



MOMENTS TO PONDER
FROM BROKENNESS TO BRILLIANCE:
UNVEILING VALUE AND FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Episode 84: Brilliance

Hi Friends! Welcome to Moments to Ponder. This is a podcast designed to help you spend a few moments in God's Word wherever you are and take away something to ponder.

We live in a loud, busy world that can make it hard to find the time to get into God's word and I'm so grateful you've chosen to spend a few moments with me to ponder brokenness to brilliance. I'm Betsy Marvin and this is episode 84.

Music fades

The movement of this series has been one that mirrors the journey of our spiritual formation. I think can all agree that we are, or have been, broken creatures in this world. We've had some broken pieces in our lives whether through relational conflicts, sinful behaviors, or hurtful experiences. These pieces can lead to shame, guilt, feelings of inadequacy, and worthlessness so we try to deal with it by people pleasing, substances, victimizing, overachieving, and many other things.

Our spiritual journey starts here. When realize that we need something, some One, to help us discover our value, to show us how to be whole, to save us from ourselves – it's then we begin to open our hearts to hear from the One who made us and accept His love, receive His forgiveness, and discover the healing He offers. Our hearts were literally designed to seek the fulfillment of the One that created our hearts in the first place. God.

When we allow ourselves to see what He sees us – divinely crafted, priceless creations made in His image - it speaks to our value and worth. As his creation, he loves us. He loved us before we even knew him. He loved us first.

Because of our value in his eyes, because he loves us so much – he offers a way to be free of the guilt and shame we take on due to our sinfulness or what may have happened to us. In his graciousness, he offered his forgiveness through Jesus. Sin has a price, Jesus came in order to pay that price, and it's a free gift we can each receive. I spoke of this in the first three episodes in this series.

Yet, we can know that we are divinely crafted and have value. We can received His grace-filled forgiveness through Christ. And, we can know that we are called by God, which was the previous episode. But, we can know these things and still feel the sense that there is more. It raises the

question of more. When does the brilliance come? When do we experience the abundant life that Jesus speaks of?

I will state is simply, but it is not easy.

The brilliance within you, from God, comes when you finally take action and literally live into the ordinary obedience of the daily surrender to Jesus. James says it straight up in 1:22, *“But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.”* As the action of surrender begins to permeate your life, living as he tells us, you discover will discover light, freedom, and joy. John reminds us that *“the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”* John 1:5 (NIV)

I have found that surrender opens the door for His brilliant light. It’s in the surrender that we fully experience the freedom that is joy and peace.

But, as humans with so much drive, independence, and need for control, many of us find it hard to fully surrender our entire lives into his hands. We may know that:

Holding onto unforgiveness brings bitterness.

Holding onto pain brings depression.

Holding onto addictions brings loneliness and loss.

And that, Holding onto Jesus brings life.

He tells us, *“I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”*

John 8:12

I have found that the hardest things to surrender are the ones done against us. If we let the pain go, who will pay the price for it? If we release the anger, how will justice be done? If I forgive, who will hold them accountable? Some of you have held onto a hurt or injustice so long it has become a part of your identity which then brings the fear of – who will I be if I let this go?

So let me say this, when we are releasing our pain– we are placing it in the hands of Jesus allowing ourselves to be free of it. It is an act of trust. When we allow him to take it from us, it acknowledges that we trust He in control and that He is For us. God loves you and I too much to want us to remain chained to these things. He longs for each of us to live into who he made us to be without all the weight holding us down.

In the words of Donkey from the movie Shrek – people are like onions. We have to peel back the layers. I’ve used this illustration often when speaking on surrender, leave it to an animated donkey to speak a truth that continues to stick in my head!

The discovery of who we are in Christ is found as we, along with his love and grace, peel back the layers that have formed over time within us. Each layer containing footholds to release, lies to acknowledge, pain to heal from, and other areas to understand and move through. Remember

Jesus tells us, *“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.”* John 10:10 (NLT)

What might be a layer in need of surrender in your life?

Is it a fear?

If I don’t control it, everything will fall apart.

I have to meet everyone’s expectations or they’ll know I’m not who they think I am.

What if I’m not enough?

What do they think of me?

*The Lord is my light and my salvation— so why should I be afraid?
The Lord is my fortress, protecting me from danger, so why should I tremble?* Psalm 27:1

Maybe it’s a limiting belief:

Women aren’t able to do that.

Look at my past, I can’t ever get over that.

If they don’t agree with me, they must not like me.

No one can do what I do.

People like me don’t get ahead.

He tells us, *“My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.”* 2 Cor. 12:9

Or is it a hurt?

If I forgive them, they won’t pay the price I need them to pay.

I am the victim.

Men leave.

He heals the brokenhearted and bandages their wounds. Ps. 147:3

Like an onion, the outermost layer is the easiest to see and remove and as we continue, as each layer falls, the light within us gets a bit brighter radiating from the center where the Spirit lives. But, also like an onion, the tears will come as well. Some layers will be painful, others stubborn, while others will just fall off. And, as we near the center, the layers are tighter, harder to remove.

It’s important to know that we don’t remove these layers alone. It is His work in us that provides the strength to grow, to forgive, to love. *[We] can do all things through Christ who gives us strength.* Phil. 4:13 And, with each layer, we are surrendering and in turn becoming more like Jesus and more free.

I recently spoke on the Lord’s prayer, looking at the various phrases and using parables to help students grasp the concept Jesus was teaching in that portion of his prayer. Jesus begins his prayer in Matthew 6:9-10 with, *“Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.*

May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:9-10

Your Will be done. These are powerful words.

These are the words behind Mary’s answer to the angel upon learning of her pregnancy and Jesus. These are words Jesus himself would say as he prayed in the garden before his trial and crucifixion. They are not easy, but they are the words of surrender.

Surrender is the acknowledgement that we will let God’s will be done, placing ourselves in his hand with complete trust that he will work and make things good in his time.

Pause...

Have you ever been a passenger in a car when the person driving isn’t that great at driving? They’re distracted, too slow, or too fast...and you find yourself getting anxious? It’s so hard to not speak up or offer to take over the driving...we like to know that car is under control when we’re going 70 miles an hour down a highway.

I have to admit that I am one of those people that can have a hard time letting others drive when I’m anxious about being late, or really, just anxious. My husband has learned that I am a really bad side-seat driver in those times so it’s just easier to let me drive. Why? When I’m anxious I need to be in control of something and if I’m not controlling the car...then I try to control him which does not turn out well. When I’m not anxious, I can easily let others drive while I sit back and enjoy the scenery and the conversation.

In the same way, it can be hard to allow God to drive our lives. Not because he’s not a great driver, but because we aren’t sure we trust where he’s going, or we think he’s going too slow or too fast. We aren’t sure we can trust his control, direction, love.

Yes, mentally we know we can trust Him, but when it comes to giving over the steering wheel, we falter. But God is gently asking, will you let me drive even when you’re anxious or in pain. Can I drive, even when you feel late or think I’m going the wrong way? If you will, I promise to take you where you need to go and you’ll be exactly on time.

It’s why he says to, *Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Prov. 3:5-6*

Jesus says, *“Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.*

All those things we carry, make us tired under their weight don’t they? Jesus says, come. He invites us to rest from the striving, rest from holding onto the bitterness, let go of control and all the heavy burdens others put on us,. *Be still and know that he is God. (Is. 41:10)*

He continues, *“Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”* Matthew 11:28-30

The yoke of a Rabbi was his teaching. Just as a yoke for cattle is something they wear, a Rabbi’s teaching is something their students wore.

What does Jesus teach?

“You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Matthew 22:37-39

What is the burden?

“I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20

This is easier and lighter when surrender.

When you surrender the idea that everyone has to agree with you, you discover a freedom to love your neighbor as yourself.

When you surrender the belief that what others think of you defines you, you are free to be yourself.

When you surrender allowing the past hold you prisoner, you stop being controlled by the narrative that you are a victim.

When you surrender unforgiveness, you realize how heavy it was to carry and experience a new lightness in your life.

In my own journey, surrender as taught me that;

When I set my worth in him, I’m not threatened by the success of others...in fact, I will celebrate God’s work in them.

When I allow my pain to be taken by him, I’m able to lean into the pain of others without the need to one up their story or relive my own. I have learned that I can own my past but not held prisoner by it.

When I allow him to take control, I’m able to watch the opportunities come and acknowledge His work.

This is the promise: *And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.*

Phil. 1:6

Dear one, here is a gift from Jesus. *“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”* John 14:27 May you discover the brilliance of the freedom that comes as you live into the ordinary obedience of daily surrender. May His will be done in your life bringing light, joy and peace as he fills you with his love, strength, and purpose.

You are loved with an everlasting love; drawn by unfailing kindness. *(adapted from Jer. 31:3)*

Amen.

If any of these verses or quotes resonated for you, and you would like to ponder them further, you can find them listed in the Pondering Journal through the link in my show notes. You can also find it along with full transcript of this episode on my website: betsymarvin.com.