



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

Week 7 Chapter 35 Let Them Grow Together -- 41 Salty

Check in Question:

Who has helped you grow in faith simply by being present in your life?

Opening Prayer

Loving God, be with us as we gather.

Open our hearts to your presence, our minds to your wisdom,
and our spirits to one another.

Teach us to live with mystery, to abide in your love,
and to listen with compassion.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reflection Questions:

Based on Chapter 35: Let Them Grow Together

1. Where in your life do you experience paradox—two seemingly opposite truths existing at the same time?
2. Why do you think we, as humans, are so troubled by “both/and” rather than “either/or”? Thomas suggests this tension is a mystery—what do you think?
3. God allows the wheat and the weeds to grow together. Have there been times when you wanted to pull the weeds before it was time? What was driving that impulse?

Based on Chapter 36: Abide

1. Thompson suggests that we are more fruitful when we work together. When have the gifts and talents of others helped you achieve more than you could on your own?
2. Are there people you would rather not be “tangled” with? What does that resistance feel like, and what might it reveal?

Based on Chapter 37: The Bothersome Widow

1. Describe a time when you persisted in prayer, even when the outcome was uncertain or delayed.
2. Thompson says that “God not only hears the cries of the helpless, but is present *in* those cries”. What do you think this means?
3. Do you prefer prayer to be easy and comforting, or challenging and even a struggle? Why?

Based on Chapter 38: When You Pray

1. Do you see prayer as transactional—asking God for something in exchange for something else?
2. Is your prayer life seamless and integrated into your daily life, or does it feel fragmented?
3. Have you made prayer so regular that it risks becoming ordinary or routine?
4. If prayer gives us permission to name our deepest longings, what longings are you bringing to God?
5. If all prayer is answered by the Holy Spirit—and the answer is always “yes”—does that change how you pray?
6. Do you find yourself wanting things from God more than you want God?

Based on Chapter 39: On Fairness

1. Describe a time when you cried out to God, “That’s not fair!” What was happening?
2. What does radical generosity look like in your life or in the world today?

Based on Chapter 40: The Story of the Bridesmaids

1. Do you agree with the author that the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids is a metaphor for the end of time? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever considered that Jesus himself is the light—and that the foolish bridesmaids may not have needed to leave the wedding feast at all because Jesus has enough light for everyone?
3. Jesus delights in *you*, not in what you have or what you do. Does that change what you believe you “ought” to do?
4. Do you tend to operate out of scarcity and fear, or mercy and empathy?
5. Thompson says that “righteousness divorced from love is always wrong”. How does that statement sit with you?

Based on Chapter 41: Salty

1. Salt, as described by the author, represents sharing our giftedness. Thompson also reminds us that balance matters: too little salt leaves food bland, too much ruins the dish. How balanced are you in sharing your gifts?
2. If salt enhances and enriches life, how do you offer your “saltiness” to others?

Closing Prayer

For whom and what shall we pray...

Gracious God,
thank you for what we have shared and received.
Help us carry your love into our daily lives,
trusting your abundance
and offering our gifts generously.
Send us forth as salt and light,
rooted in your love.
Amen.

Next time Chapters 42 My Broken Hosanna –50- You Know Everything
--