Surrender

'You're wrong! You've been deceived! God does not operate that way! He would never ask—or expect—a person to give up something that matters. This is idiocy and you are a fool. It's the final straw." Like a storm-swept sky and clouds dripping with moisture, so too were her words, swollen with sodden emotion—hurt, resentment, despise. "This is it!" she spat, the waterlogged cry the last thing I heard her say. How little did I know then; that really would be it.

It's been a handful of years now, and even though the memories are always on the periphery of my every day, the pain of surrender never seems to go away. I've replayed those words time and again, considering them from every angle, with sickness in my stomach. I didn't understand what was happening back then. I just knew everything about me was changing, and the Lord had spoken a Word over my future. I had been set on the front row of my life, watching His promises unfold. "Trust Me. Be obedient. Let go." And finally, "Just wait." He said, "I will bring you out of your muddy pit; I will set you on a higher place with a new word in your mouth. But first, you must do this: Trust Me. Be obedient. Let go. Just wait." Where the Lord was taking me, I knew few would understand and even fewer would follow. In life, you either travel together or you go alone. The trusting, obedience, the letting go and the waiting would only produce fruit if I yielded it all to Him.

It cost everything. Some relationships don't follow on the journey where the Lord leads. Some won't go; some aren't meant to. Even when they are relationships you considered essential, of utmost importance, treasured. But our economy is different from God's.

I thumbed through Scripture, trying to have it make sense. And then I ran into Abraham and Isaac. 'Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, "Father?" "Yes, my son?" Abraham replied. "The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham answered, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." And the two of them went on together.' (Genesis 22:7-8) Somehow, I knew when the Lord spoke into my broken and messed up life, I was going to have to give up a lot of stuff. But what I did not expect, was it to cost even what I considered the good in my life. Over time, He showed me it wasn't just about me. In essence, it was about everyone. The relationships being exfoliated from my life needed protection from me. I hadn't been healthy for them. My mixed messages had caused me to be a stumbling block in their lives instead. Not only would they not accept me as a new creation, but the old me had already caused too much damage.

Today, I examine the surrender. I pull Isaac close to me; I feel I know him well. I too said, 'But God, the altar is built. I hold the wood, and the match is in my hands. But where is the sacrifice to be laid before You? Where is the offering?' I know I didn't want to let go of anything. Not one thing did I want to lose. Or yield. I wanted to pick and choose what I offered. The circumference of my life so messy, but to me, neat and tidy and comfortable. And mine; it belonged solely to me.
And the Father replied to me. "You bring the obedience and the surrender, the letting go and the trust and the unwavering faith. Give up the resistance. All of it. That's what you are to bring. And I will provide the lamb."

I don't know if you have lost or let go of things—people, relationships, passions—you once held very close, because someone or something wasn't meant to travel on the next part of the journey with you. I did not—nor do I still—understand all the reasons why the Lord allows the losses and expects the loosening of clinging fists, but for me, He waited patiently while I let go and while I grieved. I believe a Holy God promises to redeem what was ruined; to repair all the enemy broke; to replace what the enemy stole. There is sufficiency in the surrender. Like Abraham, I believe when we are willing to lay all on the altar, He restores and provides.