



12: The Daily Struggle of Tired Faith

Hi, I'm Elisa Preston, and you're listening to episode 12 of Praise Through It.

My goal here 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.



Before we get started, I want to let you know about the summer. It's going to look a little different than this podcast has looked since I started in January. Starting the last week of June you'll have a blessing meditation every Monday. Then every Friday you'll have an episode of Praise Through It Together, a community offering of what I do here solo each week. There will be videos of the interview each Wednesday on Instagram and the audio will publish to this podcast feed each week, starting the week of June 28th. I'll be talking to women who have their own beautiful stories and perspectives on seeing the praiseworthy side of our daily struggles. I'm really excited to share those with you... we cover leading a school during a pandemic, finding your place in the world as a military spouse, listening to God's whispers, photography, taking chances, anxiety, dispelling purity culture myths, motherhood, family life, conflict at work, toxic positivity, and more. So stick around and make sure you're subscribed so you don't miss any.

Now, for a conversation on the daily struggle of tired faith.



When you're a young child, your faith is wrapped up in one thing: whatever is in front of you at that very moment.

As a mom of a young child, I have watched my daughter's faith move over the span of just 90 minutes from her tiny unicorn in an egg to her new library book to her Daddy to her scarf/seatbelt at the dinner table to her warm jammies to her Papa to the Yankees game to her bedtime book to her bedtime blankets.

Whatever moment it happened to be, whatever was in front of her at that moment was it. It was the most special thing, it was what made her happiest, it was exactly where her heart belonged.

And while I admire her presence with each item, I was also a little jealous as I watched. She doesn't have questions. I mean, she's got questions; she's 5. But she doesn't have any questions about her faith in these things. She's not wondering if that stuffed animal will let her down. She isn't worried that her little unicorn egg will break. She just knows: this is mine and it is here for me and it is bringing me joy and filling my heart.

I don't know how you grew up or how you came to the place in your faith that you're at right now, but I know for me a resounding message came through loud and clear: you either have faith or you don't. And that faith better be alive and well and big and bold and out LOUD.

Well, one: I'm not an out-loud person. We talked about that in the introverts/extroverts episode. I know some of you can relate. And two: I've tried that and I'm tired, so what now? Where do we go when we don't match the vibrant, loud-and-proud loving Jesus we see on the altar and on our Instagram feed? Do we still matter to God? Do we still matter to Jesus? Is the Holy Spirit still with us? Do we even have faith?

It's like those memes... if you don't have a goldfish cracker in the deep recesses of your purse, do you even have young children? If I don't praise Jesus through my trials, do I even have faith? If I don't feel feelings of love toward God at all times, do I even love him? If I get tired of having faith, do I even have it?



I have spent quite a bit of time wondering those exact questions, mostly the last one: if I get tired of having faith, of asking for the same thing, of saying I trust you, God, and then feeling like I get the short end of the stick (and not just because I'm 4'11"), does that mean I don't have faith?

Well, in the misunderstanding of hearing God through man's eyes for more than 30 years, maybe it would seem like I don't have faith.

In November of 2019 I wrote in my journal: "On days like today, I don't want to be alive or awake... it's hard to distinguish between the two when I feel this way."

I was at the very beginning of what turned out to be a four-month mysterious lung illness that doctors never ended up figuring out. All we knew was there was a spot in my lungs that wasn't pneumonia; I could barely speak, let alone breathe well or laugh, for lack of energy; I had a cough that a) I really felt should have given me a six-pack; and b) pinched so many nerves the entire left side of my body went tingly on a dime; I spent a total of five weeks in bed and the rest of that four months ambling around and sleeping on my couch; and by the time I could breathe or laugh deeply again it would be one year later.

Was it COVID? I have no idea. By the time I was getting better it was right when the disease entered the mainstream and the only testing sites available at the time wouldn't test me because I was too better. It was definitely possible. I was living in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, around a global population. But it doesn't really matter, though. I survived on my grandpa's chicken noodle soup, pumpkin chocolate chip muffins, water, ginger and turmeric tea, and a concoction

of mostly natural system-fixers, with the exception of one round of antibiotics and two rounds of steroids. And lots and lots of rest.

Either way, I was sick. Again. And it was clearly messing with my mind. I did not truly want to die. I was just so exhausted, I felt so sick, that I just wanted to take a nap in heaven and then come back when I was all better. And that was not the first time I had felt that way.

I worked so hard to keep my body healthy. I exercised all the time, ate almost completely whole food (I do love chocolate chip cookies). I had eliminated pork, kept my stress low, took my vitamins---all. the. things. All of them. And I had been fighting this fight for as long as I could remember. In different seasons of my life it was a different subject of health.

As a teenager, it was about my stomach. I said more bargaining prayers than I could count.

If you make my stomach never hurt again, I'll be nice to my brother.

If you make my stomach never hurt again, I won't fight my dad when he brushes my hair.

If you make my stomach never hurt again, I'll be nice to my brother forever.

If you make my stomach never hurt again, I'll never eat another Oreo.

Most kids bargained for a four-wheeler or concert tickets or a sleepover. I just wanted my stomach-aches to go away. Why wasn't God making my stomach-aches go away?

It turned out to be a problem-solving issue, but even after I was diagnosed with Celiac's Disease and I put on the 30 pounds of nutrients my body was missing, my body still felt like wilting pretty much every day.

So what the heck? I prayed. I believed. I trusted. And nothing. I spent years in pain, my parents and grandparents and brother trying everything to help, and me--doing every single thing my faith told me to do, and the wilting remained.

Very few conversations on faith are simple, right? We all have our own unique experiences with God, Jesus, church, and faith in general. We've all been uplifted and disappointed in different ways. We've all been encouraged and dismissed in different ways. We've all felt presence and loneliness. We've all felt welcomed and rejected by all of the above: by God, by Jesus, by the church, and by our faith.

To untangle this web will take a book I might someday write, but my goal here today is not to convince you of why your faith shouldn't be tired. It's to validate the fact that our faith gets tired. I got tired of praying for my stomach to feel better. I got tired of people telling me to have more faith, pray more, believe more, trust more. I did all of that. I was just ... tired. And that was and is okay.

I think we have this misconception that our faith is solely based on us. If that's true, we are all in a heap of trouble. As humans, we have limited capacities in all things. All things. God does not have such limitations, right? That's why He's God. In parenting, he is limitless. In relationships, he is limitless. In miracles, he is limitless. In nourishing our souls, he is limitless. In sustaining us

through trials, he is limitless. In being our heavenly Father, he is limitless. In being our Savior, he is limitless. In being our gut-check, our guide in the form of the Holy Spirit, he is limitless.

And in the case of our faith... he is limitless. We have free will, so we can choose to sidle up next to him or not. That is true. Also, we have limits. So when we feel like our faith is failing or falling or disappearing, maybe we give ourselves a little grace. Maybe we remember that we all get tired. Maybe we remember that faded doesn't mean gone, and our faith is not like a sun-bleached fabric that can never recover back to its original hue. No. Faith is dynamic. It ebbs and flows. Because we are human, our faith gets tired. But even when it's tired, it's there. It's a beacon of light deep in the soul. It calls us by name. It gives and it gives and it gives, and it waits patiently for us to work out our messes, sometimes one by one and sometimes all at once.

What's your Why hasn't God... tired faith question today? Maybe you have more than one. Where have you felt like you've been doing all the right faith things and you're still discouraged? Still tired? Maybe, just like everything else, that gets more complicated with time, and so does faith. And maybe there's more than meets the eye, more than meets the heart. Because even though our faith is tired, it's there.



What's true is that faith is like anything else: you'll find a lot of messages on how to do it quote-unquote "right".

What's also true is God never said your faith would disappear on Tuesday when you didn't feel like praying on Monday. He sent his son to say: come to me all who are weary, and I will give you rest.

What's true is God never said that your faith depends only on you and the energy of your soul to keep going 100 mph in His direction. He sent his son to tell you: I will give you peace in a way that nothing else can.

What's true is God never said your faith isn't real if you don't pray out loud, sing out loud, and jump for joy in your faith every day. I am far from being a master theologian, but I can read my Bible. And my Bible is full of deep heart cries from people who did anything but jump for joy in their faith, and God repeatedly told them He loved them.

What's praiseworthy is that God isn't going anywhere. He's not pacing up in heaven wondering when you'll stop being tired. That's not how it goes. Not only did he write your entire story so he knows when you'll stop being tired, He also isn't going anywhere.

What's lovely is that when our faith is tired, if we'll keep one corner of our hearts open, God will minister to us exactly as we need. If we'll keep one iron in the fire, even when we're tired and weary and worn out and wilted, God will weave a beautiful story with you. He promises that. He delights in that.

Your tired faith is not a weakness. It is not a sin. It does not make you less-than. It makes you human. And God made humans, He made you. And He loves you.

In her book *Take Heart*, author Lindsay Hausch says this: When we stop asking if our faith is big enough, when we stop feeling the need to behave like we have it all figured out, when we are at the end of ourselves, we can encounter God.

So if your faith is tired today, this is your invitation to take a nap. Lay your faith at his feet and ask Him to hold you and to hold your faith. Ask him to help you. Ask him where He's working. Ask him to help you see and feel his love. He's all there for that. All there for you.



Thank you so much for listening to episode 12 of *Praise Through It*. I'd love to connect with you beyond your earbuds. I've got scripture bundles for you if you're looking for some quick references on fear, grief, marriage, military, parenting, and wandering. If any of those strike a nerve, hit the link in the show notes and you'll get them straight to your inbox, all for free. And if you like what you hear on the podcast, don't forget to pass on an episode or the show to a friend. Ratings and reviews on iTunes are always helpful, too. It gets *Praise Through It* in front of people whose heart would be encouraged by what we share here.

Monday morning blessings and *Praise Through It Together* start in just 3 weeks. Make sure you're subscribed so you don't miss anything this summer.



That's it for today. I'll leave you with the words of one of my favorite hymns in the form of a prayer. *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* was written in 1758 by a man who lost his father at a young age and whose mom sent him away. He spent his teenage years tied up in a gang, but by age 20 he trusted God and Jesus. He wrote the hymn at 23 for a sermon he was giving on Pentecost Sunday. He had been hurt, he had been disappointed. His heart was tired. These were his words, and let them be ours, as well.

Come Thou fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it
Mount of Thy redeeming love
Here I raise my Ebenezer
Here by Thy great help I've come
And I hope by Thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home
Jesus sought me when a stranger

Wandering from the fold of God
He to rescue me from danger
Interposed His precious blood
Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be
Let Thy goodness like a fetter
Bind my wandering heart to Thee



Thank you for listening. I'll see you next time for another episode of Praise Through It.