



The Hardest Truth for Believers to Believe

Jeremiah 32

David Sunday

February 17, 2013

Still my soul be still
And do not fear
Though winds of change may rage
tomorrow
God is at your side
No longer dread
The fires of unexpected sorrow

God You are my God
And I will trust in You and not be
shaken
Lord of peace renew
A steadfast spirit within me
To rest in You alone

Still my soul be still
Do not be moved
By lesser lights and fleeting shadows
Hold onto His ways
With shield of faith
Against temptations flaming arrows

Still my soul be still
Do not forsake
The Truth you learned in the beginning
Wait upon the Lord
And hope will rise As stars appear
when day is dimming

(Still My Soul Be Still by Keith & Kristyn Getty)

That song anchors us. It's the truth and it's so good to hear a husband and wife team singing it together. That's such a sweet song. Thank you for the work on the guitar too; and Linda, for your work on the piano.

It's so good to be home with you after seven weeks away. Some people have asked me if I still remember how to preach and I'm kind of eager to discover the answer to that question myself today.

We are so grateful for the time you've given us and for our church family. Our hearts have been knit to you and we missed you while we were gone. We look forward to talking a little bit more about the sabbatical next Sunday night at our membership meeting. Every week, wherever we worshipped, we were thinking of you and feeling what the Apostle Paul said to the Philippians, *"God is my witness. How I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus"* (1:8). That is what's in our hearts to this church family.

Upon returning this week, I read a blog post from another pastor who had been away from his congregation for a couple weeks in Zambia. When he returned he said, "The healthiest kind of relationship between a pastor and his church is one where both people—

the pastor and the church—recognize that he is both expendable and appreciated.” I think that’s been one of the benefits of this time away. Certainly it’s shown that I am expendable.

I am very thankful for the way this church is led and cared for by your staff, by the elders who shepherd with integrity. What a joy it was for me to hear my brothers preaching the gospel—preaching the Word of God—during this time. I know you were blessed by their ministry and I was blessed by their ministry. Through all this, I think we can rejoice afresh that Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd of His church and He is building His church in such a way that it doesn’t depend on one individual. I am grateful for that.

I’m also grateful to be appreciated. You’ve been so kind to us in giving us this time away. We did not need a break from you but it was very timely for us as a family and very strengthening to us. Thank you for your generosity, for not complaining about it but being so good to us. Thank you that you’ve said you wanted us back. I was really glad when I tried my key on the church door and found that it still worked! I’m still welcome here apparently.

As an expression for my love for you, I want us to turn in our Bibles to a passage that more than any other in Scripture has been, for me, a source of reviving strength and has shaped and sustained my faith. I believe this strength has spilled over into our elders during the last three years since New Covenant Bible Church began its life together.

I think it’s safe to say that if it were not for Jeremiah 32, I don’t believe New Covenant Bible Church, as we know it, would exist today. This has had such a profound influence on my life and on who we are as a church. I want to preach this message today; I’ve preached this five different places in the last three years but never at the place I love to preach the most which is right here. I’ve been waiting for the right time and I think that’s today so let’s read God’s Word beginning at Jeremiah 32:36.

Jeremiah was in prison and Jerusalem was under siege when God first delivered these words to the prophet.

³⁶“Now therefore thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, ‘It is given into the hand of the king of Babylon by sword, by famine, and by pestilence’: ³⁷Behold, I will gather them from all the countries to which I drove them in my anger and my wrath and in great indignation. I will bring them back to this place, and I will make them dwell in safety. ³⁸And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. ³⁹I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. ⁴⁰I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them. And I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me. ⁴¹I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant

them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul. ⁴²“For thus says the Lord: Just as I have brought all this great disaster upon this people, so I will bring upon them all the good that I promise them.”

God, we say, “Still, my soul be still... Do not forsake the Truth You learned in the beginning.” Let us take these truths about You that we have known—many of us for a long time—and I pray that by Your Spirit You would massage them more deeply into our souls so that we would not only confess but derive comfort and renewed faith and hope and joy in You through the ministry of Your Word and the power of Your Spirit, for the glory of Your Son we pray. Amen.

I was in Elgin, little knowing that the most intense season of change and transition and difficulty in my family’s life was about to begin when God first arrested my attention with these words. It was the first week of January 2010. I found my heart marinating in this truth. I’m not sure how I got there but Jeremiah 32 just laid hold on me with such a relentless grip, I knew that when I stood up to preach the second Sunday of January, I had to preach these words.

There was something in these words that God was revealing to me about His heart; something about His nature that I realized I had not been fully believing. In fact, I would suggest that in these words we find the hardest truth for believers to believe about God. You might quibble with me and say, “Well, I don’t think that’s the hardest truth for me to believe.” But in my own experience and in my fellowship with others in the body of Christ, it has seems to me there is a truth in these words, an aspect of God’s character that we—the people of God—doubt far too often.

There’s a truth here that God speaks most emphatically—repetitively and warmly—as if to say to us, “My people, I know you know these things. I know you have heard these things. I know you say you believe these things, but I want to really make sure you understand what is in My heart for you. I want you to really believe what you say you believe about Me.”

God knows that our reluctant, timid hearts have a hard time embracing this. It seems too good to be true. So I’m going to ask you a daunting question: what is the hardest truth for believers to believe about God? I believe this chapter gives us an answer.

Little did I know when I was preparing a sermon in January 2010 how much God was using it to prepare my heart, to prepare Kate’s heart, to prepare our church to worship Him

in the months that were to follow. God was conditioning our hearts—seasoning our souls—with what is contained in this chapter.

So first, a little about the context. If you look back at Jeremiah 32:1-15, you will see that a real estate transaction takes place. Remember, Jeremiah is in prison in the king's court and the Babylonians are surrounding Jerusalem. They've been under siege and starvation is setting in. Jeremiah has prophesied that Israel—the people of God—are going to be carried off into exile for 70 years.

It's at this time that a man named Hanamel, Jeremiah's cousin, comes and says, "Jeremiah, there's a piece of property in our family and you're the one who has the right to purchase it. Go buy this property right here in this land." Jeremiah knows that exile is coming. He knows he will never be able to live on this property. He's going to die before the people ever come back to this land.

But after prophesying of God's judgment, he's been saying things like this, "*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope*" (Jeremiah 29:11—probably the most famous verse in the book of Jeremiah). He has been telling God's people that after 70 years of discipline and hardship, they will return to this land and experience the fullness of God's promises that many years before He had covenanted with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He's been speaking of a future and a hope. So to test his faith in God's promises, this man, this cousin comes to him and says, "Jeremiah, put your money where your mouth is. Do you really believe there's still hope for the people of God? Do you really believe God will still be gracious to them? Then buy this land and let this purchase stand as a visible symbol to God's people that the God Who has made these promises will be faithful to complete them."

Jeremiah goes through with this real estate transaction in Jeremiah 32:9-14. He buys the land because of what God says in Jeremiah 32:15: "*For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land.*" There's going to be a return; there's going to be restoration. Jeremiah says, "Okay, I believe that." In a courageous decision, he expresses his faith and puts money down to buy the real estate. That's a bold gesture of hope! But then like so many of us, he gets buyer's remorse. "Oh no! What have I done?"

Have you ever acted in faith and then doubted? "Why did I do that? Will God really come through on His promises? Do I really believe there's hope in this situation? My family and our nation—things look so dire." Have you ever become cynical and jaded? Hopeless

and overwhelmed with a sense of weariness wondering if you can even believe what you have confessed about God anymore? That's what Jeremiah's starting to experience after he buys this land.

He's sitting in prison thinking about exile and he starts wrestling against despair. He shows us how to do it in Jeremiah 32:17-25. He turns to God—the Rock of his salvation—and pours out his heart in prayer. He speaks to God about Who God is and what God has done. Jeremiah preaches the gospel to himself beginning in Jeremiah 32:17. Look at some of the things he says to God in prayer: *“Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.”* In other words, “God, I don't know how You're going to bring blessing out of this mess. I don't know how You're going to bring salvation out of judgment but this I believe: You're all powerful and nothing is too difficult for You.”

Then in the verses that follow, Jeremiah goes on to recall the redemptive acts of God on behalf of His people, especially in the exodus when He brought His people out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. We who live on this side of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ have seen an even infinitely more magnificent act of redemption that ought to encourage our hearts in the darkest of times.

Jeremiah pours out his heart to God in Jeremiah 32:16-25 and then beginning in verse 26, God very mercifully starts to pour out His heart to Jeremiah. God starts reminding Jeremiah of truths about Himself:

- ◆ beautiful truths
 - ◆ soul-strengthening truths
 - ◆ despair-defying truths

The first thing God wants Jeremiah to understand about Himself is that He is omnipotent. Look at Jeremiah 32:26-27. He is all-powerful, omnipotent. *“The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: ‘Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me?’* Now who did you just hear say, “Nothing is too hard for you, O God?” Who just said that? Jeremiah. He was praying and said, “Nothing's impossible for you, O God.” Then God turns around and says to Jeremiah, “Jeremiah, really? Are you sure you believe that? Is anything too hard for me, Jeremiah?”

On Sundays, we sing wonderful things about God. We pray wonderful truths about God. We confess our faith in this great God. Then on Monday mornings, God often says to

us, “Oh, really? Are you sure you believe that? Are you sure you believe what you’ve confessed?” What do we mean when we say that God is all-powerful, God is omnipotent?

The theologian, Herman Bavinck, describes God’s omnipotence like this: “He possesses absolute power in regard to everything. Everything in the universe, everything in your life, God has absolute power in regard to it.” Do you believe that truth? I think it’s hard for us to believe that sometimes but I don’t think that’s the hardest truth for us to believe about God.

Beginning in Jeremiah 32:28-35, we hear God pouring out His heart; we hear God expressing a truth that is severe but true and we need to understand it. He is a God Who deals justly with sin; a God Who does not leave sin unpunished. A lot of people don’t believe this about God. They don’t believe that no one gets away with sin. They don’t believe that every sin will be punished but this is what the Bible teaches. God never overlooks sin. He never leaves sin unpunished. Every one of our sins will be punished either in ourselves or, mercifully, in our Substitute.

The Substitute that God has provided—His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ Who went to the cross—lived the perfect life, died the death in our place to bear the curse of our sins and rose from the dead to prove that our sins are forgiven if we put our trust in Him. But our sins must be punished either in Jesus or in ourselves, even the sins of believers that have been laid on Jesus Christ. God, because He loves us, will not fail to discipline us if we persist in hardness of heart. His discipline is not a punishment as if we’re paying for our sins. His discipline is an expression of a Father’s love because He cares for us and He does not want us to remain in that which is harmful to us.

In these verses, God describes His discipline of His people with words like Jeremiah 32:33: *“They have turned to me their back and not their face. And though I have taught them persistently, they have not listened to receive instruction.”* Generation after generation has hardened its heart. They have not listened to the words of God and because of that, God is going to send them into exile and their hardness of heart and their refusal to listen to God has gotten so dire and dismal that in Jeremiah 32:35, we read about abominations that God can hardly dare mention; they’re so wicked and horrible, casting their sons and daughters into the fire before the pagan god, Molech. God says, “This is an abomination. I will deal with sin.”

Do you believe God tolerates sin? That He winks at sin? That He overlooks sin? That God doesn't care about sin? I think sometimes because God is so patient, we start to assume we can live however we please and there will be no consequences.

But the consistent testimony of the Word of God from beginning to end is that *"be sure, your sin will find you out"* (Numbers 32:23). There will be consequences. There will be discipline. That's a hard truth for us to believe about God but if we believe in Him, I don't think it's the hardest truth for us to believe. I think believers love the holiness of God and love the fact that God deals justly with sin even though it's hard.

Then in Jeremiah 32:36, God switches gears and brings us to a truth that I think we really, really, really struggle to believe. We struggle to believe it because it almost seems too good to be true. Now if you have the ESV Bible, I want you to carefully look at the first two words of verse 36. Does everyone see that in your Bible? *"Now therefore..."* What are you always supposed to ask when you hear therefore? "What is it there for?" It's there because something preceded this and what is going to be said after the "therefore" is an inference—a truth—that drives from what has just been said.

"Now therefore," God says in Jeremiah 32:36. So what has He just been saying? "My people have been turning their backs toward Me, not their faces. They will not listen to Me. They've been throwing their sons and daughters into the fire. They've done abominations in My sight." *"Now therefore..."* What do you think He's going to say? "Now therefore I am done with this people! I'm going to wipe them off the face of this earth. I will never be merciful to them again." That's what we would expect and could any of us blame God if that were what He said?

But that's not what He says in Jeremiah 32:36 and following. What He says that comes next is so totally unexpected, so totally surprising, some English versions don't even use the word "therefore" at the beginning of verse 36. I don't know why they would leave that out except maybe they're thinking there can't be a real logical connection between what was just said and what's coming up. They just don't fit together in human reasoning. So they leave out the word.

Look at Jeremiah 32:36-41 in light of what God has just been saying:

- "My people won't listen to me. They commit abominations against me. Now therefore... I will gather them." Really?
- "My people won't listen to me; therefore I will bring them back. I will make them dwell in safety."

- “My people have not listened to me. They’ve done abominations in my sight. Now therefore... *They shall be my people, and I will be their God. I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them. I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them*” (Jeremiah 32:39-40).

How can that be? Who is a God like this Who turns toward those who have turned away, Who lavishes love and mercy and goodness on those who deserve nothing but His wrath. As if to emphasize it beyond a shadow of a doubt, He says in Jeremiah 32:41, *“I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul.”*

That, my friend, says what I believe to be the hardest truth for Christians to believe about God.

- That God is glad
- That God is generous
- That God is ungrudging in His goodness toward His people who repent and believe in His Son, Jesus.

It’s hard to believe because it defies human logic. It’s not what we expect to hear; it’s almost illogical. How can He be so good, so gracious toward repentant sinners?

The old preacher, Donald Grey Barnhouse, once said the only logical doctrine in the Bible is hell. It makes sense that a holy God would send sinners to hell. That’s logical. But a God Who is glad, a God Who is generous and ungrudging in His goodness toward sinners? Amazing love. How can it be? How can it be? A God Who turns around and lavishes His goodness on people who deserve nothing but His wrath.

I remember about 20 years ago we had a preacher from West Virginia come to our church. His name was Tom Smith and he said, “The two hardest tasks for a preacher are these...

1. ...to convince unrepentant sinners that God is angry with them.” It’s hard, isn’t it? We live in a culture where people just scoff at that idea. They don’t believe that. They are so callous and nonchalant about that. It’s hard.
2. Tom Smith went on to say, “The second hard task for a preacher is to convince repentant believers that God loves them.” Then he said, “And the second task is harder than the first.” There is in our hearts a suspicion, a fear that makes us timid, reluctant to believe that God is good to us, that He’s glad to be good to us and that He will never stop being good to us. The only reason it’s not impossible for God to be that way is because nothing is impossible for God. Nothing is too hard for Him.

In God's wisdom, mercy and grace He has done what no one else could do. God has made a way. God has made a way through the perfect life, the sin-bearing death and the life-giving resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ for Him to be good—unfailingly good—to sinners who repent and believe in Jesus. Did you notice how God describes His goodness in so many different ways? It has so many different aspects to it; so many different sides to it. God is holding up this diamond to His goodness and saying, "Look at that angle and that angle and that angle." In Jeremiah 32:37 He says, "I will bring my people home." That means God wants you to be close to Him. God wants you to dwell in His presence. He wants you to be at home with Him. That's how He loves you. He wants you to be secure, protected. He will give you safety when you find refuge in Him. In Jeremiah 32:38 He says, *"They shall be my people, and I will be their God."*

As a parent, have you ever had a time out in public when something was happening with a child and you just wanted to walk in the opposite direction and pretend you didn't know this person? Remember how embarrassing it was! Do you think God is that way with you? "Is God ashamed to call me His child? Is God ashamed to be my God? Is Jesus ashamed to call me His brother or sister?"

Dare I say this? God is proud of His children. Do you believe that? Oh, not of every single thing you do—of course not. But I wonder if somewhere in the back of your mind you think the only time God is going to stop frowning at you is when you die and finally you're perfect in Christ's presence. "Finally, He will smile. Finally, He won't be ashamed of me any longer."

I wonder if that gives credit to what Jesus has done on the cross because as I understand it, there is One Who sank down, down, down, down, beneath God's righteous frown and because He sank down beneath God's righteous frown, God can now say to His people, *"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord lift up His countenance on you"* (Numbers 6:24). The Lord is beaming down on you with love and yes, with pride in who He is making you to be in Christ. He will be your God. He's not ashamed. He's not embarrassed by you.

"What if I mess up?" you ask. This is when I often doubt God's goodness to me and I mess up a lot. "What if I leave Him?"

I was just saying this morning, "I'm prone to wander, Lord. I feel it." God says, "Well don't worry. I have thought of that too." Look at Jeremiah 32:39. He says, *"I will give them*

one heart and one way, that they may fear me forever, for their own good and the good of their children after them.” Then in the second part of Jeremiah 32:40, He says, “*...I will put the fear of me in their hearts, that they may not turn from me.*”

In a sense, what we ask God to do He has already done through the Spirit. He has taken our hearts and sealed them for His courts above. That should not be used as an excuse to be careless, but it should be used as a comfort in His keeping power. We believers know it's the Holy Spirit Who puts the fear of God in our hearts so we don't want to go down a path of sinning. When we do wander or when we do stray, we find ourselves being drawn back irresistibly to the God we love because He has given us a new heart. He has given us a divine heart transplant.

When you think about your weaknesses, sins and failings, what are you more aware of? All the ways you failed or all the ways God is gracious and merciful? Do you think of all the promises He's made. When you look at your children and you see all the things you fear for them, do you remember that God says, “Not only will I do this for you but I will do this for the good of your children after you” (Jeremiah 32:39). Sometimes I think we almost live as if God hasn't made any promises for our children, for future generations. God wants us to cherish in our hearts a hope that leads us to pray fervently and to instruct our kids in the faith. But He also wants us to have a confidence that He is for them too; that God intends good for them too. We should have a prayerful, hopeful confidence in His goodness.

You ask, “How? How can all of this be true? How can a holy God be so good to a hell-deserving people?” The answer is in Jeremiah 32:40: “*I will make with them an everlasting covenant, that I will not turn away from doing good to them.*” That's what we celebrate at the Lord's Table. That's what our Lord Jesus did when He went to the cross. It's as if He was saying to His Father, “Father, I am going to shed My blood so that this covenant that You've made to never turn away from doing good to them can be fulfilled. I'm going to shed My blood so You don't have to stop being good to Sally, being good to Jan, being good to Mike, being good to Rich—being good to all My people.”

Jesus died to secure these promises. Jesus died to satisfy the justice of God so the goodness of God could be poured out—uninhibited, lavishly, generously and ungrudgingly—on those who put their trust in Him. God says, “I'm never going to stop this. There's never going to come a day when you find Me to be less than good.”

In case you wonder how much God feels this goodness toward you, listen to Him loudly and emphatically repeat it in Jeremiah 32:41.

When I preached this in California on January 6th, I said, "Let's read this together." What I meant was that I was going to read it and they should just listen. But those people are so free out there in California; they started reading it out loud with me. Frankly, I liked that! For our more Midwestern, reserved crowd, I'm going to invite you to read this aloud with me now if you have the ESV. Jeremiah 32:41 has become the most important verse in the Bible to me over the last three years. I want you to read it loudly:

"I will rejoice in doing them good, and I will plant them in this land in faithfulness, with all my heart and all my soul."

God says, "All of Me. I'm not holding back in this. There's an infinite intensity in this. I'm going to pour out My whole soul. I'm going to concentrate My whole nature upon My people so they may be blessed to the fullest. I delight in this. I am slow to wrath and swift in mercy."

Charles Spurgeon says, "You are happy when God blesses you but not as happy as God is. You are glad when you are pardoned but not as glad as He Who pardons you. The prodigal son going back to his home was very happy to see his father but not as delighted as his father was to see him. The father's heart was more full of joy because his heart was larger than his son's. God's heart is so expansive, so full of unlimited capacity to bless that never for all eternity will we stop experiencing this goodness."

I'm asking you this morning, friends, do you believe this? Do you believe that God is absolutely, 100% delighted to be your God when you trust in His Son, Jesus Christ? Or do you think, "Okay, I'll expect 90%." Ninety percent of God is good but that 10%, you have to watch out for that! When you fail, you think, "I'm getting the 10% right now." When you're suffering and things aren't going well and you don't understand what's happening in your life, you think that must be God's frowning side that's looking down on you in this moment.

I find when I am anxious, it's because I'm not really believing this truth. When I am hiding in shame from my sins and refusing to trust in God's promise to forgive, it's because I don't really believe this truth that He rejoices in doing me good with all His heart, with all His soul. When I'm afraid about my finances, feeling insecure in my relationships, worrying about my future, it's because I don't trust that my life is under the constant care and tender attention of my God Who delights in doing me good with all His heart, with all His soul.

Friends, when I'm resentful, when I'm bitter, when I'm sullen, when I'm disappointed, when I'm discouraged, it's because I am thinking that somewhere back there, God forgot to be good to me. Somewhere back there He turned away from doing me good. There's something in my life that God's goodness has not penetrated. There's a point in my life where He's just left me. That's what I'm thinking when I feel bitter and resentful. God is saying to us in this passage, "My children, if only you knew My heart for you. If only you understood how glad I am to be good to you, you would never doubt Me again. You would never be anxious or fearful again. Because My Son went to the cross and died for that everlasting covenant, now I am 100% uninhibited in My delight in doing you good. When you're suffering, it's not because I failed to be good."

I ended my sermon back in January 2010 with one application. I said, "Just marinate in this truth until it seasons your soul with hope and sweetens your life with joy in the gospel. Just let it ooze into you; let it sink into you. Let it give you hope and joy." That's what we were doing throughout the month of January. Kate and I couldn't get away from it—Jeremiah 32:33-41 — *"I will rejoice in doing them good...with all my heart and all my soul."* Marinating in these verses impacted our lives together.

First of all, it was the very next Saturday that the elders from Grace and Fox Valley met to have our very first conversation about possibly bringing these churches together and forming a new church. Do you know what the very first Scripture we opened together was? We discussed Jeremiah 32. God is delighting to do us good and we were trusting that every person involved—every congregation involved as God led us through this process—would experience God's uninhibited goodness and His delight in doing us good. That's what guided us through the process.

In March of that year, as we met here for a question and answer time about the possible merger, one of you stood up and asked, "Do you have any ideas of what you would like to name this church?" I thought what an opportunity because I had an idea. I didn't know what anyone else would think. I said, "New Covenant Bible Church." Why? Because my heart was marinating in Jeremiah 32. If you were here then, do you remember what you did when I said that? You all started clapping and affirming the new name.

I think God wants us to remember every time we say our church covenant together, every time we drive past and see that sign, every time we come into this building, I think God wants us to remember we didn't put this church together. God said, "I put this church

together and I put this church together with an agenda to bless and to make you a blessing and to experience My goodness.” I want that to season our life together as a church.

This verse has also affected us very profoundly as a family. Kate and I were marinating on this in January 2010. We didn’t know how God was using it to season our souls, to trust Him in the greatest heartache of our lives. We had no idea at the beginning of January that on the 29th of that month we would end up in the emergency room of St. Joe’s Hospital. After we celebrated Kate’s birthday, we were told that night she had a rare and aggressive form of cancer. It was such a shock to us—not at all what we were expecting! After the shock settled in, do you know what came to our minds? Jeremiah 32:41: *“I will rejoice in doing them good...with all my heart and all my soul.”*

By God’s grace we were able to say in that hospital room, “We’re not going to focus right now on why this is happening. We’re not going to focus on how we’re going to get through this. We’re going to focus on Who God is. He is a God Who has not turned away from doing us good right now.” We were able to worship Him because of this truth. That’s what sustained Kate through her treatments. That’s what gave us hope when the doctor said it was inoperable. That’s what gave us courage when a doctor told us in July of that year, “There is a surgery I can do but it will involve removing your whole right lung and it is a risky surgery. You’ve got about three weeks to decide.”

It was knowing that God delights in doing us good with all His heart and with all His soul that enabled us amazingly to go to bed the night of August 1st and to rest, and to drive to Chicago the next morning, and to bring Kate into an operating room and to entrust her to our Father knowing that He was good. She didn’t need to come out of that surgery alive for us to know that He was good. The reason we knew that He was good is because Jesus came out of the tomb gloriously alive! I knew that if Kate never came back home to us, she would be in the presence of the One Who rejoices in doing her good with all His heart and soul. She’d be experiencing it more than ever in His presence; and He would make sure her family experienced it too.

All of this to say whatever your circumstances today, you can trust that He will not turn away from you. You can worship Him and proclaim Him to the world. Do you know the people in your life could never dream of a God like this? So show them that you trust and believe in this kind of God. Let’s rejoice in Him!

Heavenly Father, we praise and thank You for how You reveal Yourself to us. We pray that You would marinate these truths into our hearts. God, I pray that with all the

changes and difficulties and circumstances Your people are facing—and their fears and failings—that they would return to You with confidence in Your desire to bless. God, I especially pray that You would take away resentments and disappointments and discouragements and bitterness as if You have at some point in our lives not been good. We offer to You this sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips that give thanks to Your name through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

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All Scriptures quoted directly from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

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