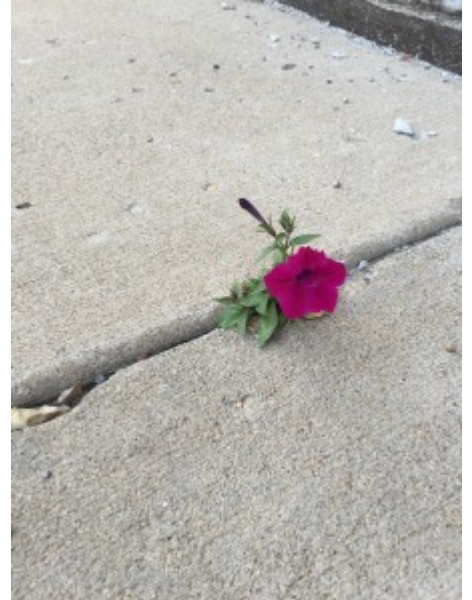


Blooming in the Cracks of Life: Sacred Everyday

Mark and I turned the corner in downtown Westfield on our way to a restaurant when it caught my eye. In a skinny crack of the sidewalk amidst a sea of concrete bloomed a velvety fuchsia petunia. Beauty stood out in the midst of the sparse environment.



Now I love flowers. Whether it's a beautifully tended garden, a colorful display of potted flowers, vining plants creeping up a trellis, or a wild riot of wildflowers, I'm always looking, smelling, touching, admiring. But I didn't expect to see one here.

And I realized that's what life should be like.

We spend too much time waiting for the perfect setting before we bloom. We think when I have...when I get...then I'll really do what I'm supposed to do. I'm always waiting for something to happen before I take action.

- An updated house worthy of HGTV before I invite the neighbors over.
- A promotion at my job before I start giving to charity.
- A visible position at church before I start

The 12 Days of Easter, Day 8: Water of Life



Day 8: Water of Life

And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts." Rev 21:6

water [waw-ter, wot-er]

noun

1. flowing water, or water moving in waves
2. the surface of a stream, river, lake, ocean,
3. to furnish water to (a region), as by streams; supply (land) with water, as by irrigation

In Jesus' time, it was hard to underestimate the importance of **water**. Wells were a gathering point for a village or community as the people came to draw water for the day's cooking, cleaning, eating, and watering of the livestock and crops. Cisterns were used to collect every drop of water possible.

Consequently, when Jesus said He would give "the fountain of the water of life freely to Him who thirsts," He was using words that resonated deeply with the people on many levels. First of all, the word **freely** is important. The people could have as much of this living water as they wanted and needed. No drought would effect it, nor would the supply be limited by

what they could carry or who owned the well.

The phrase *him who thirsts* is also pivotal. Everyone gets thirsty, so everyone is eligible to receive living water *if they want it*, not just a privileged few.

For greater insight, we must also consider John 4:1-26. In this passage, Jesus delves deep into the hearts of the people with a lesson about Living Water. Jesus meets and talks to a Samaritan woman who is at a well drawing water. This was unusual for two reasons. First, Samaritans and Jews had a longstanding dislike and distrust of each other, and secondly, men usually did not address women in public unless they were family members.

But Jesus breaks with that convention for an important reason: He gives her an opportunity to change her life. He tells her in verses 13 and 14 that the water He gives is different; it will become “a spring of water welling up to *eternal life*, and those who drink it will never be thirsty again” – truly a revolutionary idea that her spiritual thirst could be eternally satisfied.

These scripture passages are just as relevant to us today as they were to the people thousands of years ago. Although many of us have easy access to water, we are still a spiritually thirsty people. Only Jesus can quench that thirst, and He does that by offering His well of eternal life that will never run dry.

point to ponder

Do you draw deeply from your well of eternal life as you go about your days? We can never plumb the depths of what Jesus has for us. This should not be a “one and done.” Give your life to Jesus, and then spend the rest of it drinking deeply, growing and learning and sharing this gift of eternal life with others.

prayer

Lord,

We thank you for quenching our thirst for redemption with Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. May we draw deeply from this well each day, living our lives in Your power, finding our callings and contentment in You. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

previous posts

Day 1 : [Breath of Life](#)

Day 2: [The Life](#)

Day 3. [Eternal Life](#)

Day 4. [The Life Which I Now Live](#)

Day 5. [All the Days of Your Life](#)

Day 6: [The Book of Life](#)

Day 7: [Word of Life](#)

The 12 Days of Easter: Day 2, The Life



Day 2: The Life

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through Me. "

John 14:6

Life [lahyf]

noun:

1. a corresponding state, existence, or principle of existence conceived of as belonging to the soul:
2. the course of existence or sum of experiences and actions that constitute a person's existence:
3. anything or anyone considered to be as precious as life:

~

In today's verse, Jesus makes a bold statement. He tells us that He is the way, the truth, *the life*. The Greek word for life in this verse is **zoe**, which is, according to the *Key Word Study Bible*, "the very life-force itself, the vital principle which animates living beings." The meaning for **zoe** life, however, goes much deeper than physical life; we are not just living, breathing creatures. We have souls, and this definition of **life** permanently melds together the physical and the spiritual – imputing to us holiness and righteousness.

But that holiness and righteousness does not come from ourselves. So, where does it come from? It comes from Jesus, who according to Acts 3:15 (NIV), is the **author of life** to all who trust in Him to forgive their sins. I love this thought of Jesus being the author of life, not just life in general, but *your* life. When you ask Jesus to forgive your sins and accept His work of grace that He started on the cross and finished at The Resurrection, then you give Him permission to be the

author of your life. No matter what age you are, He opens the cover and begins to write the most exciting life story that could ever be written, full of characters and plots beyond your own imagination and expectation. The author of life sacrificed His life so that you can have new, eternal life.

Point to Ponder:

Who is writing the story of your life?

Prayer:

Dear Father,

Life is so much more than a physical existence. It's easy to forget that truth in today's world. Help us to grasp hold of the reality of eternal life through Jesus, where we can be holy and righteous before God. May we make the choice to have the author of life write a life story for us that will never end. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Previous Posts in This Series

[Day 1: Breath of Life](#)

life. Dictionary.com. *Dictionary.com Unabridged*. Random House, Inc. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/life> (accessed: February 22, 2015).

[Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words](#)

Travel Lightly

“The Lord says, ‘I will guide you along the best pathway for your life, I will advise you and watch over you.’” Psalm 32:8NLT

Learning that God had a plan for my life was a relief to me.

I hadn't done such a good job at it myself, making mistakes along the way, living in fear that I'd never get it right. I soon discovered, however, that knowing He had a plan and following it were two different things. I still felt like something was missing. And it was.

~

When I was 18, I had the delight of traveling to Germany after high school graduation to meet my relatives. My German



grandparents also happened to be there at the same time, returning for a trip to visit the “old country” and their families they had left many years before. At the end of my visit, I was packing when Grandpa slipped a few pouches in my suitcase.

“I don't think I'll have room for these when we leave next week, Janie,” he said as he stuffed them in my suitcase. My cousin Max loaded my suitcase in the car as I searched the house for any forgotten items. At the airport, I waved good-bye to family and grabbed my suitcase to head through the Frankfurt airport. I could barely budge the thing. “What happened to this?!” I thought to myself. I suddenly recalled the bags Grandpa shoved in there, wondering what could possibly be in them.

I dragged that suitcase what seemed like miles to my gate, so encumbered by the weight of it that I wasn't certain I would make it, arms and back aching. I was never so glad to unload

something as I was that suitcase at the baggage check.

Extra Baggage

When I got home, I found the bags Grandpa had glibly tossed in. I peeked inside one of them. BB pellets! Each bag was brimming with BB pellets, weighing about 5 pounds. Ugh. My ultra-frugal grandfather had found a deal on pellets, and I had just lugged them halfway around the world for him.



After spending the previous day dragging around my suitcase, I had learned the lesson of traveling lightly. But it wasn't until many years later that I realized this truth applies to much more than our physical travels. Thomas A Kempis said, "[They travel lightly whom God's grace carries.](#)" I spent too many years of my young adulthood dragging around 30 pounds of my "BB pellet" past. God was guiding me along the best pathway for my life, but I was so bogged down by my past that I was just inching along.

Finally, the Holy Spirit taught me that I was missing **grace** – [the grace](#) that rids us of what has come before, freeing us for what is now. I already had the grace that forgives all my sins at the cross of Jesus. But I needed to learn how to accept grace for the journey that each day brings, realizing that each day I can choose to walk in that grace and live it. I learned that **traveling lightly** means I live with open hands that are not full with holding on to the past but are empty, waiting to grasp what God has for me today, now.

And it makes all the difference: **Grace means I can dump the baggage of my past, free to run the path God has laid before me.** Free to relish His plans. Free to join in His work.

If you're still towing around your past, it's time to

permanently check it at God's baggage counter and run with Him down the pathway of grace called Your Life.

Has grace made a difference in your life? Please feel free to share your experience below.

Pray on!

Jane

"Image courtesy of iconmac / FreeDigitalPhotos.net".

"Image courtesy of Keattikorn / FreeDigitalPhotos.net".

The Vessel

What have you been learning from God lately? **And more importantly, who are you sharing it with?**

Many of the **blessings** God gives us are meant to be shared. This isn't always an easy thing, is it? We often don't feel accomplished enough or smart enough. We think others are so much more worthy and could do a better job. That was my viewpoint – until one Sunday in church a few years ago.

A visiting pastor from our sister church in Africa addressed our congregation directly:

“Do you understand the value of the teaching that you receive every Sunday?” he asked us. “Those of you who hear these teachings every week have more training and learning than the average pastor does in my city. What are you doing with what you know?” he challenged us. “Who are you teaching?”

I no longer felt that I could use the “not knowledgeable enough” excuse I’d been hiding behind and decided to earnestly pray about where and how God wanted to use me. I found out that what God wants us to know is that we may not be perfectly ready for what He’s calling us to, but *He is!* As the saying goes, we should show up “prepared and prayed up” and then let God work.

I know it’s not easy to get past our insecurities. I wrote this poem to remind myself that God’s not looking for perfection; He’s looking for obedience and willingness.

The Vessel



by Jane VanOsdol

I offer you my life, Lord.
As flawed as it is.
As cowardly as I am.
You, who makes beauty out of ashes
and joy out of mourning,
Who breathes life into dead, dry bones,
What will do do with me?

I am the clay in your hands,

the hands of the Potter.
Fashion me into a vessel
that although imperfect on this earth,
is more than adequate for daily use
when you fill me to overflowing
with your Spirit.

You entrust this cracked, chipped vessel
with pouring forth Your Living Water to any parched soul who
will drink of it: healing the hurting, planting a seed,
setting a captive free.

Creating extraordinary out of ordinary.