



9: The Daily Struggle of Salvaging

Hi, I'm Elisa Preston. You're listening to episode 9 of Praise Through It.



This podcast is based on Philippians 4:8, which says “Finally brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, whatever is excellent and praiseworthy -- think about these things.” My goal will always be to help you see an old burden in a new way, to see the praiseworthy side of your daily struggles. To see life in a way that brings hope, and in a way that shows the glimmer of light that inevitably shines, even in the daily grind. If that's something you're working on or you'd like to be a part of, listen in.

About five years or six ago I won a Pi Day contest with a gluten-free, dairy-free coconut cream pie. For those of you with no food allergies, first of all: bless you. About four years ago I tried to recreate the magic of winning with a s'mores pie. What's more fun than s'mores? Nothing. Nothing is. So, I tried a s'mores pie. And before I finish that story, I'm going to insert the fact that I'm a little bit known in my family for kitchen adventures. I've set the temperature and timer for chicken but forgot to put the chicken in the oven, and I didn't know that until I opened the oven and saw no chicken at all; I've splattered oil all over the wall in an attempt to fry tortillas; cheesecakes--more than one--have imploded in my oven; I've melted plastic to the burner; I've blackened a glass pan after leaving it on a hot burner; I've shattered Pyrex after putting the item in cold water straight out of the oven. Recently I burned water. I am a lifelong learner, okay? And I am not ashamed to say that.

Anyway, in the-- back to the s'mores pie. It was going really well until the broil part. Two minutes, and my pie was actually on fire. Not the cool, Gordon Ramsey kind of fire, but the not-supposed-to-happen kind of fire. And I forgot to mention and I'm having flashbacks to another kitchen fire from last summer; the house got so smoky AB and I ate in the trunk of my car. An adventure I forgot to mention. Anyway, for the s'mores pie, Greg blew it out and I whisked my pie to safety while my parents watched in horror.

Amazingly, that dessert was salvageable. I just had to remove the blackened marshmallows with a pair of tongs; they actually lifted right off and I replaced them with a new set, which toasted perfectly with one alteration to the process.



Sometimes it feels like life is catching fire and you're powerless to stop it. All around you something is going wrong, one way or another, and you're just trying to get from sunrise to sunset without setting off any landmines. And when that kind of season is upon us, I think we tend to tip-toe and just make do. We tire of showing up, we tire of trying again and again. We feel wrecked right along with whatever has come undone.

What if we saw the value of salvaging what's left, rearranging, and finding the delicious inside the disaster?

We might wonder...

What is the beauty in salvaging what's left? What's the point?

What's so great about rearranging?

What's so special or what is the point about finding the delicious inside the disaster?

(10-15 second musical interlude, soft guitar)

When the marshmallows catch fire, why salvage what's left? Why not let it all go in the trash?

Sometimes a thing is ruined beyond recognition. The way it started is just absolutely nothing like it is today. A job, a trust of some kind, a community, a work project, a creative project, a pregnancy. An ideal, a dream, a deeply held desire or wish. A marriage, a friendship, a parent/child relationship. The event or the thing has burned down or is in the process of burning down in some way, shape, or form, and we are standing around the wreckage thinking... is this even worth saving? Is anything in this even worth saving?

I'm not sure it's all worth saving, that's kind of up to you, but rarely will something end in our lives without leaving us something beautiful. And that is what we salvage. We reach into our hearts and we make room for the good and the beautiful and the uplifting and that is what we salvage.



When the marshmallows catch fire, why rearrange? Why not leave everything as-is and try to complete the recipe juuuuuust so?

Well when my pie literally caught fire, the Pinterest version was long-gone. Looooonog gone. So I rearranged. I looked at what I had and I rearranged according to what I saw, what I had, and

what I needed, because that's what we do. We look at what we have each day and we don't keep trying to fit the square peg into the round hole. I mean, we do. But that's what we try to move on from. We do the work of rearranging what doesn't work anymore. We look at what we made room for in our hearts - the good, the lovely, the beautiful, the glimmers of light, and we rearrange according to what will foster that beauty. We set boundaries. We make decisions. We grieve the Pinterest version of what we *were* trying to achieve, remembering that those versions are carefully cultivated images with filters and edits to which we are not privy. And we rearrange. We move the bar if it needs to be moved, we resettle our expectations, we look at what we have and what we need and we rearrange according to that.



When the marshmallows catch fire, why find the delicious inside the disaster? Why not throw up our hands and just call a spade a spade?

Because calling a spade a spade is calling what we see, and if all we see is burned marshmallows on top -- what about the rest? This goes back to salvaging and making room for the good and the beautiful... just because one part is horrible doesn't mean it will all be that way. Under the burnt marshmallows lay a delicious pie. An edible, super sweet, rich, delicious, gluten- and dairy-free s'mores pie that went like hotcakes at the party to people who did not even have food allergies (if I may say so). If I had just called it, we all would've missed the sugar coma that came from all the deliciousness.

Aside from the actual pie, here's the lesson: sometimes, yes, it is worth it to just call it like we see it and move on. There are healthy ways to do that and maybe someday we'll talk about that. But today we're talking about salvaging the ruins. And as we look around at our life at what we perceive to be ruined... where is the delicious in your disaster?

Where are the glimmers of light that inevitably shine?

What has your loss given you?

What has your heartache put back together?

What have your doubts confirmed?

Where have your fumbling steps taken you?

Look for the delicious in the disaster.



Salvaging that pie gave me a good story and a lesson I took to heart. Though I have burned my fair share of things in the kitchen, that pie was one of the first things I actually salvaged. It reminded me that just because something looks wrecked doesn't mean it *is* wrecked, and even if it is wrecked, that wreck doesn't have to be in vain. It can mean something, it can give me something valuable.

The true thing about our life's wreckage is that it can undo us from the inside out. It can put into place all these big feelings that we have no idea what to do with.

What's also true about our life's wreckage is that it's not the whole story. It's only part of the story. Your wreckage is only part of your story. It is not your whole story.

The praiseworthy side of our life's wreckage is harder to find, isn't it? I could offer you true scripture to remind you that the Heavenly Father who wrote your story knew this was coming: John 16:33 - "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world;" and John 14:27 - "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid." In both of those situations, Jesus is telling his disciples of heartache they will experience, and he is reminding them that through that heartache they don't have to be afraid, and in fact they can reach for the peace. These scriptures acknowledge what we will feel and what we will experience, and what we can reach for when we're in the nitty gritty of it.

And here's the good news: you get to be part of what you salvage, what you rearrange, and what you find beautiful.



I hope this gives you peace in any wreckage you're feeling. If it doesn't or if it doesn't, I leave you with a prayer and a blessing for whatever you find on fire today.

Heavenly Father, there is wreckage around us and it has wrecked us. From the inside out, we feel undone. Be near, be kind, hear our cries and hear our prayer. We know that you provide in ways we struggle to understand, and we know that provision can take awhile because we see it through our time and not yours. As we move forward...

May salvaging bits and pieces of our wreckage feel beautifully possible.

May our hearts open enough that we make room for the good, the beautiful, the lovely, and the delicious.

May rearranging our expectations set us free from what we thought and bring us into a new glory of what only God can do.

May finding the delicious in the disaster feel not only possible, but fascinating, fun, true, and life-giving.



Thank you so much for listening to episode 9 of Praise Through It. I truly value that you choose to spend some of your time with me. Life can be messy and hard, and we can see that side with no shame. And we can work to see the glimmers of light that shine through our everyday.

If you're looking for a way to connect beyond your earbuds, you can find me on Instagram as *elisapreston*, super easy; that's usually where I'm hanging out in the socials world. Every Monday I offer a blessing to my readers; you can sign up for that at elisapreston.com/sign-up or the link in my bio on Instagram. I love connecting in one-to-one chats, too, so if you're ever up for that or you want to share something that impacted you, feel free to send a DM on Instagram or send a message to hello@elisapreston.com.

That's it for today. I'll see you next time for episode 10 of Praise Through It.