

busy about so much nothing

"and Jesus answered and said to her, "martha, martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. but one thing is needed, and mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." luke 10:31-42

and now

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every so often, my head hits the pillow and i curl into a fetal position, trying not to hyperventilate at the realization that in not nearly enough hours, this finish line will become the starting line. and i'll have to tackle life all over again. oh come again, Lord Jesus.

i wonder how i got here – the chaos, the mess, the failing – and i strategize how to make tomorrow better. this is just a season and it will pass. but is it? and will it? i suppose the seasons have been different. whether it was adolescence, or insecurity, or exams, or finances, or breakups, or stressful jobs, or moves, or pregnancies, or anxiety, or babies, or hard relationships, or traveling, or sickness, or parenting, or just sheer exhaustion. but so often it's just one thing replacing another thing. another fire to put out. another mountain to climb. and as a doer and a fixer, the to-do list is never-ending and there's always something to improve or put back together.

i can do this. just tweak the schedule. get up a little earlier. simplify. re-organize. streamline. plan better. focus. pare down. clear out. divide

and conquer. tomorrow will be better. i'll sleep more this weekend. it'll slow down next week. just waiting for summer. it'll get easier when they're older.

but there are storms in every season. whether it's a constant, dreary spring rain, an unexpected summer thunderstorm, or a driving, relentless blizzard, there's no avoiding storms.

and while i might cry out to God when the storms get really bad, it's those long, weary rains that are most dangerous for my soul. not quite bad enough to scare me, but they get me wet enough to distract me from my purpose. i put my head down, hide under the umbrella of my self-sufficiency, and forget to look up at the one who has power over every single raindrop.

maybe it'll hit me as i collapse into bed, battle already fought and lost. "Lord, please just pause life for a bit and stop the rain so i can catch a glimpse of you."

He is not a genie who merely takes away bad things and gives me good things. He is my good thing. He is my peace and my rest and my life and my hope – in both the storms and the calm.

"be still and know that i am God" psa 46:10 rather than commanding us to try harder to find him, God tells us to be still and know him. stop. enough. cease striving. because he is God and he is moving and doing glorious things in both the sunshine and the rain, whether we stop and notice or not. we must not miss out because our hearts are too busy.

though i would never admit it, it's almost as if i want to streamline and organize and simplify my life to a point where i no longer need God to get me through my day. but my strengths and abilities will fail, again and again. i need a Savior every day.

perhaps feeling overwhelmed and inadequate isn't such a bad thing if that is what brings me to my knees and shatters my false sense of security. to the place where i realize my planning and intelligence and coping mechanisms mean absolutely nothing if I'm not becoming more and more like Christ and resting in the strength and presence of my Creator, the author of my day. more of Him and way, way less of me.

we don't need answers to all of our questions and problems; we need the only answer. seek him first and allow the Holy Spirit to lead and problem-solve and prioritize. He's way better at it.

yes, we probably are too busy. yes, we probably have too much stuff. yes, we probably need more sleep. but fixing these things should be the fruit of seeking first the face of God, trusting in the blood of Christ, and yielding to the power of the Spirit - not the focus.

this is not meant to sound pessimistic. i realize that when i say we will continually fail and face hardships, it can come across as bleak. but i'm telling you, battling the storms while understanding our utter hopelessness and resting in the power of Christ is infinitely more peaceful and invigorating and impactful

than a thousand chaos-free days. He is our rest. He is our peace within the chaos. He is the means and the end. don't spend so much of your energy running from the mess that you're too weary to run to Him.

but how do we do this? knowing something means nothing if we aren't letting it change us. we have to start right now. ask Him for help. it will look a bit different for everyone, but try putting aside your own list of things to accomplish today for just a few minutes, and make a spiritual to-do list.

this is not something you learn, conquer, and move on. you can't cross it off your list so you can tackle the next thing. i'm ashamed at how many times i've had to relearn this. how many wasted hours have gone by that i've forgotten Him. how many days i've foolishly spent relying on my own strength and overlooking His presence. but if you didn't seek Him yesterday, seek Him today. if you failed to look for His glory an hour ago, look for it now. if you forgot who gave you your last breath, remember who is giving you the next. be still and know.

by bonnie mckernan