

The Tension of Transition

"Are you in or out?" my mom would ask... and I'd stand there at the door, not sure what to do. Did I want to go inside or stay outside? Did I want to go with my brothers or stay at home? Did I want to swim in the lake or stay in the cabin? I was faced with a choice and, in a moment, I'd have to decide.

These photographs remind me of that tension. The tension of transition.

When you look at these photos, what do you see?

I see two worlds, forever overlapping, because they've been frozen in space. Sand and wave are interwoven... and will always be that way. The sand is more than the shore and the wave is less than the ocean. If you were able to break free and choose one or the other, you could build castles in the sand or swim in the ocean. But you can't break free. So, instead, you inhabit this shoreline, straddling the sand and the sea. God's people were on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land. It was not an easy road, but God gave them a glimpse of hope along the way. Manna that tasted like honey and disappeared like frost. A fleeting foretaste of a land flowing with milk and honey.

Their lives were in the tension of transition. Could they taste the Promised Land? Yes. Could they live in it? Not yet. But they could live on it. This taste of heaven. Yes, they could live on that in this desert... but only day by day.

Wandering through the desert, they ate the bread of heaven and God drew them into trust in his work. "Can I enter into the promised land?" "Not yet." "Should I worry that God has forgotten me?" "Not while manna lies on the ground." Every day, God called his people to live in the tension of his work.

So much of our spiritual life inhabits these places of transition. God's work is not separate from the world but interwoven in it. God, in Christ, has entered into his fallen creation to bring forgiveness, life, and restoration. Eternity in time. Life in death. Power in humility. Joy in suffering. God calls us to see him. Not as a figure, distant on the horizon, but as a companion, hidden along the way. In the midst of my distraction, devotion calls me deeper. In a world that is disenchanted, I discover God at work. In times of disillusionment, I practice the disciplines of faith.

Manna does more than feed the body. It awakens the soul. We stop for a moment. We pause along the shore. We see the sand and the wave, the desert and the manna, and acknowledge that they are woven together in a mysterious way. Rather than choose one or the other, we receive one with the other. Trusting that, each day, God calls us to experience his eternal kingdom in a momentary way.

