Introducing Scattered Moments — A New Podcast

For forty years, I've been collecting scattered moments — in hospital rooms and sanctuaries, in seasons of grief and flashes of unexpected joy. Places where grace showed up quietly and changed everything.

I've always believed that faith grows best not in comfort, but in the unexpected classrooms of suffering. And I've wanted to find a way to share that conviction in a form that's brief, honest, and easy to carry with you through the day.

So, I'm launching a new podcast called **Scattered Moments** — brief reflections on faith, adversity, and the quiet places where grace appears. Each episode is about five minutes long.

And we're starting with something special.

A Holy Week Series: The Seven Last Words of Jesus

Beginning Palm Sunday, I'll be releasing one episode a day — seven reflections on the final words of Jesus from the cross, all the way through Easter Sunday. I'm releasing the Palm Sunday episode so you can preview what's coming.

Here it is:
https://youtu.be/j4pAQQkkNp8?si=k3gzRea627ZSoJRZ

(Scattered Moments is an audio podcast — this video is just the episode with a simple visual. For the best listening experience, subscribe on Apple Podcasts or Spotify below.)

After Easter

New episodes will drop every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Original poetry, hymn stories, Scripture, and honest reflection — all in about five minutes.

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If it speaks to you, share it with someone who needs it.

Take heart, notice the scattered moments, and share the grace.

God Approaching

You’ll know Him when you see Him.

He carries the likeness of no mortal man.

He will turn you upside down and shake you until your pockets no longer jingle.

He will turn the heat up until meltdown occurs.

He can swallow galaxies.

He can stand on the hairs of your thumb.

He will take your personal certainties and make them uncertain.

He will take the earthly securities and make them insecure.

He will do all this for His own reasons

They are His and He won’t tell.

Not today.

Fearing Him is glorious.

He smells the fear as worthy sacrifice.

When He comes, don’t hide or run.

Die and He will roll the stone from your lifeless resting place.

Cease and Be Still

We battle to own the apostates.
We fight in our bunkers of shares.
We taunt them with jesting emojis.
We rage with our unflinching stares.

We argue our case on the platforms.
We scroll, we like, we subscribe.
We give the guilty comeuppance.
In political tribes, we abide.

And we wonder why we are dying
as descendants are leaving the church.
But our minds are so quickly distracted
by views that we share from our perch.

We’ve taken His throne in our scoffing.
The gavel we’ve ruthlessly kept.
Stoned on the wine of our malice,
Mocking them all as He wept.

We rage at the ones who offend us
And wound them with daggers of scorn,
This stain runs ever before us.
Our unity- broken and torn.

So this is the state of our movement.
This is our shameless pursuit.
Instead our loving our neighbors,

There are *errors* we need to refute.

So drunk in the glory of judging,
Admired for rhetorical skill,
Proclaiming our tribe's indignation.
But it's better to cease and be still.

We spew out the bile of our anger.
We play the pawn with the press.
We lie to ourselves in the meantime.
We rant upon those in distress.

The venom stirs in our outrage.
Insulting for glory and thrill.
For we are aroused by the carnage.
Instead, we should cease and be still.

Be still before Christ in your silence.
Wait for the dawning of night
Boldly retreat from the clamor.
Surrender your need to be right.

Featured Image of phone and dagger created by DALL·E

The Mystery of Making Stuff Up

Most creatives can't explain how they do what they do. Formulas escape them. The mysterious process occurs somewhere between the prefrontal and motor association cortex.

Apart from the mechanics of syntax, color, structure,

template, perspective, and story arc, creators are at the mercy of something no one but God understands. Like little children at supper, they say grace over it but can take no great credit for its existence. It's something that causes emotional tremors from time to time. It causes lack of sleep, lack of time, brief moments of tunneling when all relationships temporarily vanish, frustration on the behalf of spouses, and the inability to focus on other people and things during moments of artistic production.

Most artists have low self-esteem even though some may appear egocentric. Their low self image is rooted in emptying one's self to make room for things that come through them, but not from them. The best creative work is found in hiddenness. This hiddenness allows the reader, audience, viewer or listener to feel as if they, themselves are in the experience created by the artist. It's why lovers love love songs. And mourners need poetry. They walk into the art and adopt it into their own personal narrative. In this way the artist becomes a concierge of the human experience. Great art always gets personal.

There are moments of unrestrained yeses. Everything is yes in the creative process, before the murdering of darlings- those little things in the work that mean much to the writer and little to the reader. The writer must scatter themselves to the four winds of the delete key. They are at the mercy of the muse because they don't know how the muse works. I use the term "muse" but I'd rather not. It's the spiritual cosmos that is unseen and neutral until the forces of divine consequence appear. Artists do it but don't understand it any more than most people understand the inside of an MP3 and how it produces sound from digits.

But when it happens they are as close to God as Genesis 1:1. "Created" is a verb coined by God Himself. There is nothing new under the sun, but the artist will fight tooth and nail to disprove it.

All good gifts come from God but not everything artists write or say is God breathed. Not in the least. But there are those times when the Spirit moves, the clouds part, and glory speaks. The artist stands trembling with a little flicker called an idea. The artist enters the process like an East Tennessee snake handler in a church with signs following. It's risky but it's when the artist feels most alive. Ideas are best seen in caves of solitude and often express themselves in seismic yearning. Painters paint, musicians compose and writers write because they can't help themselves any more than one can stop a sneeze, and often just as messy.

Some artists give meaning to mythos and mysteries but find it hard to iron shirts or complete an online form. They dance between the county lines of catastrophe and bliss, often in both at the same time- a fact proven possible in quantum physics.

How does normal life work? Why is everything so desperately broken? Why do I feel so alone? These are questions that creatives struggle with but never conquer. (And woe to the artist that thinks she's figured everything out.) The name "artist," like the name Israel, means STRUGGLE. Struggling is a virtue, not a vice. It stands poised for the angelic fracas until the blessing is spoken.

The mortality rate for creatives is much lower than the general population. Their brain's tread-life is much shorter. They are stripping gears to dig deeper. And for that we should all be thankful. We need them down there in the threshing floor.

So the nervous, emotional artist continues to do what he can't put his finger on, for an audience he doesn't know and a debt that he didn't owe when he started. He or she lives in a state of panic or grace, totally dependent on God or some infinitely lesser being to survive.

Not all crazy people are artists, but most artists are crazy people and we need them. Bruce Cockburn puts it so simply, “Pay attention to the poet. You need him and you know it.” We need them in our homes, churches, universities, seminaries, and kindergartens. But don’t hand them the keys. They’ll lose them.

Everyday Thanksgiving

In wanderlust of eternity,
I travel streets of grace

I know the power of illusion.

But I find truth upon Your Face

(illusions crumble)

the b/ro/ke/nness have weakened bones and feeble flesh.

I trust in the Musician’s strings,
The One who makes the nation’s sing.
You are good
it’s understood
as days lead on……. to Day.

So
I
trust
in
You.

I long for bliss.

I send resounding praise.

You have *always* (in every single moment of my life) placed Your Hand upon me and I could not escape it.

I could not escape the love and the joy that had brought me even in the midst of dark hours in crooked roads.
You hem me in with mercy.
You have laid my sorrows upon the banks of Your glory.

Your glory, outshines them all.
Your holiness compels me in the arena of your steady sure activity
even in times of c h a o s you speak (a sensible soft Voice) like a faithful father, Your Hand
on
my
shoulder.

I will be guided and I will be kept.

in flesh and blood,
gold and glory,
eyes of fire,
You tell the story.

Who am I?

I've asked myself this question for years now and I still see through a glass darkly. I am guided and shaped in the midst of my own perplexities. One fact counters the next, but this list is true. Everything else is still on the table.

I am loved by Christ . . .
often wrong
rarely strong

seduced by grace
fixed in place
soaked in tears
racked in fears
a mix of duality
I long for centrality
homesick
heaven bent
wounded, limping
yet surprisingly steady and quite unrelenting
rebel some days
deceived by the haze
this maddening, saddening, dazzling maze.
sick and then healed
with mercy revealed
faithful, bold, and perfectly formed
wandering, timid, disfigured and scorned
enigma, riddle, mystery, clue
firm, unchanging, promised, and true.

Within

ever since the days of yellow buses and rocket ships
that landed after lunar conquest
i have yearned to see beyond this skin
the bold courageous Warrior
that lies within

He triumphs over veiled conspiracy
the grassy knolls of hostility
flying headlong into the undiscovered
creeds of truth
and that’s where i am

before the thoughts slow down
and the angels bring the grace of sleep.

this (one and only) God
knows my weak mortality
keeps me from insanity
my words in all their gravity
redeeming my depravity

nothing stops the Spirit’s rise
above my feeble alibis
and in the morning
the beat of yeaning has begun.
Sweet Jesus whispers still:
O Jerusalem.

The Unseen Place

i long for the Unseen Place
not just Heaven
no.
a place on earth
as it is
where You are King
and love reigns
in everything
my source
my guide
and friend,
show me the secret
and glorious end

amen



He Came for the Rest of Us

Jesus came
for the wise and the strong.
And He came, just as well, for the rest of us.
Jesus came for the days that life seemed ordered and filled with meaning.
But we rejoice because He came for the other days, too.
Blessed by old men and shepherds
Worshiped by kings and beggars
And the rest in between.
He loves us still.
He did not come to receive *just* our joy and elation.

He came for the rest of us.
He came for our doubts, our burdens, our sorrows and grief.
He even came for the times when we doubted His presence.

He reached down to us.
When our loneliness seemed unbearable.

His love courted us.
And His mercy enveloped us.
His holiness consumed us.
God’s advent of grace put the pieces of our broken lives together.
Along the path of our lives we’ve heard of blessed souls who could manage their problems, pick themselves up, find the reasons for all of life’s challenges.
But thank God, that He came for the rest of us!
Not just our good.
But also the rest of us.

He came to celebrate our youth but when our youth is spent,
He celebrates with even greater passion, the rest of us.
He came for the people of Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Judea.
But He also came for the rest of us.
So now He compels us to shout to the world, the joy of a coming King.
So that every person can hear the invitation to join…

The rest of us.

He came… for the rest of us.

Before I meet Bart Wrinkle

when it’s all said and done here.
look me up.
I’ll be kicking back, slinging jawbones
with samson
who made it in the door by the grace of God

same as noah
found grace
discovered it

(he happened upon it or rather it happened upon him)

i'll be listening to stories of limping jacob and stumbling bartimaeus
I'll be all ears– smiling and wondering about weak eyes, pharisees and romance
discussing it with the miracle boy of Jesus' mud pies

look! there's Paul (no longer writing with big letters–the lasik surgery is divine)
he's catching up on his reading
checking out the far flung analysis of lettered theologians
from barclay to barnes to hal lindsay (just for fun)
I will not dare disturb him.

and Jesus is smiling
His kids–the whole crew is back home
all of them
He's feasting on the vision He's been waiting to see

me?
i'm the guy way over in the back of the family portrait
next to a man named bart wrinkle (of whom i have not met)
