

Time to be honest. Things the past few days have been hard. Easter was so much different than anything that we had expected, and even though I tried my best to make it feel normal, it just wasn't. I tried to carry on with some of our regular traditions like an Easter egg hunt and dying eggs, and even added a new one – getting up to watch the sunrise, but I have to tell you, Easter church services on the couch just aren't the same. I knew there was much to celebrate – Jesus is indeed alive, but I had a hard time celebrating without my extended family and my dear church family.

Monday morning, I woke up and I felt worse. I really wanted to just stay in bed and pull the covers over my head. I knew that I had to get up and begin my day, and so I did – and then I realized that the power was out. Ack! We live in the country, so no power means no water. No showers, no coffee...everything seemed to be going wrong. Then I remembered that I would need to encourage our classes with a devotion for the week. I didn't know what I would say...things just seemed so hard and I couldn't get my eyes off my circumstances. Then I looked down at my kitchen table, and God gave me a gift.

I don't know about you, but when we dye eggs in our family, there are never enough. It's so much fun to see the colors mix and change – I just love it. When I boiled the eggs on Sunday, we used most for dinner, but set a few aside to dye. And of course, they were done too quickly, and we wanted to dye more. I realized that I hadn't thrown away the broken eggshells from dinner, so the kids and I decided to put the broken shells in the dye. Silly, right? But it was fun to pull them out and see how beautiful the colors were, even though they were broken.

Fast forward to Monday when I looked down at my kitchen table. You see, I had left the colorful, broken eggshells on that table to dry on a paper towel. I took one look at them, and God reminded me that He can take broken things and make them beautiful. I stopped sulking and thinking about myself, went to my Bible and found Isaiah 61:3 and read these words: *"To all who mourn in Israel, he will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks that the Lord has planted for his own glory."*

I continued to read and was gently guided back to His truth when I read, *"I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness."* And then my sadness lifted as I thought of the goodness of God, His grace in my life, and the gift of Christ. Thank you, precious Lord, for YOUR TRUTH!

There are days that are hard. We all know this. But our response when we are discouraged should be to look for God in His Word. And some days, we may need a gentle reminder in something ordinary – but we have to keep our eyes open, and our hearts tuned to what God might be showing us. For me, broken, colored eggshells were just enough to help shake me of my thanks-amnesia and remind me that God is bigger than my circumstances. Isn't God good to remind us of His love in the simplest of things?

I took those colorful, eggshell pieces and glued them to a cross to remind me that God can take broken things and turn them into something beautiful. God is going to take this time and do amazing things for His glory. May we keep our eyes off of our circumstances, look for His grace in simple things, and turn to Him for His Truth!