



NEW DIRECTION Mustard Seed

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A Slow and Laborious Journey

As I was waiting in the parking lot of a grocery store I found myself entranced as I watched a woman come out with a grocery cart stocked with groceries. One by one she began packing them into one of the largest backpacks I have ever seen in public. The enormity of the pack sparked a memory of when I had seen one of these before: while watching a documentary of American soldiers loaded down as they headed into a city in Afghanistan.

Once the pack was filled and buckled the lady bent down in order to hoist the pack onto her back. She then proceeded to walk to the sidewalk and up the street, heavy laden under the weight.

“ I wondered “what is her story?” ”

Each of the women with whom we are called to walk has their own unique story. Our lives merge, we believe as do they as well, by God’s providence.

We receive a call. One is in crisis. Oftentimes this crisis has been going on for quite some time. We meet and hear their story wrought with brokenness, confusion, despair.

Not everyone who comes for an interview is a candidate. Because of the extensive, intensive and expensive commitment to work with a single mother for 2-3 years, we must be careful.

When it is apparent we are called to work with a mother it is as though we are stepping in the water with them to get to the other side. These ladies are heavy laden, bearing loads that are beyond their weight limit.

While not visible their backpacks have extensive contents which come to light step by step in our journey with them.

Cadie Davis is a mother with whom we have been most honored to walk. She approached us about the possibility of sharing her story with others. Be blessed and encouraged!



Burdens in a Backpack

We have all been there.

Heavy burdens weighing you down. Circumstances you have either brought on yourself, or others have brought upon you. Trials that push you to your weakest point. You feel the load of a thousand forcing you further into the dirt beneath your feet. The thoughts of worthlessness, doubt, guilt spinning around like a whirlwind trapped in your head. In these moments of darkness, your backpack is overflowing, and most of us go at it silent and alone. When we suffer in silence, we are fighting a losing battle. We are not meant to carry loads such as these. The Lord has said, "Come to me all of you, who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." - Matthew 11:28



I found myself with an overloaded backpack, nearly two years ago. My seemingly perfect life came crashing down around me. I was roughly six months pregnant when my husband left me to pursue an already existing relationship with another woman. The word devastated is an understatement. I truly believe there are no words to describe the emotion, which engulfed me during this time. Our three year old and one year old were caught in the middle of an earthquake that ripped the foundation known as safety out from under our feet. I remember so vividly the night my husband left. Our one year old was tucked in, safe asleep in his bed, unbeknownst to the changes in the air around him, as our three year old ran out the door, screaming for his daddy as he watched him drive away. I held him tightly as we cried together. Burning tears streamed down our faces as I attempted to do everything in my own power to comfort him during the time of uncertainty. It was in that moment it was he, who comforted me. Our three year old looked up at me and said, "Mommy, let's pray. God please feed me, so I can feed Mommy. Amen." Such a simple, child's prayer that had such a deeper meaning hidden in the words. Through that mere prayer, I found the strength and knowledge of whom I needed to carry me. The Lord lifted me up, as well as all of the burdens I carried. I heard, "My child, this is not meant for you to carry alone. Come rest."

As the days turned into weeks the storm grew stronger. Though the pain was still there, He did not leave my side. The aching, heart-wrenching times during each drop off. He was still there. The times of hearing the cries from our children begging for me to hold them and not leave them; He gave me strength to hold myself together long enough to reassure them in our goodbyes. In the moments of hard questions from a curious natured three year old mind, He provided the answers, or the times for silence. The amount of times I was asked, "When is Daddy coming home?" has long been lost in the wind. The questions concerning the new "mommy-girl," who lived with Daddy. The innocence in the questions only meant they deserved an answer with the likeness, and each time God would supply the nurturing answer for their ears to hold.

The grace the Lord gives us is asked for us to extend to others. In hard times how easy it is to grow bitter and despise the one who hurt us. But through His grace and peace He poured over me, I was unable to hold onto the hurt. The unexplainable joy I had, during some of the most difficult times, is only that which could be provided by the Lord.

I had no income throughout this time. I was a stay-at-home mother, since our first child. To keep up with the items of this world all seemed like an impossible task, even more so when attorney fees are added in. Remember though, nothing is impossible with God. The place the children and I call home, has been in the beginning process of foreclosure on numerous occasions. My vehicle threatened to be repossessed. It was one thing after another that was shoved down into the already burdensome backpack. During the first time, I was confronted with these trials, I was eight months pregnant. The doctors feared preterm labor from my fifth month on. I was given medicine to keep with me in order to control my contractions, for

hopes of having a good outcome. I recall receiving a text from my husband. In it was the news concerning the possibility of losing the house, my vehicle, and the lapse of auto insurance. He had once already tried to remove my vehicle off of his insurance plan, and after realizing that failed, he decided to let it lapse coverage. The texts were constantly cluttered with degrading remarks. I was belittled for not having a job and failing at providing for our children. Given at this time I had already been financially cut off for nearly two months, and by the grace of God the children had all that they needed. According to him the children deserved a better mother than me. The remarks and accusations were far from being over, and as time went on I allowed anxiety to grip my situation. Each moment my phone would go off, my heart would jump, my hands would shake, and I felt as if I was a deer caught in headlights.

He had lied to gain access to an emergency custody order. His texts would constantly be riddled with lies. His hopes were of maintaining one-sided proof over his false accusations. The mind-games seemed never ending. Although we had a judge-signed custody order, he would act as though it didn't apply to him. As I did my best to follow the order, I only lost more control over my own life. I felt trapped. I felt as manipulated as a puppet. The frustration I had over the lack of control in my own life and the children's lives only fueled the anxiety and worry that grew within me. It has been a year and a half, since the order was set in place. He has slowly made his way down it, as if it were a grocery list, by seeing how many times he could be in contempt. We all love to control the outcome of things, especially that which means the most to us. It seemed as though the more I attempted to gain control, the more I would lose it. It wasn't until I had a revelation: Having control was not a part of God's intended plan for me. How are we supposed to trust the Waymaker, if we refuse to let go of the steering wheel called life? The more we go about jerking the wheel, the more it will increase our worry, anxiety, and all to find ourselves on an abandoned, dirt road that leads to a dead end.

The words "Be still," continued to repeat in my head. I wondered how I could be still in the midst of losing all I loved and cared about; however, 'be still' doesn't mean to 'be quiet.' The original Hebrew root of 'be still' means 'let go.' I had to surrender my all to Him. I learned there was absolutely nothing I could do or say when it came down to it all. The violations of the custody order are going to be inevitable, until a court date is set. Here we are, nearly two years later, and I am still waiting for a court date for contempt of court, child custody, and child support. I am now in a season of waiting and recovering.

Even though my circumstances seem at a stand still as of right now, I can focus on all that God has already brought me through. By the people God has placed alongside me on this journey, I have seen more than I could have ever asked or imagined. My house has stayed out of foreclosure. My vehicle is now paid off, and has been in and out of the mechanics successfully. The stack of medical bills from the birth of our daughter has decreased.

This past Christmas, the children and I were overwhelmingly blessed. These people have shared the weight of this backpack with me all because of the grace of God.

This is far from how I ever envisioned my life to turn out, but to be allowed to witness the way God moves has made this storm turn into a blessing in disguise. I still have a long road ahead, yet I know I can rest in Him. We are not meant to carry these burdens by ourselves, and if we are willing to be still, the Lord will show up. He will even bring a community of hearts filled with His will and love. Give it all to Him and remember:

"God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble." - Psalms 46:1

Cadie will be one of the mothers who will be sharing about the ever present, faithful presence of Our Lord Who has navigated them and their precious children through deep waters at the Cove (see insert). These women realize it has been the Lord at work in their lives using the many, such as you, who are alongside lightening their loads bit by bit. There is now a lightness in their step.

Thank you for walking with us as we walk with them.

All of us at the Mustard Seed



Encompassing Hope and Care For Families.