



*Micah Lehman Kavedzic*

Originally from Idaho, I now call Bosnia-Herzegovina home along with my husband and three little girls. In between diapers and dishes I try to get out and be with my neighbors as well as serve as the training coordinator for OM Balkans (Operation Mobilization).

Living and working in the Balkans for the last ten years has inevitably colored the way I look at life and my journey with God. I have combined some of these Balkan lessons with a study through Psalm 90. Though a song of lament, there is much about this chapter that speaks into living a clearer, more distilled life with God. Our lives are too short not to embrace his gifts of simplicity and beauty and order right now.

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 90:1-2*

I was living in Vienna at the time, an incredible city forever marked by the grandeur of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The leap into the post-communist Eastern Bloc was startling. Of all the memorable things I saw and experienced on that first trip into Romania, the row upon row of cold, stark apartment buildings have been seared into my mind; the drab, rundown buildings bearing watermarks beneath the windows giving the appearance of tear-stained faces.

It has been fifteen years since that first visit, the last ten of which I've been living in Eastern Europe. Most of the dreary buildings remain unchanged, but now I know them more intimately: mostly one or two bedroom apartments, comfortable, adapted to meet the needs of their owners, warm, pristinely clean—home.

The greatest gift these buildings have given me is the reminder that God is my true dwelling place. As my heart struggles with the lack of space and things, I learn the beauty of order and contentment. In such limited living areas families can't have it all and to my surprise, don't need it all. Living with less raises my awareness of my desire to have control, and the fight to hang on to that control is intense. Yet as surrender to God lifts my eyes to his kingdom, his rule brings a greater peace and a deeper joy than I will ever find in any other place.

*SONG: In Christ Alone*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Lord, lift my eyes beyond my present surroundings to life in you. Raise my awareness to the areas in my life that I am hanging on to and fighting to control, not allowing you to order and redeem. May I find my dwelling place in you.*

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*BIBLE READING: Psalm 90:3-6*

The rough, rocky terrain of Herzegovina leaves a dry taste in my mouth. Hot summers and the strong winds of winter have left their rugged mark. Signs for the Tvrđos Monastery begin to appear alongside the road and we look forward to a cool, quiet place to stretch our legs. Lush and green, the gardens welcome us in. I walk into the Eastern Orthodox chapel. Vivid paintings and sharp incense wash over me, waking me from the weariness of the last hour driving with a screaming baby, raising my thoughts to the reality beyond.

*What am I doing with my time?*

I'm tucked into the corner of the gardens feeding my four-month-old, watching my husband chasing our two other girls across the thriving grounds.

*How come I can't breathe this deeply all the time?*

I know it's not a question of *can't* but *don't*. My frantic pace is a choice I can step out of. Life is fleeting and my hurried efforts and tense shoulders only make it more so.

We talk to a young priest. He's traded a successful career in a large city for the slow rhythm of monastic life, committed to prayer and pursuing God. I'm a little jealous.

Responsibilities, duties call us all. Rather than allow them to rule my day, right now I choose to breathe deeply and let daily routine call me back to prayer, each transition a reminder of who is holding my times.

*SONG: Come Alive (Dry Bones) (Lauren Daigle)*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father God, thank you for the path you have placed me on. Teach me how to fully embrace my today with a heart of prayer.*

—Micah Lehman Kavedzic

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 90:7-8*

Language learning is an odd thing. It grows harder with age. This is not an issue of capacity but complexity. As we grow older we become more complicated, have more obligations, are more aware of ourselves, and more aware of how others perceive us. My three-and-a-half-year-old has no qualms about making a language mistake. She blurts out what she knows, rolls with the punches when she is corrected, and asks for help when she gets stuck. My two-year-old similarly is not bothered by her limited vocabulary, repeating the words she knows over and over and over until I think even the dog will learn them. She picks up new words on a daily basis and does the same with them. Over and over and over.

In the area of language learning the result of my children's innocence astounds me. They may be unable to see beyond themselves, but pride has not yet sent down its deep roots. They have not yet learned the art of saving face or developed the desire to project the image of who they think they need to be rather than who they actually are.

What would happen if I adopted this level of authenticity into my complicated adult heart? God knows me inside and out regardless of the image I try to project. How beautiful to unashamedly live my life in the presence of the Father of Light. How scary. Intimidating. Freeing. As I allow myself to be set out before him, he orders my inner places and makes me beautiful. He redeems. He heals. He makes me whole.

*SONG: Brokenness Aside (All Sons and Daughters)*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father of Lights, sort through my layers and give me strength as you deal with my dark corners.*

—Micah Lehman Kavedzic

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 90:9-10a*

As I sit in a conference room full of women I can easily pick out the Eastern Europeans, dressed in carefully planned outfits that make a statement. Over the course of our four days together I notice the same outfits are donned more than once with slight variations. I, on the other hand, have four completely different outfits plus extra layers—just in case—for every possible weather scenario. I'm impressed with the conventional approach of my Balkan counterparts.

I think about my overflowing closet at home. It's not that I'm a shopaholic, rather just unconsciously overcautious in hopes of being ready for any and every situation. Three-quarters of my clothes I rarely (if ever) wear, but hang on to them because one never knows.

My attempts at control in this area just add another layer of frantic to my life. A well-organized closet only lasts for a few days since the shirt I want tends to always be at the bottom of a stack or way in the back. It's time to let go. The *just-in-case* scenarios don't justify the disarray that tugs at my soul.

It's time to surrender, loosen my tight grip. Fleeting years are much better enjoyed when I choose to trust God to provide for the what if's. He is already fully aware of the *just-in-cases* and will take care of me. As I thin out my closet, contentment washes over me. There is something beautiful and freeing in having fewer choices. I've discovered an exercise in trust.

*SONG: He's Always Been Faithful (Sarah Groves)*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Show me the ways in which I am choosing labor over rest. Show me the areas of control that I can release to you today.*

—Micah Lehman Kavedzic

*BIBLE READING: Psalm 90:11-12*

The convenience of the delta is hard to argue against. The sandy beach is easier for our kids to play on than the rockier beaches further up the Croatian coast. The gradual drop-off and shallow water is less intimidating and warmer for little bodies. But as we became aware of the risks, the conveniences paled in comparison. The water of the delta is fairly stagnant. Combine this with warm temperatures and you have a hotbed for breeding bacteria.

The health risks far outweigh the conveniences, so we drive a bit further. We teach the girls how to maneuver across the rocks. We hold our breath as we brace for entering colder water. But it's worth it. My girls will not only be healthier because of this choice, but stronger, braver, bolder in the water. And it's beautiful. There is little that compares to the clean blue water of the open sea.

This past summer we were faced with a major decision about our place in the local church. As we prayed through our options it became apparent that convenience was clouding my judgment. I realized that a choice based on convenience is not living out of a heart of wisdom. Rather, it is failure to make the most of the time that God has given me. The rocky beach is not always an easy place to be. But ultimately, its beauty is incomparable.

*SONG: Oceans (Where Feet May Fail) (Hillsong United)*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Help me to see when conveniences are keeping me from taking a fuller, stronger, healthier plunge into your grace.*

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*BIBLE READING: Psalm 90:13-15*

Six weeks of temperatures hovering around 100 degrees demanded an escape. Boracko Lake is only a few hours away, tucked up in the Herzegovinian mountains—cool refreshment calling our names. But I almost missed the beauty. Over-packed beaches. Blaring music. Goats roasting on a spit overrode my senses. Thankfully we stayed an extra day and as the weekend crowd dispersed I was able to catch a glimpse of the serenity of God's creation that had been buried beneath all the chaos: looming mountains, stars so close you could touch them, the fresh breath we so desperately needed.

*Satisfy us. Satisfy me.*

My efforts are just noise. Clutter. More weight. Overcrowded beaches and raging music. The peace I crave can never come from rigid striving but only from a slow rhythm coursing from you. Let the weekend crowd pack their bags.

Back home my husband takes the early shift with the girls, allowing me a few quiet moments with you. I sit in the orange chair wrapped in a soft brown blanket. Coffee in hand. Bible in my lap. Heavy eyes. A desire in my heart.

I hold this desire loosely up to you.

*Lord, examine me.*

You call me into refreshing waters. Deep into the calm. The surface current washes away the clutter that collects. The worry. The hurry. The hard things. I want to stay in this place. This calm. It's a seed, a gift I carry in my heart. May it grow and bloom. May it fill my whole day, my full day, my life.

*SONG: Rock of Ages (When the Day Seems Long) (Sandra McCracken)*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Only you satisfy. Open my eyes to the ways my striving shuts you out. Turn my heart to ways that make space for you to work.*

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*BIBLE READING: Psalm 90:16-17*

I can't get enough of the Adriatic Sea. One particular visit was due to a team retreat. Teaching, prayer, worship, and quiet, unplanned afternoons. Nearby tourist sights kept the group busy and I was eager to join them, not wanting to miss anything. But my husband had no desire to do anything but enjoy the sea. Grudgingly I stayed behind with him. Happily I look back on that retreat as the moment my idea of vacation was forever altered. I found the healing power of rest.

How easily I miss the beauty of rest in my frantic search to see, to do, to conquer. God's gift is before me and I treat it like a postcard, stashing it away in the third drawer for some special occasion that never comes. Enough of the sightseeing, enough of the pressure to not miss a thing. Rest.

Sharing life with my husband has taught me more than just how to enjoy a vacation. It is a constant discovery of differences: male vs. female, Bosnian vs. American, him vs. me. I am on a lifelong journey of learning how to let him be himself and let God do his work. It is God alone who can bless the work of my husbands' hands. Most of the time, I just need to get out of the way.

Rest. Today I choose rest. I choose to stop talking and striving. And today I choose to let God do his work in me and in those around me.

*SONG: Your Great Name (Natalie Grant)*

*PRAYER SUGGESTION: Multiply, bless, enrich the labor of my hands. May I not take a step without you. May my life be established in you. May my life be rooted in your rest.*

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