



MATTHEW 11:28-29



*Easier and
Lighter*

SONYA CURTIS-TSHUMA



Easier & Lighter

written by Sonya Curtis-Tshuma

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Chapter 1 – Wholeness
Gen. 1:27, John 20:24-29

Pieced to Wholeness

into this world
souls come dismantled,
pieces packed in flesh,
preserved in blood,
purposed for puzzles
whose image is a picture of divinity

these pieces processed through
sunrise, sunset
and the gravity of circumstance,
smoothed with kisses,
curved with beatings,
advanced with knowledge
painted with tradition
and measured against rebellion,
everyone unique and essential
pieced into wholeness,
into God's image

some ending seamless as photos
as if blemishes were removed at
every stage, as if the edges
had never known separation,
as if they came whole into this world

and some end defined by their flaws,
as if the wind angrily crashed
soul and earth together
in the midst of a storm,
as the sun sealed what the rain
had licked into communion

and if i have a choice,
i want to be the latter,
to be that image
that's hurricane kissed
branded by nature

that has live and existed
and is valued the more
for its unexplainable stance

i want to be that image
that is kept at a distance
to keep hands and time
and cravings from advancement
from touching
the wonder that is me

to show forth the hand
of God with its scars
still in place,
a puzzle with gaps
deep enough
for the world to
find refuge in,
messed up enough
that humanity
can see its reflection in it,
if only it won't be turned
away from what it represents

this puzzle is incomplete
without dents, without unevenness
and discoloration
without declaration
that fixing it will somehow
take away from the wholeness it
has found, from all that it is,
from all that i am

Whenever I get really stressed or start to feel down about myself, I find a downtown city and take a walk. I try to avoid the downtowns where all the buildings look new and that are filled of people looking for the newest outfits. Instead I choose the ones with worn down buildings, the ones filled with small stores you've never heard of and the ones with graffiti and murals painted on the buildings. Every time I walk through one of them, I just think about how long the buildings have been around. I think about how time, weather, and modern trends in architecture have fought to kill these types of places and yet they still stand. They are strong locations with their own quirks and uniqueness and their own people. They are rough around the edges but full of treasures that major downtowns can't identify.

I am in many ways rough around the edges. My life has been shaped by many things including abuse and some days I am so distracted by the weariness of going through so much and so distracted by the quirks of my personality and the fact that I don't exactly fit into everyone's standard that I start to not appreciate who I am. It's while walking through these spaces that God's voice

reminds me of my own beauty and wholeness. Pieced to Wholeness is a poem that I wrote on one of those walks.

The Bible says that we are made in God's image. We always carry in us that image and the ability to look just like God. When God creates us in His image, I believe He puts a unique measurement of each of His qualities to help us accomplish our purpose and destiny. I also believe it is life and experiences that causes those qualities to come out of us. Each lesson we learn, each moment of joy or sadness brings out more of what God used to piece us together. And at the end of that is an image of God, a piece of God that only we can reflect.

If you look in an art museum, some paintings look almost like photographs and others are abstract and unfocused but each is beautiful in their own way. Some people will never go through abuse and there are some feelings of ours that they will never understand. However, everyone has their problem and their struggles and in the same manner, there are some feelings that we don't understand about others. I think the key is a appreciating the difference and uniqueness and finding the strength in every story. For people who've been abused sometimes that picture looks messy

and abstract. Sometimes it is our views and our awkward moments that make us beautiful and worthwhile.

I wrote in **Pieced to Wholeness** that I would rather be the latter. Maybe that's the artist in me speaking or the voice that knows my experience but either way it is true. I appreciate those worn buildings downtown. I appreciate pictures of old churches and old buildings that have withstood time. They seem powerful to me. They claim the space that they are in and I know they will be sought after when the trendy buildings aren't. In the same way, overcoming abuse has only made me stronger. It has made me wiser and it has made me more mindful of claiming my space and my time. My prayer is that it also makes me able to help others as they see me standing for God and freedom knowing my story.

The Jesus who raised the dead, healed the sick, and replaced an ear chose at the end of His time on earth to walk around with scars in His hands and feet. This was the Jesus who had been resurrected, who showed off in Hell, showed up in Heaven and came back to prove He'd done both. Jesus, who had fulfilled His purpose, chose scars when he could have easily healed them. This was Jesus whole and proven. As someone who has gone through abuse, I had

to ask myself many times what wholeness looks like. Abuse can break you in many ways. So how do we know when we are really whole? Does it mean looking and thinking how I did before the abuse or is it something I have not imagined? What does that look like and does it include scars? I believed it does and I am thankful to be able to show mine.

Scars are not necessarily physical markings on our bodies. They can be anything that bears witness to what we have been through. They are any part of your story that we give voice to or that is seen in us. The thing about scars is that even though they show evidence of a past pain, they no longer carry pain themselves. Touching them and revealing them does not hurt at all. For me, many of my poems that I write are scars. Some I wrote when wounds were open and raw but now when I read them and remember their motivation, there is no more pain and no more tears.

After Jesus rose from the dead and walked among His followers, people believed his identity for different reasons. For some it was His voice, for some it was the way He made their heart feel, for some it was the recognition of others, or the recognition that He fulfilled prophecy but for Thomas, it was His scars. All these

things made up Jesus identity. When they could not immediately recognize His form, it was His voice, His spirit, His actions, and His scars that revealed his identity. In the same way these very things reveal who we are and are a picture of our wholeness.

There is no common picture of wholeness and the worst thing we can do for people of abuse is teach them that there is. We weren't created to look a certain way but to hold a certain thing and that is the spirit of God. If we are whole enough to hold God's spirit and act out of it, then we are whole. God makes us new, there is no need in trying to be exactly who we were before the abuse. We can however learn from our experience the lessons it has to teach us and by finding our voice, our safe space, our beauty, our forgiveness, our love, we can be wholly who we are. We can accomplish all that God has for us knowing that nothing is impossible for us.

Questions To Consider:

What defines you?

Name something about yourself that reflects an attribute of God?

How are you owning your life and making the most of it?

Are there any scars in your life?



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