My Playbook

I was really floundering. I had been for a long minute. In fact, maybe I always had been. I was a fraud. I had been given every desire a person could hope for, but there was emptiness in my soul (Ps 106:15). I felt lost, like an imposter had been drop-kicked into my life and I was nowhere to be found. I was searching. For what, I did not know. For meaning. For direction. For a reason to *be*. I was expecting my children and grandchildren to be my reason *why*. To give me purpose. Note to self: never expect someone else to be your happiness, your *why*. We are each responsible for our own contentment. It is not another individual's job to give you or me significance, and God places within both of us, the capability and capacity to know—and achieve— your *why*

I was successful. I was smart. I was loved. I was *somebody* to many. But I was empty, adrift, immersed in plasticity, and for all my accomplishments, I was a sham. I was discovering this with a sickness in my gut, because I had begun to dive deep into a Holy God. And He was revealing to me, everything I was, everything I wasn't. I could not be that same person any longer, all I was, all I wasn't Not, and live with myself. He was revealing *me* to *me*. It was as if He had hidden me, like I was suddenly invisible to me. I had gone missing, vanished, without a trace, and the *old me* could no longer exist. I was hidden in obscurity, a reflection of grace.

You know, the Bible talks about the woman at the well (John 4:4-42), this castoff of society who encounters Jesus; or perhaps He encounters her. The experience *changes* her. And after it changes her, she runs back into the very town that objectified her. She runs back to the very ones who cast her off to tell them about this man who has just told her everything she has ever done (John 4:28). Her *why*...her before and her after.

That's what Jesus did for me. He told me everything I had ever done. And He said He would rescue me from that pit I had buried myself in. He said He would place me on a higher ground with a new word in my mouth. But I must commit to do something myself. He said, "I can, and I will rescue you and set you free from your own bondage, but you must do these things." He said, "You must trust Me. Be obedient. And let go." He began to work in ways I cannot still put into words today. He resolved and absolved me of the shame, the guilt, the lostness, the captivity, the wandering. It was costly. It cost me people who were dear to me, who didn't understand or believe in me any longer, who had given up on me. It was hard. It hurt. It was like ripping a giant scab off a wound time and again that had barely begun to heal. He did everything He said He would do. And more. He delivered me out of that sinkhole. He set me on a sturdy and firm foundation. He put His word in my mouth, and it has only gotten stronger and bolder and laced with grace over time as He proves His faithfulness repeatedly.

And a year later, He added, "Just wait." I cannot detail the ways He has shown me His faithfulness and His favor, because it is indescribable. Because of His trustworthiness however, I have my own Playbook I live by. It's my mission statement, my guardrails, my manual, my one way, my *why,* and it is infallible to me, because it is a word spoken over me by a Holy God who loves me, who sees me, who knows me by name. And I promise you, if you will forfeit yourself to a life of obedience, to the life God scripted into your Playbook, you will encounter Jesus and experience abundant life more than anything you can ask, dream or imagine (Ep 3:20).

Psalm 18:19, 'He stood me up in a wide-open field. I stood there saved; surprised to be loved!' (MSG)