



Micah Lehman Kavedzic

Originally from Idaho, I now call Bosnia-Herzegovina home, along with my husband and three little girls. Our life here is simple, ordinary, and intentional as we seek to be the salt and light God has called us to be. One of the greatest joys of this journey is to experience how God's light leads, strengthens, and heals us through this calling. This week's devotionals focus on passages about light from Isaiah combined with some of my everyday experiences in the Balkans. Let us be reminded this week what it means to live in God's light.

BIBLE READING: Isaiah 2:2-5

At its prime, the Austro-Hungarian Empire reached well into the Balkans. Its rail system was extensive, connecting the outer reaches of the kingdom. Markings of this abandoned rail system can still be seen today in our area: old stations turned into homes, elevated pathways level and straight, little watch shelters falling apart, rock embankments still holding up over 150 years.

Though this rail system was deemed outdated and was replaced about fifty years ago, it is now being given new life. A group of young entrepreneurs are in the process of transforming the old railway into bike paths. These paths have good bones and yet the refurbishing process is demanding, monotonous, even tedious. Identifying routes, clearing out rubbish, pruning back overgrowth. One segment of the path at a time. One part of the journey after another. An overarching plan that will one day be a network of bike paths connecting little towns and villages across the region.

Swords into plowshares. Spears into pruning hooks. What habits, behaviors, ways of thinking is God seeking to refurbish in my life? Choosing to walk in his light is the choice first to be examined and then to be reworked. Am I welcoming the regenerating light of the Lord into my heart? An attitude. A behavior. A way of worship. A habit. A tradition. A perspective. An opinion. What am I being called to release? What am I being called to embrace?

Come and let us walk in the light of the Lord.

SONG: Come to Me (The Village Church)

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Lord, thank you for your renewing, life-giving light. May it fill my life and awaken me to the areas which you desire to refurbish and transform.

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BIBLE READING: Isaiah 8:12-20

Outside of town lies the small Serb-minority village Prebilovci, the shame of Herzegovina. During World War II, 650 of its women and children were massacred while the men were away fighting. It was targeted again during the 1990s war, the bombing and gun fire leaving it nearly uninhabitable. It's hard to understand how the few residents are able to remain in such a place, forever reminded of all that has been lost.

Up the road, on a small hill stands a new Serbian Orthodox church, more of a memorial than a place of worship. Constructed just a few years ago, the architecture is breathtaking. Yet its beauty does not mask the pain of harbored hurts. Two rooms honor the victims of the World War II massacre, and the names of Serbians killed during the 1990s war cover the walls of the second story. The bones of the dead have been gathered and can be seen through a Plexiglas plate in the floor. What narrative does this building tell? What message is being passed on to the next generation?

Isaiah 8 reminds us that we are responsible for choosing the narrative to which we cling. The Israelites are called out for putting their trust in the wrong source—narratives without light, allowing fear to reign in their hearts. Isaiah puts the question before us, to what do we cling? What narrative do we allow to fill our minds and hearts? Prebilovci does not have a corner on the market of hurt, division, fear, and extremism. These are as available to us as to every people and generation. Will we focus on them, or will we cling to the truth of God's light?

SONG: Send Out Your Light (Sandra McCracken)

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Almighty God, show me ways I may be clinging to false narratives. Raise my eyes to you, the true Light.

—Micah Lehman Kavedzic

BIBLE READING: Isaiah 30:18-26

Unfinished buildings mark the landscape. Rebar shooting to the sky for a future second story. Concrete blocks waiting for a façade. It is common in the Balkans to build as you can pay for it. The process can draw out for years as a relative or two head off to Western Europe looking for work, sending back money when they can.

The choice to build our own house was eased by this reality and yet our lack of funds weighed heavily on our minds. As we started, we knew we only had enough money to finish the basic, bare skeleton of our home. Who knew how long it would take to finish such a project? Who knew how we would be able to fund such an undertaking?

Go for it.

The battle began. As each fear, each doubt, each frustration arose, we took it to God. Often a daily struggle.

This is the way. Walk in it.

As we took small steps of faith, darkness was turned to light. Crooked places made straight. We couldn't see the way, yet God led us forward, providing for each phase as needed. A year after breaking ground we moved into our home, amazed at the obvious work of his hand. Streams, rivers of blessing. The seven-fold light of God revealing a reality more beautiful than our dreams.

As we tune in to God's voice, he speaks into our situation. As we take steps of obedient faith, he leads. What can I do today to hear him?

SONG: No Longer Slaves (I Am They)

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father of Lights, there is no darkness you can't penetrate. As I seek your face, guide my steps.

—Micah Lehman Kavedzic

BIBLE READING: Isaiah 42:16

There are plans for a freeway to be built, running the length of Bosnia and Herzegovina, connecting north to south and making travel much more convenient. Small segments have been completed and are slowly beginning to be linked with one another. The most recent segment to have been opened is an easy ten minutes away. The difference this makes for us in getting to and from the airport is incredible.

The forethought and planning that goes into these types of massive roads is immense. Tunnels through mountains. Bridges over canyons. Curves, inclines, descents evened out in a way that is often hardly noticeable. We watched as an enormous bridge was being built hundreds of feet over a small two-lane highway. Once it was finished, we drove on it, amazed at how easy it is to take such a massive structure for granted.

The next segment to be completed will head north. Again, a small two-lane highway will become obsolete. It is hard to imagine a straight road, leveling out the difficulties of the terrain. Mountains, gorges, and so many curves laid smooth. Yet we see the evidence of what will be and have already tasted it in small ways.

So are the promises of God. How easy it is to forget the paths he has created in the past, and how easy to be overwhelmed when we look ahead. Pause and reflect on the ways he has guided you up until now. Claim his guiding light as you look into the future.

SONG: Find Me (Jonathan and Melissa Helser)

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Lord God, you have brought me to this point and you continue to go before me. I am filled with thanks.

—Micah Lehman Kavedzic

BIBLE READING: Isaiah 58:6-12

Bog je jedan. God is one.

This is a statement I have been grappling with the last few years. A divided nation. Three groups of people separated by religion and unending years of turmoil.

Bog je jedan.

A Band-Aid to cover the hurts and atrocities of war and little everyday acts of prejudice. Finger-pointing that destroys a nation. I give you space. You give me mine. It doesn't matter how we worship God. Let's just acknowledge we have different beliefs and never really talk about them, deal with them. Keep the conversation on the surface.

Bog je jedan.

In so many ways I want to nod my head, agreeing with a half-truth that might bring temporary peace. But deep down I know this subtle half-truth is really a full-on lie—a lie to appease brokenness, hurt, separation bigger than this generation.

Bog je jedan.

Yes, but not the way it is being implied. Yes, God is one and because this is so, it is he that is the standard of truth, not our beliefs or opinions or interpretations of reality.

Isaiah points out that we may be free to choose our fast, but there is only one fast that is true, and that is of God. Saying yes to the half-truth may feel good and safe but it ultimately shuts our hearts off from true healing and unity.

This is not a call to be judgmental and separatist, but an examination of self and a soul that reaches out to others.

SONG: Heal Our Land (Kari Jobe)

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Father God, what half-truths have I bought into? Show me how I have allowed my fast to become contaminated.

—Micah Lehman Kavedzic

BIBLE READING: Isaiah 60:1-3

A young man sat in our living room one evening, sharing his story. I found myself shaking my head inwardly. Barely out of his 20s and so many hard things: Transplanted out of his home town because of war. Labeled as an outsider because of where he lived in his new town. Just out of college he survived a horrendous car accident, only to lose a hard-earned position at a solid company because of his injuries and the months required for healing. And most recently, crops ready for harvest stolen from his fields during the cover of night.

I shake my head because his story is not uncommon. Displacement. Hurt. Mistreatment. Hurdle after hurdle. Frustration upon frustration. No hope for the future. The world we live in is broken and dark.

He's not asking for pity. He's not whining or looking for handouts. He's just telling his story. How do I speak into this young man's life? How do I respond to his hurt?

*Darkness covers the earth,
And deep darkness the peoples.
But ADONAI will arise upon you,
And His glory will appear over you.
(Isaiah 60:2 TLV)*

Do I have the courage to speak what's on my mind? Do I have the words in the right language? I'm learning to stop questioning the urge. I may not have all the words, but when God nudges, it doesn't matter. The promises of God are for me to share, especially when he lays them on my heart. Pass on the hope. Pass on the light. Obey.

SONG: Reason to Sing (All Sons and Daughters)

PRAYER SUGGESTION: Lord, open my eyes to ways you would have me share your light and hope with others.

—Micah Lehman Kavedzic

BIBLE READING: Isaiah 60:19-22

High on a hill overlooking the Neretva Valley stand the ruins of Daorson, one of the earliest settlements found in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Though little is left of this fortress which dates back to 300 BC you can make out the outer wall and a few structures within. Roman ruins tend to be a bit younger and much easier to identify. Megorjela, set lower in the valley, is a place to let your imagination run wild. This fourth-century villa complex was built for agricultural purposes and you can still wander in and out of the numerous rooms and walkways, trying to figure out what their functions might have been.

Fortresses evolved as demands for survival shifted. Rulers in. Rulers out. Empires invading, expanding, conquering, leaving their mark. Power struggles, stripping the land and taking away hope, leaving behind a people clinging to all they have: their bloodline, their traditions, their name. An ideal, an identity, a reason to fight, to make their voice heard. But when pain, loss, and suffering become the focus of life, it merely breeds more of the same. Retribution. Revenge. Setting things right.

Isaiah calls us to lift our eyes. Let's remember not just the past but the reason, the source, the future promise. God is eternal and unchanging. He is free from time. His kingdom is already but not yet. That is the reality that we are called to live. Not a focus on preserving ourselves, but rather on living in the promise of the future, the everlasting light that ends all mourning and suffering.

SONG: Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

PRAYER SUGGESTION: God, I am awed by the thought of eternity. May your light shine into my heart today, reminding me of the glory that awaits in my future.

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