers that preserved their warmth until their royal garments were all that remained. Grace was between the two, hand in hand with her parents.

As they marched to the entrance of the city, the blackbirds standing guard at the gate saw the brilliant Light from the King’s blood and quickly flew upward into the swarm of brewing darkness. As they marched in, the pattern repeated. Parting like seas, the nesting blackbirds abandoned their post and were lost in the blended motion of flight overhead.

The stench of decay filled their nostrils. Desolate streets, barren and scorched with gray tones of isolation, gave way to the footsteps of the King’s allegiant. The tired eyes of onlookers peering from the dark windows gave the family a sense of heaviness. The oppression could be felt in the atmosphere but it stirred compassion on the inside of Grace and her parents. From the moment they crossed the gate’s threshold, a soft melody to escape Grace’s lips. Her calming voice gave comfort to the entire family as they pushed through the cold air. The silence that shrouded the city was broken at the sound of Grace’s song.

The sight of the King’s blood scorched the gray that frosted the eyes of onlookers. Upon seeing that the blackbirds did not show aggression towards the family, doors opened for the first time in ages,

releasing the stale, recycled air that had been flowing through the lungs of a sickly people. Slowly, frail bodies began to emerge from isolation.

A crowd formed, surrounding the family. The faces of those were tired, weary, and weak from years of oppression. As they approached, they slumped over an invisible line of hope. The encompassing crowd parted for an elderly man holding a lifeless body. He walked through and stood before the family. Grace's father took the hand of the dead body and placed it on the King's crimson handprint. At that instant, the multitude gasped as they saw the young man's eyes open and his lungs expand with air. Life returned to his body and his eyes were bright with color.

The multitude immediately flooded the family. Pressing against them to receive healing, the mob gravitated towards the family like a starving people for food. Shouts filled the once quiet streets as the crowd quickly grew. Amidst the shouts and voices, Grace began to call out to her parents but her cries were drowned by the crowd's noise. They were nowhere in sight, buried beneath the sea of people longing for redemption.

Grace identified a high vantage point that could assist her in locating her parents. Was it beyond the safe zone? The blackbirds only parted for the King's blood but she was born after her parents were marked. If she ventured too far, she would run the risk of triggering an attack. As she began to make her way to higher ground, a lone man, dressed in white, ran by her, dropping a small satchel.

Picking up the satchel, Grace called to the man, attempting to return what was lost. He disappeared in the mob, seemingly unaware of the lost possession. Curious of the satchel's contents, Grace peered inside. Seeds rested in the bottom of the bag, glowing with color and Light. How could anything of color and Light exist outside the Kingdom?

Upon inspection, Grace detected small words embedded across the surface of each seed. She picked one up and squinted to read the word inscribed. Suddenly, before her eyes could focus, a horde of blackbirds wildly swarmed around her. Before she could react, a blackbird snatched the seed from her hand with its beak.

As the assailants flew away from Grace, the seed, firmly gripped between the blackbird's sharp bills, was swallowed whole. Grace pursued the assailants as they would forever be lost in the crowd of blackbirds in their ascension.

With sudden boldness, Grace shouted to the birds in harsh rebuke, demanding they return what was stolen. The authority in her voice carried across the landscape as the crowd had moved deeper in the city. As the birds continued their ascent, a fireball erupted from the belly of the blackbird that swallowed the seed. The thieving fowl were engulfed by the explosion. In a whirring stream of smoke, the attackers crashed and burned to the ground. Flaming feathers and embers rained from the sky, littering the terrain with enemy casualties.

Grace stepped through the cinders, searching for the stolen seed. Smoldering like an ember among the ashes, the seed shone through the dust, unscathed and pure. Grace picked it up. She knew that she couldn't let the blackbirds have this seed. She had discovered a weapon that generated Fire and Light.

The commotion stirred the multitudes of blackbirds overhead. A stream of fowl roused like a tornado, trailing Grace as she raced to save the seed. Knowing there was one place that the birds could never steal the seed, she sprinted down the path, searching for good soil where she could bury what she found. Her eyes looked to the hills. Grace jumped from the path and staggered over the rocky ground. The birds were closing in. She treaded over thorns and thistles, climbing to the top of the hill where she began digging with her hands. She dug a little hole in the dirt, placed the seed, and gently pushed the dirt back into place. The blackbirds encompassed her, blocking any escape route. With dirty hands, Grace

clinched her fists. Remembering what her mother had said, Grace began to sing in the face of her adversaries.

As her voice resonated, the surrounding birds began screeching a threatening reply. Their presence was suffocating, but Grace continued to sing. Without warning, the ground began to shake beneath her feet. Unmoved by the low rumble, the blackbirds closed in. The loose dirt that rested atop the mound above the seed began to topple. The soil began to radiate beneath the surface. Suddenly, a pillar of fiery Light shot up from the ground, burning a hole in the sky, piercing the darkness that dominated the air. As if a veil had been rent, the heavens became visible as Light enveloped the New Capital, lending its warmth in response to the bitter chill that formerly occupied the air.

Blackbirds in the path of the pillar were devoured in the flames. The surviving blackbirds immediately dispersed, shrieking as they retreated from the consuming Fire. Grace's eyes were fixated on the Light as the fluttering sound of wings and squawking grew faint. The cloud of blackbirds disappeared beyond the horizon. Originating from the seed's resting place, warm color stretched across the expanse, casting its appeal to the appetite of eyes that were once bound to the sight of shadows.

For the first time in years, blue sky overtook the gray that so many grew accustomed to. Light caressed the land as people crawled from hiding. The dark ages were over. In the midst of abundant life, new beauty, and the contrast of fresh color, all eyes remained on the Fire. Citizens gathered around the newfound warmth the Fire offered. Freedom was finally theirs again. As Grace's parents had reinforced her entire life, Light had come.

Silence was overcome by cheers and laughter that erupted from the crowd. The people, in an act of reconciliation, made a vow to rebuild the city as an extension of their native Kingdom. As the crowds briefly departed to prepare a celebratory feast, Grace remained alone by the Fire. She began to sing quietly with a smile as she watched the people from the crest of the hill.

A voice called to Grace. She turned and saw no one. The voice called again. She looked into the Fire and there He stood. The man in white who dropped the seeds: The King.

She bowed but He told her to stand up.

"Did you read what was written on the seed you planted here?" He asked. Grace shook her head. "It was the very component needed for these people. You sowed FREEDOM. I provide and sustain liberation from darkness. I give freedom. I AM their protection from enslavement. Despite their past rebellion, I love them. Now they know that I was willing to bleed to bring them home."

Pointing to the satchel, the King began to commission Grace. "Each seed has a Word written across its surface. Go into all the world and plant these seeds of solution in good ground as you have done here. I know two people who are well suited to take you with them," He pointed behind her.

Her parents called out to her in the distance. She looked behind her to see them running towards her. She turned back to the Fire but the King had disappeared. They put their arms around each other as Grace's parents began explaining what happened in the midst of the crowd they addressed: The blind saw, the deaf heard, the mute spoke and the dead were raised when they made contact with the King's crimson handprint. However, when Light filled the city, all who looked upon it were instantly liberated from the infirmities that once ailed their bodies.

The residents of the city were finally free from tyranny. With penitent hearts, the people pledged everlasting loyalty to their King. All was pardoned. The New Capital took on the likeness of the Kingdom and became an exemplary extension of the King's territory.

The pillar of Fire continually blazed as a signal of hope that could be seen from great distances. It stood as a signal of hope to all people. Those who were scattered gathered to it. Many traveled great distances to see the pillar of unquenchable Fire. From it, they would take a flame that would spread Light to their homes, neighborhoods, towns and cities throughout the land. The Kingdom multiplied. This flame represented a new, reborn allegiance to the King of Light.

As for Grace and her parents, their family grew as they continued to travel the world, planting seeds in good ground, healing the sick, raising the dead, destroying oppression, and cleansing the world of darkness with the Light of their loving King.

Afterword

To skirt the issue of the reality we live in would rob readers of the full experience and truth hidden in these words. Since 2006, my life has graduated to a supernatural level I didn't realize existed. Miracles happen every day. Life is a miracle. Creation is a miracle. Though we are surrounded by wonders, a world of realism, humanism, and philosophy can easily entangle us in a web of formulas that cage us to the inevitable decay of existence. Gray area begins to infiltrate our soul. Our mind, will, and emotions begin to bow to the status quo, caving to an enslavement of this world's standards.

By our own strength, it is impossible to escape the gray that can so easily compromise the purity of enlightenment and revelation. My tendencies of striving once bound me to a religion of debate and strife. Instead of love, I lived in constant struggle against my God-given identity. I was divided against myself. Unattainable by works, my efforts, achievements, and accomplishments fell short of the wholeness I longed for.

My grievances met extinction the very moment I had a genuine encounter with the God-man: Jesus Christ. For many years, I believed He was stern, angry, and merciless. When I fell in love with His Word, I discovered He was joyful, filled with compassion, and never let the downtrodden escape His miracles and healing. He never added conditions to His love or excuses for His action. When I discovered who He was when He walked the earth, I encountered who He still is today.

He wasn't angry with me. He didn't accuse me or recall my shortcomings. He didn't threaten me with wrath. He only loved me and showed me His goodness. When one encounters a love this magnificent and tangible, it poses the question if one ever knew love at all? Did I know love beyond a feeling, emotion, or desire, without conditions or expectations?

To put it simply, mankind fell through one man's sin. By another, we were reconciled back to God. Jesus was on a rescue mission. Without favoritism, He liberated all people from hell, death, and the grave. A savior can offer a way out of enslavement. Until the captive agree to come with their rescuer, how is salvation possible? It must be received.

Our mistakes, our mutiny, our rebellion is not beyond saving. Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the Word of God incarnate. When He spoke, miracles followed. He lived a perfect life and gave Himself, His blood, and His life - once and once for all. He was whipped, beaten, mutilated and nailed to a tree where He died. In that moment, sin, sickness, disease, transgressions, iniquities, and curses met their end. Three days later, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, appeared to hundreds of eye witnesses, ascended to heaven, and sent His Holy Spirit to believers so that they might be instruments of peace, revealing the truth of God's love with signs and wonders.

The moment I received His mark, His perfection became mine. I became a co-heir of His kingdom. I was rescued from darkness, reconciled, and marked by the blood of God Himself - the King and Creator.

The King's love was never intended for one nation, people, or generation. He is for all nations, all people, and all generations. His love never burns out, meets defeat, or sleeps. He is unchanging. He is full of life, light, and fire. He is a protector, ensuring that citizens are not only free from darkness but are free to multiply the Kingdom, expand it, and create, just as the King originally did.

The revolutionaries represent those who abandon responsibility at their own expense. They sacrificed light for darkness, color for gray, warmth for cold, and paradise for hell. They deduced themselves to puppets and the King to a puppet master. Despite the dominion they once experienced, they began to believe a lie that the King was in control. Blurring the lines between having all control and all authority, the rebellion spirals beyond reasoning. Had the King been in control, He would have stopped their bitterness towards Him. Often, it is believed that we must forfeit pleasure for pain in order to validate who we truly are. It is through the eyes of the Creator that our true identity is seen and by His lips that we are affirmed. It takes an exodus from His presence to realize that their worth was valuable enough for a King to bleed.

The King's allegiant represent the laborers of the Kingdom who resist conforming to the mutiny. Subduing darkness and multiplying His kingdom, the King's allegiant carry the authority and power of their King. Though they are sent into a world of darkness, they are not of it.

Grace embodies the hope of new generations, though born in a dark world, aspiring to bring light. She also adds another element of the family unit commissioned for their assignment. She helps portray the challenges of raising children in a threatening environment while preventing its influence and without underestimating the power and influence children can have.

The blackbirds symbolize the demons many people face on a daily basis. The fear of breaking silence, the hunger pains of poverty, the compromise of stealing for survival, and the enslavement of being bedridden with sickness are included among the conditions created by the blackbirds. The need for a savior is not only needed in these situations but is felt in the depths of the human heart. In these moments it's realized we were not abandoned to crash and burn. We ran away. Though darkness may follow, a rescue is always close behind.

About the Author

Jonathan Fawcett was married to his wife, Keeli, in the summer of 2010. They planted and oversee a campus ministry at Appalachian State University in Boone, NC where they graduated with degrees in Communication. In the winter of 2012, their first child, Anneli Grace, was born. Later that year, they launched Something More School of Ministry. Jonathan and Keeli are cofounders of Something More Ministries, Inc. Together, they empower, equip and train disciples for the nations with an emphasis on college campuses.

