

Following Jesus

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY

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FEB. 18-27

A Word from Pastor David

I have been studying the Gospel of Mark for more than forty years. It is a gospel I have returned to again and again as I have sought to understand the good news of Jesus and my own calling as a pastor and a Christian.

My love for Mark began during the fall semester of my sophomore year in a class taught by Dr. Daryl Schmidt at TCU, a course on Jesus and the Gospels that proved transformational for me as a student. Dr. Schmidt helped us see that each gospel tells the story of Jesus in its own distinctive way, shaped by the community for which it was written. In particular, he opened up Mark for me not only as a gospel, but as a work of literature...urgent, compassionate, and shaped from beginning to end by the nearness of the kingdom of God.

That class was the moment when things began to come together, when the lights were turned on. I went on to study Greek with Dr. Schmidt for two years, and his influence continues to shape the way I read Scripture and think about ministry. This work is dedicated to him, with deep gratitude for the impact he had on my life and vocation.

What I have written here is more devotional than commentary. It does not claim to be a scholarly offering, and it does not try to be, nor will I be quoting secondary sources. What I share is simply what I have gleaned from a lifetime of reading Mark, reflections formed by reading this gospel slowly, prayerfully, and repeatedly.

Writing these reflections as a daily practice before daybreak has been life-giving for me. This work is still taking shape. I expect to continue returning to it, revising it, and using it in future teaching and preaching. What follows is a first attempt, offered with humility and love, and an invitation to follow Jesus in Mark with me.

Everything good that has happened in my life traces back to a decision I made as a teenager to follow Jesus. I was about fifteen years old when I began that journey, and it has not been a straight line. There have been joys and disappointments, moments of clarity and confusion, and failure along the way.

Over the years my theology has changed in many ways, but one conviction has only grown stronger: in Jesus, we meet a God of unconditional, unfailing love. That love has shaped my life, and it has also come with cost. Following Jesus, and choosing to love the way he loves, always does.

Still, I would not choose another way. My deepest hope is that, through spending time in these texts, you might come to know Jesus more personally and discover what it means to follow him, rooted in Scripture, with him at the center of everything, learning again and again how to live and love as he does.

Before We Begin

Mark's Gospel does not allow passive reading. As you read, you will have to decide for yourself who Jesus is. Rather than offering tidy conclusions, Mark tells a story that keeps pressing this question and leaves the response with the reader. Before we begin, I want to name a few things I have noticed over years of reading and reflection, patterns that have emerged as I've looked back over what I have written.

Jesus consistently moves toward those on the margins.

Women, children, the poor, and the overlooked are not side characters. They are where the kingdom of God becomes visible.

Misunderstanding is the normal experience of discipleship.

The disciples rarely grasp what Jesus is doing, yet they stay with him. In Mark, staying matters more than having everything figured out.

The kingdom of God is active, present, and disruptive.

It is not an abstract idea or a distant hope, but God's Kingdom breaking into ordinary life, challenging assumptions, habits, and power.

The road Jesus walks leads through suffering, not around it.

In Mark, the cross is not a detour but the center of the story, the place where Jesus is most clearly revealed. Any vision of Jesus that tries to avoid suffering misses the heart of this gospel.

Grace comes before understanding and outlasts failure.

We misunderstand. We deny. We run away. Grace remains. Fear, denial, and even death do not get the last word. Resurrection does, not as a neat ending, but as an open-ended invitation to keep following.

Mark is ultimately concerned with who Jesus is.

Mark's story keeps pressing the question, "Who then is this?" It leads readers toward the confession that Jesus is Messiah and Son of God, an identity revealed through his mission, his actions, and ultimately through rejection, suffering, and the cross. Mark does not force this conclusion on us. He leads us there and asks us to decide.

These broad strokes are meant as a map, not a destination. They have shaped the way I read Mark, but they are not meant to close anything off for you. Mark's Gospel can take wrestling. I have been reading it for over forty years, and I am still growing and learning.

Most of all, I want you to read Mark itself, not simply read what I have written and settle there. My hope is that you will stay with the story long enough for it to speak to you, and to your own sense of what it means to follow Jesus today.

Week 1: Mark 1-2

Mark: 1:1-3, Good News Begins Here: Mark begins his Gospel with a simple announcement. “The beginning of the good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” That’s it. No birth story. No genealogy. No angels or dreams or explanations. Just a single sentence: short, direct, and to the point. Mark tells us immediately what this story is about, but he does not stop to explain what it means.

That work will take sixteen chapters. This opening line functions like a heading, a thesis, a claim that will be tested and unfolded scene by scene. Everything that follows is meant to show us what “good news” really is, who Jesus truly is, and what it means to call him Christ and Son of God.

In the first-century Roman world, the phrase good news (euangelion) was common public language. It was used to announce military victories, royal births, or the rise of a new emperor. Inscriptions proclaimed the “good news” of Caesar, news that promised peace, stability, and salvation for the empire. Emperors were spoken of in divine terms, described as sons of gods, figures who brought order to a chaotic world. Mark knows exactly how these words would have been heard in his time.

He takes language that belonged to Caesar and applies it to Jesus instead. In the Roman world, that was a bold and dangerous thing to do, because it meant that peace, authority, and salvation were not ultimately found in Rome, or in any empire then or now. That is the claim Mark makes at the very beginning. The good news is not about Caesar. It is about Jesus. And not just Jesus, but Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Those words would have landed with weight. They still should. But for many of us, they've become so familiar that they no longer surprise us. We hear “Jesus Christ” and it sounds like a proper name rather than a confession of faith. We hear “Son of God” through layers of theology, sermons, and beliefs we bring with us when we read the story. Our familiarity with these words may be our greatest obstacle.

We think we already know who Jesus is and what these titles mean. Mark will challenge that. He is not writing simply to preserve information about Jesus; or just to confirm what we already believe, he is writing to bring us into life-giving contact with him. Yes, study the Gospel. Dig into the historical context. But Mark asks more of us than that. He asks for our attention, our openness, and a willingness to follow where the story leads. And we badly need this story. We live in a world hungry for good news.

The times may be different, centuries separate us from Mark’s world, but the questions are the same. What makes life good? What brings happiness? Many of us are worn down by division, by strife, by anger and fear. We hear voices competing for our attention, our energy, and our loyalty, offering newer versions of the same old thing. Just another kind of empire with a different name. But we are not looking for more false promises or another system.

We are looking for something that transcends all of that, for peace that brings people together, for love that is unconditional and unifying, and for the assurance that God is with us and that God's new world is breaking in. Mark begins with an announcement, not an argument. He does not give us a set of ideas to consider. He names a person and invites us into the story. This is the beginning of the good news. And it may be a new beginning for us too.

God, open our hearts to the good news you are offering to us.

Mark 1:4–13, Preparing for Good News: Mark begins his story by reaching back into the Old Testament, to the prophet Isaiah. These are words first spoken to people who were waiting, people living in a hard world, longing for God to step in and do something. And then Mark does something unexpected. He doesn't start in a temple. He doesn't start in Jerusalem. He doesn't start where we assume God would begin. He takes us into the wilderness. That alone should get our attention. Why the wilderness? Why begin there? What would make people leave what's familiar and walk out into a place like that?

Out there, we meet John. He's an odd figure. He dresses strangely. He eats strange food. He doesn't try to fit in. Prophets rarely do. They aren't trying to please anyone. They listen for God and speak a word the world may not want to hear, but needs. And people come. A lot of them. They come out into the wilderness to hear him preach and to be baptized. Which tells us something. People were searching. They were hungry. The religious institutions of their day weren't giving them what they needed. The empire that ruled over them wasn't offering much hope either, only pain. So they went looking elsewhere. John doesn't soften his message to keep the crowd.

He calls people to change their lives. To repent. To get ready. Someone is coming, he says, someone greater than me. Someone who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John keeps pointing beyond himself. He keeps saying, I'm not the one. Then, without letting us catch our breath, Mark moves on. And Jesus steps into the story. Jesus comes from Nazareth. A small place. Not Jerusalem. Not the center of religious life. Just a Galilean. And he steps into the water to be baptized. No special treatment. No moving to the front of the line. No clearing space for himself. He gets in line with everyone else. He identifies with them. With us. And as he comes up out of the water, the heavens are torn open. The Spirit descends like a dove. And a voice says, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

Before Jesus teaches. Before he heals. Before he does anything at all. It begins with what God says. That word, spoken over Jesus, will become the word he speaks over others: the sick, the forgotten, the pushed aside. You might think this is where things slow down. You'd be wrong. The voice has barely faded when the Spirit sends Jesus into the wilderness. Again, without ceremony. Without explanation. Not as a punishment. Not as a mistake. But as preparation.

Out there, things get real fast. There's no crowd. No voice from heaven. Just hunger, pressure, and choices. And this is where Mark takes us too.

God, help me step into this story with open eyes and an open heart.

Mark 1:14-20, Leaving Without Knowing: We are not given a definition of the kingdom of God at the outset, and that is not an accident. When we hear the word kingdom, we instinctively associate it with things we know, political power, control, hierarchy, domination. We think of kingdoms from the past, or we use the word today only ironically or critically: he rules over his little kingdom. It is not a word that carries much life for us. And that may be precisely the point. Mark does not begin by explaining the kingdom.

He invites us to let its meaning unfold over time, as we read, as we watch Jesus act, and as we hear him teach. For now, it is enough to notice what Jesus' first words are, and what they are not. He does not begin with a statement about himself. He does not ask people to believe in him. He announces that something has happened: a new kingdom has arrived; it is at hand. That announcement would have landed heavily for the people Mark was writing to. They lived in a world on edge, a world that was collapsing around them. Perhaps Mark was writing to Roman Christians who had been persecuted and blamed by Nero after the fire in Rome in 64. Or perhaps to Christians closer to Palestine, who had witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 70, when the Romans crushed a revolt.

Either way, kingdom was not a neutral word. It carried painful associations of violence, occupation, and loss. In that sense, Mark's world is closer to our own than we might like imagine. And yet Mark tells us that in Jesus, something decisively new has arrived. A kingdom, but not like the ones they knew. From the very beginning, we sense that this will be a very different kind of kingdom. That becomes even clearer when we listen closely to the words Jesus uses: "Repent, and believe the good news."

The word we often translate as believe can mislead us. We tend to hear belief as holding the right ideas, affirming a doctrine, or agreeing with a set of propositions. But the Greek word here is closer to trust. It speaks of placing the weight of your life somewhere, of commitment, movement, and action. And repent does not mean feeling bad or dwelling in guilt. It means to turn, to reorient your life toward this good news, to trust your life to it, and to let it reshape the direction you are going. Nothing else is explained. No details are offered. The kingdom is announced, and the future is left open. That is why the very next scene matters so much. Jesus does not say to the fishermen, "Believe these things about me." He says, "Follow me."

The invitation is not primarily intellectual; it is relational and lived out. Come. Walk with me. Let your life be caught up in this kingdom as it unfolds. Mark tells us that Jesus meets them in

the middle of their everyday lives, while they are doing their ordinary work. He does not wait for them to come to him in a religious building or a school. He goes to them. And when he calls them, they follow.

We are not told much about them. We do not know all their reasons. But curiosity alone does not make someone leave everything behind. You do not abandon your life because you are mildly interested. You do so because you are searching, because you recognize in Jesus something you are longing for, something the world itself is aching for. That is why this story still speaks to us and still matters. The call to follow Jesus meets us where we are and asks something of us. To follow him means leaving things behind, without being told exactly where the path will lead. It is a call we understand only by walking it.

Turn us toward your good news and give us courage to follow.

Mark 1:21–28, When Darkness Pushes: Early in Mark's Gospel, Jesus faces opposition. He is just getting started—preaching his first sermon and calling his first disciples, and immediately resistance rises to confront him and try to silence him. Mark is clear: this opposition is not accidental, and it will only grow stronger. This resistance runs deeper than disagreement or misunderstanding. Mark wants us to see that the powers aligned against Jesus are not limited to religious authorities or Roman rule.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus is confronted by spiritual opposition as well. A man with an unclean spirit interrupts him in the synagogue and shouts at him while he is teaching. When the kingdom of God is announced and its light breaks in, darkness does not retreat quietly into the shadows, it pushes back. This confrontation reveals who Jesus is and what he has come to do. His ministry is offering far more than helpful insights for a better life or instructions on how to be more religious. Jesus has come to confront and undo the forces that bind human beings and drain life from them.

These forces are spiritual, social, and religious. They operate wherever people are controlled, diminished, excluded, and denied their dignity. They were present then, and they remain active now, and we can expect resistance too. Opposition rises because these forces understand what Jesus' presence means. He has come to set people free. He has come to give life where life has been taken away. He has come to restore people to community and return to them the dignity that has been stripped from them. His authority threatens anything—seen or unseen, that survives and profits by keeping people bound. This is why opposition appears so quickly. Evil opposes him because it knows what his presence will dismantle. Mark places this opposition alongside another response. The demons know exactly who Jesus is, and they resist him.

Their recognition produces fear, not faith. The disciples, by contrast, do not yet understand who Jesus truly is or how costly following him will become. They have no idea how much they will eventually be asked to leave behind. But they follow him anyway. At first, they followed without knowing where it would lead. Now they follow as resistance begins to surface. They stay close. They walk with him as his ministry unfolds, his teaching, his healing, his confrontation with evil, and the growing resistance that builds over time. Their understanding will come later. For now, they keep moving ahead with him. Mark's claim is unmistakable.

Faith is not certainty at the beginning. Faith is choosing to walk with Jesus before we understand everything. The disciples do not have all the answers, and their faith does not arrive fully formed. It grows slowly, marked by moments of trust and moments of fear, by faithfulness and failure, by confidence and doubt. But they keep walking with him. And that is how faith grows. Not all at once. Not without struggle. But step by step, staying close to Jesus, continuing on the way with him even when the path is unclear. The demons recognize Jesus and resist him, but the disciples follow him without understanding. And this reminds us that faith begins, and keeps growing, simply by walking with him.

Jesus, help us keep walking with you.

Mark 1:29-45, Healing, Touch, and Prayer: As this first chapter draws to a close, Mark leaves us with a picture of Jesus who has the power to heal, and whose compassion reveals who he is and what his heart is like. And that compassion shows up most clearly in two small, easily overlooked moments. Jesus takes Simon's mother-in-law by the hand and raises her up. And Jesus reaches out and touches a man with leprosy. Neither action is necessary for healing. A word would have been enough. But Jesus chooses touch.

In both cases, Jesus crosses a line. You do not touch the sick. You certainly do not touch a leper. Illness made a person unclean, and leprosy made them untouchable, cut off not only physically, but socially, spiritually, and religiously. To touch was to risk contamination, to violate religious boundaries, to make yourself unclean as well. You simply did not do it. And Jesus does it anyway. Mark tells us that when the leper comes to Jesus, Jesus is deeply moved, some manuscripts say with compassion, others say with anger. That anger is not directed at the man asking for help. It is directed at a system that had taught people they were untouchable, that holiness required distance, that suffering meant you were cut off from God. Jesus is angry at a religion that stigmatizes the sick rather than heals, that isolates rather than restores. So he touches him.

And we should not rush past that. For someone who had likely not been touched in years, maybe decades, this was more than healing. It was recognition and dignity, the return of human connection. In that moment, his isolation was broken. That touch says everything. The man is met with compassion even before he is healed or restored to the community.

Jesus is showing us what God is like, and what the kingdom of God looks like when it breaks into the world. But Mark doesn't let us romanticize this. The crowds begin to press in. Everyone wants something from Jesus, healing, help, hope. His popularity grows. The demand increases. And then, very early in the morning, while it is still dark, Jesus slips away to pray. This is not an escape. It is not withdrawal from his calling. It is how he stays faithful to it. When the disciples wake up and go looking for him, when everyone is searching for Jesus, he does not rush back to meet expectations. He does not allow the needs of the crowd to define his mission. Instead, prayer grounds him again in why he has come. "Let us go on to the neighboring towns," he says, "so that I may proclaim the message there also. For that is why I came."

In prayer, Jesus resists being reduced to a healer-for-hire or a religious spectacle. He remains rooted in his identity and clear about his purpose. His compassion flows from this place, this deep communion with the Father that keeps his life aligned with the mission of God. This matters. Jesus is not a distant miracle worker, immune to exhaustion. He is fully present, fully human, and fully dependent. His authority does not come from endless activity, but from faithfulness to his calling. Mark 1 ends with a Jesus who touches the untouchable, heals the broken, confronts religious exclusion, and then pulls away to pray so that he can continue proclaiming the good news. This is power shaped by compassion. Authority expressed through faithfulness. A kingdom that restores people not just to health, but to dignity, belonging, and life.

Jesus, hold us close, soften our hearts, and keep us rooted in prayer. Amen.

Mark 2:1-12, Grace Goes First: Mark chapter 2 may look like a collection of different moments in Jesus' ministry, healing, forgiveness, shared meals, debates about the law. But Mark is telling one story. Each scene is connected by the heart of Jesus' message about grace. And in every scene, grace goes first. Before people change their lives. Before they understand who Jesus is. Before anything is explained. Before anyone confesses belief. Grace goes first, healing, forgiving, including. In each encounter, Jesus leads with grace, and that grace shapes how he forgives, how he relates to people, and how life with God is meant to be lived. We see it first in a crowded house. Jesus is teaching, and the space is packed. There's no room left. No way in.

Outside, a paralyzed man arrives, carried by friends who refuse to turn back. When they can't get through the door, they climb onto the roof. They dig through it. They open a hole and lower the man down right in front of Jesus. While Jesus is teaching. While everyone is watching. Pieces of roof falling down. Jesus doesn't seem bothered. You can almost imagine a smile. Without missing a beat, he looks at the man and speaks. "Son, your sins are forgiven." That is the first word Jesus offers. He does not ask what the man believes. He does not teach him anything. He does not heal him. He forgives his sins. The man does not ask for it.

He doesn't even speak in the story. His friends don't request it either. Jesus simply gives it—freely, without conditions, responding to an unspoken need. That's grace. Grace in action. This moment tells us something essential about Jesus. Forgiveness is not the end of a long process. It is the beginning of life with God. Before the man stands, before his body is restored, his life is made whole. By grace. Only then does Jesus heal him. The man stands, picks up his mat, and walks out in front of everyone. It's a powerful moment. But it is not the center of the story.

The center is what came first. The grace of God at work in Jesus. That grace astonishes the crowd as much as the healing. And it threatens the legal scholars and the religious system they represent—a system where forgiveness is earned, managed, controlled. A system where belonging is conditional and improvement must come first. Prove yourself and only then can you receive it. Jesus works differently. He does not wait for people to improve their lives before offering mercy. He does not fix people so they can belong. He forgives. He heals. He loves, first. Grace goes first. And everything else follows.

We still live in a world that works the other way around. Worth is earned. Belonging is conditional. Forgiveness comes after improvement. Grace, if it comes at all, comes last. And this way of thinking doesn't just shape the world, it often shapes the church too. But when the church lives this same grace-first way, it becomes a different kind of place. Not a space where people are fixed or managed, but where they are welcomed and received. Where no one has to earn a seat at the table.

What does that look like? It looks like listening before correcting. Taking people seriously before trying to fix them. It looks like staying instead of withdrawing. Not leaving when things get complicated or uncomfortable. Not rushing past pain because it doesn't fit the schedule. It looks like making room instead of guarding it. Opening tables. Widening circles. Choosing presence over control. This kind of grace is not weak. It gives life and it restores dignity. It creates the space where real change can happen in someone's life. Grace is not the reward of a faithful life. It is the beginning of one.

Thank you for meeting me with grace before I even knew to ask for it.

Mark 2:13–17, Grace Makes Room: After the roof is torn open, the next place grace shows up is around a table. Jesus is walking along the sea when he sees Levi sitting at the tax booth. No conversation is recorded. No explanation is given. Just the invitation: "Follow me." Levi gets up and follows him. That's all we are told. We don't know his story. We only know this, he is a tax collector. And tax collectors were despised.

The next scene is not a synagogue or a place of teaching. It's a house. A meal. A table. Jesus goes home with Levi for dinner, and many of Levi's friends, tax collectors and sinners, join them. Mark tells us that many of them were following Jesus, like disciples. And nothing

dramatic happens here. No sermon. No confrontation. Just a meal. And that's the point. Sharing this meal, stepping into Levi's home, wasn't some kind of strategy for creating buzz, going viral, or building a movement. It is simply who Jesus is. This is his heart on display, genuine love for people, sharing life. Jesus loved being with people. Hearing about their lives. Listening to their stories. You can almost see him in the middle of it all, laughing, relaxed, a smile on his face. He looks at people, really looks at them. And they look back at him.

People are drawn to him. They like being around him. Jesus isn't tense or guarded. He isn't worried about his reputation. He isn't managing the room. He radiates life. He radiates love. And in doing so, he shows us what grace looks like, and what God is like. Grace is more than just an idea. It is giving your time and your attention. It is being present. It is noticing people. It is sitting with them instead of rushing past because you have somewhere else to be. Sometimes grace is nothing more than kindness freely given, without an agenda or strings attached.

This is what really agitates and angers the religious leaders. You can almost see them standing off to the side, watching the dinner unfold, arms crossed over their chests. You don't eat with those kinds of people. Doesn't he know they are? They ask his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus hears the question and answers directly. "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Jesus does not say, "Once they change, I'll eat with them". He does not say, "Once they clean up their lives, then they belong." He eats with them before any change is visible. He shares life with them first. He enjoys people first. He shows grace and mercy and love before they understand what that means, and before they even know what they believe. That's grace. Grace that meets people where they are. Grace that softens hearts. Grace that changes lives through presence, not pressure. The irony is hard to miss. The people who know the law best are the ones who miss the heart of God. They know the rules, yet they stand outside the joy those rules were meant to protect.

Grace goes first. We live busy lives. We rush from place to place. We eat on the run. We half-listen while thinking about what's next. Grace-first living looks different. It looks like slowing down enough to really be with people. Like giving someone your full attention. Like choosing to be present because every person carries sacred worth. They are made by God and loved by God. When we slow down enough to notice people, to listen, to stay, we are not just being kind—we are showing God's love. And in doing so, we are loving God. Jesus didn't just talk about grace. He lived it. He sat in it. He laughed within it. And people who had been pushed to the edges found themselves welcomed in. And once again, grace is doing what it always does, opening the door before anyone thinks they deserve to walk through it.

Jesus, teach me to receive your grace and live from it.

Mark 2:18–28, Grace Gives Life: By the end of Mark 2, the questions shift. They are no longer about forgiveness or who Jesus eats with. Now they are about faithfulness. About religious practices. About what life with God is supposed to look like. People notice that Jesus' disciples don't fast like others do. They notice that they pluck grain on the Sabbath. They notice that Jesus doesn't seem as concerned with the rules as everyone else. And Jesus doesn't respond by adding more rules. He opens things up. He speaks of a wedding feast. Of guests who don't fast while the bridegroom is present. Of new wine that can't be poured into old skins.

Of a Sabbath made for people, not people made for the Sabbath. Jesus is not dismissing the law. This is his first real teaching on it in Mark. And what he reveals is its heart. The law was never meant to wear people down. It was meant to help them live. To make space for rest. To protect joy. To guard what gives life. The irony is hard to miss. The people who know the law best are the ones who miss the heart of God. They know the rules, yet they stand outside the joy those rules were meant to protect. Jesus is being clear about what really matters here: Life with God is not meant to be managed. It is meant to be lived. Grace does not weaken faithfulness. It gives it its true shape. When grace goes first, people aren't acting out of fear, they're responding to love. Practices flow from life instead of pressure. Faithfulness grows out of joy, not exhaustion.

Still, that's not how life usually feels. We live busy lives. We're always moving, always behind, always trying to keep up. Faith can start to feel like another thing we have to get done, another way to get it right or wrong, a burden. We judge devotion by behavior. By effort. By how disciplined or put-together someone looks. Rest starts to feel lazy. Joy starts to feel careless. Even in the church, it's easy to assume that if something feels heavy, it must be holy, and if it feels light, it must not be serious enough. But Jesus keeps pulling us back.

God's desire has always been life. Fullness. Rest. Joy. The Sabbath was never meant to box people in. It was meant to give them back their breath. To remind them that they are more than what they produce. That they are loved apart from what they accomplish. In every story, he moves first. He heals before people ask the right questions. He eats before people clean up their reputation. He forgives before anyone proves they deserve it. And when grace goes first, faithfulness becomes a response, not something driven by fear, not something we perform to stay in God's good graces. God's desire has always been life. Not managed. Not controlled. Not boxed in. Life that is full. Life that includes rest. Life marked by joy. This is the life Jesus invites us into. A life held by grace. Can you imagine him smiling as he offers it to you?

Jesus, thank you for your grace that gives me rest, joy, and life.