

Epilogue

The Beginning

Every journey reaches a place where maps are no longer helpful.

There comes a moment when the road beneath your feet matters more than the pages behind you.

Perhaps this is that moment.

You will wake tomorrow to the same home.

The same work.

The same relationships.

The same ordinary world.

And yet... perhaps nothing is the same.

Because once the heart has learned to notice, it cannot return to living unnoticed.

Once Love has re-hydrated the soul, even deserts begin to whisper of hidden springs.

Once you have recognized the quiet companionship of Christ, you begin discovering Him everywhere.

Not because He suddenly arrived.

Because your eyes have slowly learned to see.

So don't try to remember every chapter.

Remember to notice.

Notice the person no one else sees.

Notice the beauty that asks for nothing.

Notice the interruption that may be an invitation.

Notice the ordinary places where heaven refuses to stop appearing.

The journey was never meant to end with this book.

It was always meant to continue through your life.

Walk slowly.

Love generously.

Remain deeply.

And should someone, years from now, quietly say of you,

"There was something different about them..."

May it never be because you tried to appear remarkable.

May it simply be because... **you had been with Jesus.**

There comes a moment when every journey quietly asks to become a life.

Books are like that.

We close the cover.

We place them back on a shelf.

The words remain behind.

Or so it seems.

The best books refuse to stay on the page.

They become the way we notice a sunrise.

The way we listen to a friend.

The way we sit beside someone who is grieving.

The way we answer an unexpected question.

Eventually, we realize we are no longer remembering the book.

The book has begun remembering us.

Perhaps this journey has never really been about Peter and John.

Nor has it been primarily about courage.

Or atmosphere.

Or even Presence.

Perhaps it has always been about Love finding a home within ordinary people.

Not extraordinary people... Ordinary ones:

People who become a little slower to judge.

...A little quicker to forgive.

...A little more willing to remain.

...A little less afraid of silence.

...A little more attentive to beauty.

These are not small things.

They are how the Kingdom quietly enters the world.

If someone were to ask me today, *"What does it mean to be with Jesus?"*

I'm not sure I would begin with doctrine.

I think I would tell them about Nurse Angie who straightened a blanket as though she were dressing a king.

I'd tell them about the husband who refused to let go of his wife's hand.

I'd tell them about the child who climbed into a grandfather's bed without speaking.

I'd tell them about the hospice room where tears became holy because no one tried to stop them.

I'd tell them about my father, who used to say,

"Tell me who you go with, and I'll tell you who you are."

Because I think he understood something long before I did.

We become the company we keep.

Perhaps that is why this journey began with a question and now ends with another.

Who have you become while walking through these pages?

Not what have you learned; Not what have you decided.

Instead,

Who have you become?

Are you noticing more?

Listening more deeply?

Holding people more gently?

Has wonder returned?

Have your eyes become softer?

Has your heart become less hurried?

If so... then perhaps these pages have already fulfilled their purpose.

There is one final thought I would leave with you.

Do not try to carry this book into the world.

Carry the Presence that gave birth to it.

Books eventually become worn.

Ideas evolve.

Language changes.

Love does not.

Love remains.

And wherever Love remains... Christ, The Presence is never far away.

One day, perhaps years from now, someone may leave a conversation with you and never remember exactly what was said.

They may forget the stories.

The quotations.

Even the Scriptures.

But they may remember that, somehow... they breathed a little easier.

They felt less alone.

More fully seen.

More fully alive.

If that happens... the journey continues.

*Because in the end...
the greatest evidence that we have been with Jesus
may not be found in the words we leave behind.
It may be found in the lives that quietly
begin to bloom
after we have gone.*

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