

“How Deep is God’s Love?”

By Cathy Love

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Readings:

Psalms 91

Jeremiah 17: 7-8

Ephesians 3:16-20

One day last year, Grant and I, along with some family members, were wandering near a waterfall in the same area we took the barn pictures when we saw some beautifully intricate root systems that flowed across the ground, over rocks, and weaved in and out of crevices. We snapped pictures of them. As I mentioned last time I talked, even Grant is looking for potential messages from God!!



These are images of deep, narrow crevices, with roots stretching down into them, across the ground, and even making bridges across the crevices. These roots push through cracks in stone, reaching for something more. They grew not where the ground is soft, but where it was broken. What did this mean? Why were we drawn to these? What message was God asking me to prepare?

The Bible makes references about roots in many places – here are some, but again, I invite you to find your own references - Jeremiah 17:7–8, Colossians 2:6–7, Psalm 42:7 I thought about the tall trees attached to these root systems; they stand tall and have withstood all kinds of weather. In this area, many tourists wander around. How many lives have these trees seen? How many generations have visited here? How many feet have trampled these roots.

Although the trees stand tall and independently for the most part, the roots, rather than being buried, run all over the ground and down into crevices. Some come up on the other side, some come up on the same side, some disappear into the crevices and some, well, some we could not figure out.

Trees don't complain about the terrain—they just send their roots out looking for what they need to survive. And while their roots are searching for a place to anchor, the tree is reaching higher - towards heaven.

Have you ever seen a tall tree with shallow roots? When a powerful storm hits, the tree, roots and parts of the ground give way and the tree falls to the ground. Now, that tree might be too big to stand back up but what about us? Well

we can stand again and send our roots deeper into the ground, or deeper into our faith. A fallen tree can provide further life to animals or insects so while it cannot always be replanted, it forms a new purpose. We, thankfully, are capable of so much more in life even after the storms clear. Because when your roots are deep, your faith will last. Let's talk about crevices. A crevice can be defined as a narrow opening resulting from a split or crack in a rock, wall, cliff or other solid surface.

Sound familiar?

Crevices can represent the trials, tribulations and traumas of life. The divorce. The diagnosis. The depression. The disappointment. Places we didn't ask for—but ended up in. A crack in our life.

And when we find ourselves in these deep, broken places, we often think God has abandoned us.

But what if... What if the crevice is not a place of death, but a place of growth? What if there is a way to climb out the other side?

And when our roots go deep enough, they find the Living Water. When our roots reach into the faithfulness of God, we begin to stand tall again—even in the middle of brokenness. Because God is with us in the crevices of life - sometimes the darkness makes it hard to see the light but if we look up, we can see the glimmer of the light of God.

We also sometimes fight against having our roots settle in a spot that we don't like, but God wants you to grow where you are, not where you wish you were.

Here's the mystery of God: God often uses the broken places to grow us the deepest.

Some of us are in crevices right now:

- dealing with anxiety or fears no one knows about.
- trying to hold your family together while falling apart inside.
- facing financial stresses
- facing health issues
- feeling like we've hit a wall spiritually.

But hear this:

God isn't punishing us. He's rooting us.

A post on Facebook pointed out when it feels like God is breaking you, He is actually building you. And it went on to say:

When God wanted to make David a king, he didn't give him a crown, he gave him Goliath.

When God wanted to raise Joseph to the palace. He didn't give him a short cut, He gave him prison.

When God wanted to make Esther a queen, He didn't give her comfort, He gave her crisis.

When God wanted to make Moses a leader, He didn't give him a stage, He gave him a wilderness.

Many times when we feel like God is breaking us, He really is building us. God doesn't give us what we expect in life, He gives us what we need in order to become all that we need to in this life.

Bishop G.D. Jakes talked with Steve Harvey in an interview about his book *Crushing. God Turns Pressure into Power.*

He talks openly about his challenges when his 13-year-old daughter came to him to tell him she was pregnant. He says that the same daughter, at the lowest moment, thought her whole life had been shattered by the circumstances she was

in, made a complete turn around, and is now pastoring, speaking all over the world and writing books.

It doesn't matter where you start; it matters where you finish. Most people he met who are doing exceptional things it was always a comeback from exceptional crushings. He has a metaphor about grapes being crushed to make wine.

They are the only fruit that is raised to be crushed, not to be protected. It is in the crushing of the grape that it comes to its ultimate purpose, becoming wine, and lasts 10, 20, or hundreds of years. And if it had not been crushed, it would not have survived.

He talks about the crushings in your life, and the things that drive you to be successful that make you work harder, that make you study harder, that make you do more than other people do, are often rooted in what you are running from, not what you are running to.

Steve asked him what stops people from letting go and moving on.

Bishop Jakes responded, "If you can let go of the story you told yourself, you can reframe everything about your life, but it is the way we process what we've been through."

"We use it as a defence. Look at the difference between being buried and being planted. To the observer, it looks like the same thing. But the dead are buried, and the seeds are planted. And you can either say this is going to bury me or something is going to come out of this that is going to resurrect me better than I was before."

“He wasn’t born Bishop Jakes. He is a real person. People define you by how they met you, and when they do that, they limit you. They put a period where God put a comma.”

“When you really want to get to the core of who you are, many times it is the pressure that pushes out of you what you really are. What you really are made of. He talks about people who would be watching the interview who withstood things they thought they couldn’t stand. They say they are survivors but you didn’t withstand all that just to survive. You withstood that to succeed.

Bishop Jakes says he wrote his book to get people off the gurney and out of the emergency room and to understand that when the archer pulls back the bow, the further he pulls it, the further the arrow will shoot. He says for everyone suffering a list of trials, when you see how far you’ve been pulled back, wait until you see how far you will shoot. Bishop Jakes says Steve Harvey has been a platform for which good has been done. Your seasons can change, but if you preserve your purpose, your seasons can change all they want to, but they never change who you are. “

Steve Harvey began to talk about what he was supposed to do in life.

Bishop Jakes explained you aren’t supposed to know what you are going to do. If you took away the mystery and everything was certain, you wouldn’t need faith. Faith functions best when you don’t know. God puts us in positions where we don’t know, to destabilize us from relying on what we know.

The more unstable your life becomes, the more you have to go inside yourself to stabilize yourself. You are strong

enough to withstand instability and if you knew everything, you would have not room for faith, discovery, or innovation because creativity comes from uncertainty.

Notice what Jeremiah is saying:

It's not the height of the tree that brings blessing—it's the depth of the roots.

The roots are what allow you to stand when your world shakes.

They're what nourish you when life gets dry.

And sometimes—like in these pictures—roots don't grow in soft soil.

They push through stone. They reach into crevices, into dark places. They sit on rocks and on each other. They are not straight but twist along and among each other.

When you're in the deep, you're not alone God meets us there. Deep calls to deep. His depth reaches into your depth.

You don't have to grow in ideal conditions to bear fruit in God's Kingdom.

I'd like to share this song I heard which reached me. This song has at least 7 Bible verses connected to the message in the song.

This song symbolizes hope, reminding us to look upward during life's lowest moments. It is natural to seek divine assistance when we reach rock bottom.

New Release today – by Kevin Davis NRT

The song speaks of a conversation with a homeless man that leads to self-evaluation and explores forgiveness, honesty, loss, and rebirth – it speaks of how difficult it is to forgive and be forgiven. We all fail. God doesn't leave or

forsake us. He has great plans for us. We can always look up at our low points and God is there for us.

David Frey, lead singer, says God always does more in my life than I've ever dreamed possible for myself. People often need to hear that they must show up, trust and have faith. More than anything it's realizing how powerful our God is and that He does care each day, and He hasn't forgotten you. In this song we explore what it means to be a follower of Christ, encouraging ourselves and others to extend grace and forgiveness to themselves and others. This song extols virtues like humility, kindness and generosity.

The song is Looking Up by Sidewalk Prophets.

Associated Bible verses listed from the above interview.

2Corinthians 5:17 NKJV

Jeremiah 29: 11-13 NIV

Romans 12:2 VOICE

Psalms 119: 105 NKJV

John 3:30 NKJV

1 Corinthians 1:27 VOICE

2Corinthians 12:9 NKJV

Please join me in prayer.

Gracious God. Thank you for your patience with us, for waiting for us when we come up from the depths of the darkness seeking You. Thank you for forgiving us when we are not faithful and when we try to do things on our own and try to set our roots where we want rather than where you need us. Remind us to trust you have a plan for where you planted us. We pray in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.