



Into the Mess & Other Jesus Stories: Reflections on the Life of Christ by Debi Thomas—

Week 6 Chapter 24 When Daughters Go in Peace-- Chapter 28 Is it Good for Us to be Here?

Check in Question:

Where have you noticed God's presence—on the mountaintop or in the valley—this past week?

Opening Prayer

Loving God,

you meet us in our wounds, our questions, and our hunger for healing.

As Jesus made space for those on the margins,
make space in our hearts now.

Open us to truth, compassion, and transformation,
that we may recognize your presence
in one another and in the ordinary moments of our lives.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reflection questions:

Based on Chapter 24: *When Daughters go in Peace*

1. If you were the woman with the hemorrhage, would you have touched Jesus even though it was forbidden?
2. How can we make space for others today, as Jesus did for the woman with the hemorrhage?
3. The author shares that when she told her story of abuse, over and over again, the sting lessened. Why do you think the pain diminished through retelling?
4. What does love look like in the Gospel?

Based on Chapter 25 *Legion*

1. Is it dangerous to conflate psychological suffering with evil? Why or why not?
2. Would you allow Jesus to search you as deeply as he searched Legion?
3. You do not need to share aloud, but what might you be addicted to?
4. Naming our addictions can deepen our understanding of the Gerasene Demoniac. Debi Thomas suggests that addictions are the pandemic of our time. How does this insight shape your reading of the story juxtaposed to your story?
5. Which is easier: to confront our demons, or to remain spiritually "dead"?

Based on Chapter 26: *Enough and More*

1. Have you ever experienced real hunger?
2. According to the author, food can be a thing of beauty, an idol, an enemy, or an addiction. Which of these most reflects your own relationship with food?
3. How do you come to know Jesus in the breaking of the bread?

Based on Chapter 27: *When Jesus Weeps*

1. Debi Thomas offers several explanations for why Jesus weeps at the grave of Lazarus. Which resonates most deeply with you, and why?
 - a. He legitimizes human grief
 - b. He honors the complexity of faith
 - c. He acknowledges his own mortality
 - d. He shows that sorrow can be a powerful catalyst for change

Based on Chapter 28: *Is It Good for Us to Be Here?*

1. Have you ever had an extraordinary experience of God?
2. What are the “valley” places in your life where you long to experience God?
3. How did Golgotha upend everything the disciples thought they understood about Jesus?
4. Thomas suggests that most of life is unspectacular, yet all of life is sacred. How does this insight resonate with your own experience?

Closing Prayer

For whom and what shall we pray...

Gracious God,
thank you for the grace we have shared in this time together.
As we go forth,
help us carry your presence into our daily lives—
in our struggles and our joys,
on the mountain and in the valley.
Send us in peace to live with courage, honesty, and love.
Amen.

Next time Chapters 29 Bear Witness through 34 The Extravagant Sower
