

Chapter 10

The Face We Almost Missed

There is something mysterious about recognition.

Sometimes we are looking directly at someone... and still fail to see them.

It happens more often than we realize.

We become so accustomed to familiarity that wonder quietly slips away.

The extraordinary stands before us dressed in ordinary clothes.

I have often wondered why so many stories in Scripture involve delayed recognition.

A gardener who is mistaken for someone else.

Travelers walking beside a stranger.

A voice heard before it is recognized.

Eyes opened only after bread is broken.

It seems that Love is rarely hidden by distance.

More often, it is hidden by expectation.

We keep looking for the remarkable... while heaven quietly arrives disguised as the familiar.

Perhaps that is why we overlook so much beauty.

We expect revelation to interrupt life.

Instead... it illuminates it.

The kitchen table becomes an altar.

A shared meal becomes communion.

A hospital room becomes sacred ground.

A quiet conversation becomes holy.

Nothing has changed...

Everything has changed.

The older I become, the more convinced I am that God has never struggled to be present...

It is we who have struggled to notice.

Not because we are inattentive people.

Because life has taught us to hurry.

We rush past the ordinary in search of the spectacular.

Meanwhile... the Eternal patiently waits inside the ordinary.

Hospice has given me countless moments like this.

A daughter gently combing her father's hair.

A husband falling asleep while holding his wife's hand.

A nurse adjusting a blanket with such tenderness that no one else in the room even notices.

Nothing dramatic happens, yet something eternal becomes visible.

Love has taken on flesh again.

Perhaps that is the continuing mystery of the Incarnation.

It did not end in Bethlehem.

Nor at the empty tomb.

The life of Christ continues wherever Love becomes visible...

Where mercy interrupts judgment.

Where forgiveness overcomes resentment.

Where hope quietly refuses to surrender.

The Word continues becoming flesh...

not because humanity replaces Christ...

but because His life is freely shared with those who remain in Him.

This changes the way we see one another.

No longer as interruptions.

No longer as categories.

No longer as enemies.

Every face becomes a *place* where dignity waits to be discovered.

Every *conversation* becomes an opportunity to honor what fear has often hidden.

Every *stranger* becomes someone carrying a story we have not yet been invited to hear.

There was a time when I believed spiritual maturity meant seeing more clearly where people were wrong.

Now I wonder if maturity looks almost the opposite.

Seeing more clearly what Love has never stopped believing about them.

Not denying brokenness.

Not pretending suffering isn't real.

But refusing to let either become the deepest truth about another human being.

Perhaps this is why Jesus looked at people so differently.

He never ignored the wound.

He simply refused to mistake the wound for the person.

He spoke beneath shame.

Beneath fear.

Beneath failure.

He addressed our identity that had never been erased...

Beloved.

Deeply loved.

Deeply valued.

Highly Prized.

I wonder if that is what true vision always does.

Then I remember the words that first began this journey.

"They took note that these men had been with Jesus."

At first, I thought those words were about Peter and John.

Now I think they are about recognition.

The religious leaders recognized a familiar atmosphere.

A familiar way of *seeing*.

A familiar way of *loving*.

A familiar *freedom*.

Not because Peter and John had become copies of Jesus.

Because His life had become visible in theirs.

Perhaps that is the invitation waiting for every one of us.

Not to become someone impressive.

Not to become someone admired.

But to become so quietly at home in Love...

that others begin recognizing its fragrance before they ever hear its name.

Sit With This...

Today... before you try to change anything... simply notice.

Notice the face in front of you.

Notice the kindness that almost went unseen.

Notice the ordinary moment asking for your attention.

Perhaps recognition begins there.

Not by finding God in extraordinary places...

but by discovering that He has never stopped meeting us in ordinary ones.