

MIDNIGHT JESUS

WHERE STRUGGLE, FAITH, AND GRACE COLLIDE

JAMIE BLAINE

THE LATE-NIGHT PSYCHIATRIC CRISIS GUY

NOTES

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The image of “Peter cursing and falling beneath the waves” refers to Matthew 14:22–33, when Jesus walks out on the water to meet the disciples’ boat.

- “Noah fed up and drunk” refers to Genesis 9:21: “Noah drank some wine, got drunk, and lay down naked right in the middle of his tent.”
- “Thomas doubting” refers to John 20:24–29, when he asks Jesus for proof that he’s really returned and risen from the dead.
- “David tiptoeing to get a second peek” refers to his spying on Bathsheba’s rooftop bath in 2 Samuel 11:2–5.
- The story of “Jonah at midnight in the belly of the whale” can be found in Jonah 1–2.
- “Elisha calling down bears” refers to the time Elisha caused a bunch of angry bears to maul some kids who had been taunting him in 2 Kings 2:23–25.

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JUST START WALKING

freewheeling roller rink DJ gets job offer at a mental hospital

- “Don’t try to figure out everything on your own.”
—Proverbs 3:5 THE MESSAGE
- “For we walk by faith, not by sight.”—2 Corinthians 5:7 ESV
- “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”—Psalm 90:12 NIV
- “The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen.”
—Isaiah 43:20 NIV
- You can find an interview where I discuss the openly Christian message of early Sabbath songs with bassist/lyricist Geezer Butler—and another where former vocalist Glenn Hughes talks about beating the devil by the grace of God—at jamieblaine.com.

THIS IS NOT TV

in which a giant psychotic patient threatens to hit me with a chair

- “Be patient in tribulation, constant in prayer.”—Romans 12:12 ESV
- “For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.”—2 Timothy 1:7 NLT
- “I will . . . transform the Valley of Trouble into a gateway of hope.”—Hosea 2:15 NLT
- The song nurse Jackie sings in the med room is “Seven Spanish Angels” by Ray Charles and Willie Nelson.

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THERE BUT FOR THE GRACE

pyromaniacs and nympho schizophrenics in my first few weeks working the psych ward

- “So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart.”—Genesis 6:6 NLT
- The scripture the priest read was Isaiah 30:15: “In returning and rest, you will be saved. In quietness and trust you will find strength” (THE VOICE).
- Country bands often put their own spin on R&B classics to keep the people dancing.

MONK BY DEFAULT

naïve psych major struggles to find the balance between faith and responsibility

- “If a certain quantity of gas is pumped into an empty chamber, it will fill the chamber completely and evenly, no matter how big the chamber. Thus suffering completely fills the human soul and conscious mind, no matter whether the suffering is great or little.”—Viktor Frankl
- “Smoke. Nothing but smoke.”—Ecclesiastes 1:2 THE MESSAGE
- “Humans are too temporal and moody to delay gratification. We are terrible at waiting and obsessed with reward. But if we weren’t hardwired this way, we’d likely still be huddled in caves, not particularly concerned whether someone discovered fire or found better sources of food.”—Dr. Stephens

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- The “store up your treasures in heaven” plan in the Bible is discussed in Matthew 6:20: “But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal” (ESV).
- Proverbs 25:2 reminds us that it’s the glory of God to conceal a matter, but the honor of kings to seek it out.

GOTTA RUN TO KEEP FROM HIDING

a familiar face on my first crisis call

- “Even though I am free of the demands and expectations of everyone, I have voluntarily become a servant . . . to reach a wide range of people: religious, nonreligious, meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists, the defeated, the demoralized—whoever. I didn’t take on their way of life . . . but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view.”
—1 Corinthians 9:20–23 THE MESSAGE

OCEANS OF GRACE

where the psych ward pastor has his biggest altar call

- When Brother Ponder says, “Remember when he was trying to preach and that guy kept hollering out, ‘Have mercy!’” he is referring to Mark 10:48.
- Mary Magdalene “barged in on the board meeting” in Luke 7:37.
- The “boys cut a hole in the roof during church so they could lower their sick buddy down” in Luke 5:19.

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- Aftershave, shoe polish, and hair spray are frequent alternatives for desperate alcoholics.
- “I’m after mercy, not religion. I’m here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders.”—Matthew 9:13 THE MESSAGE
- “Make sure no one misses God’s grace.”—Hebrews 12:15 CEB

RAMBLE ON, OL’ BLUE

in which a loveable old drunk teaches me a thing or two about the nature of God

- The part in the Bible Ol’ Blue was referring to when he spoke of Jesus not always being so sure was likely when Christ quoted Psalm 22:1 in Mark 15:34.
- “Grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.”—2 Corinthians 12:9 NLT
- Insisting on a safe Bible and well-behaved Jesus neuters the grace of God.

THE GOLDEN TICKETS OF GOD

where I try to raise money for grad school by singing at a campus nightspot

- “If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness.”—2 Corinthians 11:30 NASB
- “The Pharisees and the religion scholars were not all pleased. They growled, ‘He takes in sinners and eats meals with them, treating them like old friends.’”—Luke 15:2 THE MESSAGE
- There are no reported stories of Jesus turning over tables in a bar.

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GOLDEN TICKETS II, THE FIRST CLUE

we play a rocking Pentecostal revival and Jesus comes through last minute with the cash

- “Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm, and it filled the house where they were sitting.”—Acts 2:2 NLT
- “Go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a . . . coin.”
—Matthew 17:27 NIV
- The passage describing “blood red moons and crashing stars, [waiting] for lightning to split the eastern sky and rapture us over the jasper wall” refers to the events described when the world ends in Revelation. Revelation 21:18 describes heaven: “The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.”
- The part in the Bible where Jesus says, “Give no thought to tomorrow,” is Matthew 6:34.

INTO THE VENT

where I climb into a wall to talk down a heartbroken office worker

- “A crushed reed he will not break, and a fading candle he won’t snuff out.”—Isaiah 42:3 ISV
- “The only true currency in this bankrupt world is what you share with someone else when you’re not trying to be cool.”—Lester Bangs
- Crawl spaces for storage are apparently common in older buildings.

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LIFE IS CRAZY / AMAZING GRACE

testimony night at church proves a good place to study behavioral psychology

- “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion?”
—Matthew 11:28 THE MESSAGE
- “Stop your silly efforts to save yourselves.”—Isaiah 30:15
THE MESSAGE
- Brother Doobie’s disco pants were shiny black cords with big front pockets and mammoth flares.

BROTHER JOHN AND THE RAGGED STRAGGLERS BAND

in which the police bring an evangelist to rehab

- “So the last shall be first, and the first last.”—Matthew 20:16 NASB
- Individuals who are attracted to the emotionally intense elements of the Charismatic experience are also often drawn to behaviors such as substance abuse, sexual acting out, and criminal misconduct.
- Jesus said, essentially, “I didn’t come for the religious people; I came for the misfits,” in Matthew 9:13, Luke 5:32, and Mark 2:17. (“On hearing this, Jesus said to them, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’”)
- Fellow Nashvillian Brandon Kinney wrote a great song about how, thank God, Jesus still runs with a rough crowd.

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IN YOUR DREAMS

where I ponder life's meaning while roller skating through the grocery store

- Proverbs 18:24 speaks of the friendship of Jesus. “A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.”
- “Night is coming, when no one can work.”—John 9:4 NIV
- Roller rinks have an exclusive and far catchier version of the birthday song.

THE KINGDOM IS NOW

fellow psych tech kicked out of church and that time they asked me to preach for the youth

- *Malkuth* is the Hebrew word for kingdom and refers to the authority and rule of God. Scholars are split. Some believe the term “kingdom of God” refers to the Christian way of living while others maintain that the gospel writers are speaking of the age to come.
- “Notorious sinners are entering the kingdom of God in front of you.”—Matthew 21:31 WNT
- “Heal the sick, and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you now.’”—Luke 10:9 NLT
- “Some Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God would come. His answer was, ‘The kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen. No one will say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or, ‘There it is!’; because the kingdom of God is within you.’”—Luke 17:20–21 GNT
- “The Rock that was uncut by human hands, that

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destroyed the kingdoms of this world, is even now covering the earth as the waters cover the sea. This is the kingdom that we serve, the kingdom that has come, the kingdom that is forever. This is the one kingdom we all seek.”—R. C. Sproul Jr.

- The Bible verse that says the grace I give will be measured back to me the same is Mark 4:24: “With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more” (NIV).
- Jesus warns against obsessing over the speck of sawdust in someone else’s eye in Matthew 7:5: “You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye” (NIV).
- The song that talks about how Christians should be happy all the time is a kids’ song called “Inright Outright” or “Happy All the Time,” and comes complete with a rousing set of hand motions.

JUMBO THIN MINT AND THE JAUNDICED CHIMP

in which I appear on Christian television

- In Psalm 2:4 it says God sits in the heavens and laughs.
- “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men.”
—1 Corinthians 1:25 ESV
- “I became the laughingstock of all my peoples.”
—Lamentations 3:14 NIV
- David danced half-naked in the street in 2 Samuel 6:14–20.
- Ezekiel’s bread baking method is described in Ezekiel 4:9–12: “Take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet

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and spelt; put them in a storage jar and use them to make bread for yourself. You are to eat it during the 390 days you lie on your side. Weigh out twenty shekels of food to eat each day and eat it at set times. Also measure out a sixth of a hin of water and drink it at set times. Eat the food as you would a loaf of barley bread; bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel.”

- John the Baptist ate locusts in Matthew 3:4.
- John the Revelator saw seven-headed dragons in the sky in Revelation 12:3.

THIS IS THE MATTRESS TRICK

where we trick a despondent young psych patient out of his knife

- “Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones”—Mark 5:5
NIV
- “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.”—John Watson
- Seclusion rooms are often painted soft pink to be calming.

THE EPIPHANY OF THE HOLY AND OF THE ABSURD

the one with all the drums in a single-wide trailer

- King David and crew had a mighty celebration with castanets, harps, tambourines, and cymbals in 2 Samuel 6:5.
- Neil Peart took on the Pharisees on Rush’s 2007 release *Snakes & Arrows*.

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WALK ON WATER

where I'm a misfit Jesus in the church play and meet a man on the midnight bridge rail

- Isaiah 53:2 features a prophecy of Jesus that pretty much defeats any notion of a good-looking, charming Jesus. “There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him.”
- “He was . . . a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” —Isaiah 53:3 NASB
- “Truly, O God of Israel, our Savior, you work in mysterious ways.”—Isaiah 45:15 NLT

CRAZY, MESSY THINGS

where I get smacked with a chair by Satan and admit a colleague into the psych ward

- Jesus got mad and made a whip in John 2:15: “After making a whip out of cords, he drove all of them out of the Temple, including the sheep and cattle. He scattered the coins of the moneychangers and knocked over their tables” (ISV).
- Jesus asked, “How long do I have to put up with these guys?” in Luke 9:41.
- Jesus said, “My burden is light” in Matthew 11:30.
- The Bible describes Jesus starting his ministry when he was thirty in Luke 3:23.
- “How long do I have to put up with you?”—Luke 9:41 GNT
- “While it was still dark, Jesus . . . went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.”—Mark 1:35 NASB

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- Schizophrenics often believe themselves to be God or Satan. Some researchers propose that right temporal lobe activity occurs in healthy individuals having a religious experience while right temporal lobe dysfunction is present in schizophrenia.

JUST ONE SIGN

where I consider quitting mental health before meeting a suicidal punk from LA

- Jonah ran from God by heading down to the town of Jaffa (now known as Joppa) and buying a ticket to go on a boat going to Tarshish. “But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction in order to get away from the LORD.”
—Jonah 1:3 NLT
- “Everyone, without exception, who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”—Romans 10:13 WNT

BAD JAMIE AND THE OLD RUGGED CROSS

that one where they throw me in jail

- “I don’t really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do what I hate.”
—Romans 7:15 NLT
- “God leads the prisoners out with singing.”—Psalm 68:6 NIV
- Jesus is called Wonderful Counselor in Isaiah 9:6.
- The Nietzsche quote Dr. Cryer scribbled on the board: “He who fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster.”

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PICK WONDER

frazzled from a long night on psych, I play pinball and ponder what Jesus was like at twenty-five

- The Bible is largely silent on Jesus' life from ages twelve to thirty.
- The paraphrase of the principle Jesus taught about choosing wonder over worry is taken from a variety of translations of Matthew 6:25–34.
- “But the Lord answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary.’”—Luke 10:41–42 NASB
- “Let heaven fill your thoughts; don’t spend your time worrying about things down here.”—Colossians 3:2 TLB
- Daniel 10:6 describes a face that flashed like lightning and eyes like lamps of fire.
- *Black Knight* was the first multi-level pinball machine.

TREASURES IN THE DARK

outlaw Bible study in the psych ward courtyard

- The opening quote is from Luke 5:4, where Jesus says, “Push out into deep water, and lower your nets for a catch” (ISV).
- The verse Crazy Mary reads is Psalm 23:2.
- The passage about darkness and the whirlwind comes from Job 38.
- Jesus’ warning that those we call lost just might be closer to the kingdom is taken mostly from the parable of the

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Pharisee and the tax collector. The good news that says “no matter where you are or how far gone, there is always a way back home” is best illustrated in the parable of the prodigal son. But really, both messages are cover to cover, if you know how to look.

- “For the proud shall be humbled, but the humble shall be honored.”—Luke 18:9–14 TLB

OF POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCES

the one where I get my master's degree and go straight back to work at the roller rink

- Blood to the bridles of horses (Revelation 14:20).
- Rebel angels having sex with the daughters of men (Genesis 6:4).
- Stuttering, angry Moses, denied the promised land (Numbers 20).
- Lustful, murdering David, a man after God's own heart (2 Samuel 11).
- Solomon's wisdom neutered by concubines (1 Kings 11).
- Ezekiel's wheel of fire in the sky (Ezekiel 1).
- Kamikaze Samson and his suicide mission from on high (Judges 16).
- The prophet Hosea ordered to marry a whore (Hosea 1:2).
- “Make insight your priority.”—Proverbs 2:3 THE MESSAGE
- Psalm 18:11 speaks of God shrouding himself in darkness.
- The 1994 Convention of Christian Existentialists lobbied

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to get “The Hokey Pokey” included in select midwestern hymnals.

LIKE CHAINSAW JUGGLING OR WRESTLING BEARS

where I get hired at a megachurch counseling center

- The six-wing creatures covered with eyes are described by John in Revelation 4:6–8 while the locust armies swarm through the second chapter of Joel.
- Wild women driving tent stakes through the temples of men: “Then Jael . . . took a tent peg in one hand and a hammer in the other. She crept up on [Sisera], drove the tent peg through his temple into the ground while he was asleep from exhaustion, and he died.”—Judges 4:21 NET
- “And when you pray, don’t babble on and on like the pagans, who think God will hear them better if they talk a lot.”—Matthew 6:7 CJB
- Rabbi Rami Shapiro’s exegesis of Ecclesiastes 1:18 says, “The more you do for control, the less you do for joy.” Love that.
- You can find a pair of interviews I did with Anne Lamott where we discuss Jesus, The Beatles, and favorite TV preachers at jamieblaine.com.

SUNSHINE SOMEDAY, MAYBE

in which a girl from church begs me to help her friend who works at a strip club

- “If this man really were a prophet, he would know what sort of woman is touching him. She’s a sinner.”—Luke 7:39 GW

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- “By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish.”—Hebrews 11:31 NASB
- “Where it’s sin versus grace, grace wins hands down.”
—Romans 5:20 THE MESSAGE
- “Now, y’all without sin can cast the first stone.”
—H. I. McDunnough
- The fourth man in the fire refers to the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in Daniel 3.

BELIEVE THE BEST

where the sorority girl skating party is crashed by orphans

- “No eye has seen, no ear has heard and no one’s heart has imagined all the things that God has prepared for those who love him.”—1 Corinthians 2:9 CJB
- The verse that says God is sheer mercy and grace is Psalm 103:8 (THE MESSAGE).
- That part in the Bible that says Jesus seeks out and earnestly believes the best about me? Actually, it’s Genesis to Revelation. If that’s not the message, we’re all in trouble.
- The blue merle Australian Shepherd has two different colored eyes and is known for its intuition and loyalty.

JESUS LAUGHS (I HOPE)

the one where I have to go get the drunk girl out of the church thrift store

- The opening quote from Joey Ramone is from Lisa

NOTES

Robinson's "Rebel Nights," Vanity Fair, November 2002, <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2002/11/new-york-rock-scene-1970s>.

- You can find a link to my interview with Lisa as well as one I did with Marky Ramone describing how much Joey and Johnny loved Cracker Barrel at jamieblaine.com.
- Christ walked on water in Matthew 14:22.
- Peter and Paul brought the dead back to life (Acts 9:36–41, Acts 20:7–12).
- Judas stole money and hung himself from the tree (Matthew 27).
- James and John were called twin Sons of Thunder (Mark 3:17).
- Thomas refused to believe until he had seen the nail prints in Jesus' hand (John 20).
- "But You, O LORD, laugh; you scoff at all the nations."
—Psalm 59:8 NASB
- "In your presence is fullness of joy."—Psalm 16:11 NKJV

HANDSHAKES AND SIDE HUGS, THAT'S ALL

nice girl from church wants to be friends, maybe more

- "Don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will worry about itself."—Matthew 6:34 CJB
- "For now we see through a glass, darkly."—1 Corinthians 13:12 KJV
- "Everyone is but a breath, even those who seem secure."
—Psalm 39:5 NIV

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- “The trees of the field shall clap their hands.”—Isaiah 55:12 KJV
- King Solomon talks of smoke in the wind and how meaningless everything seems in the entire book of Ecclesiastes.
- Jonah’s stumbling is described in the book of Jonah, where he runs from God repeatedly.
- Moses stuttered and stumbled through the desert in Numbers, Exodus, and Deuteronomy. It took him forty years to make an eleven day trip.

ONE OF US

where the homeless guy offers to share his bottle . . .

- The reference to Jesus making room in the kingdom for Skeeter comes from Luke 14:21: “[And the Master said,] ‘Quickly, get out into the city streets and alleys. Collect all who look like they need a square meal, all the misfits and homeless and wretched you can lay your hands on, and bring them here’” (THE MESSAGE).
- “But don’t forget to be friendly to outsiders; for in so doing, some people, without knowing it, have entertained angels.”—Hebrews 13:2 CJB

SAVE A STAR

. . . and another homeless guy offers to share his food

- Jesus says essentially “Where were you when I was sick? When I was in jail? How about when I was hungry? Where were you when I lost my mind?” in Matthew 25.

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- Our solar system is a mere speck within the Milky Way galaxy. The nearest spiral galaxy to ours is Andromeda, 2.5 million light-years away. The Hubble Deep Field image suggests that the observable universe contains approximately 200 billion galaxies.
- “For one star differs from another star in glory.”
—1 Corinthians 15:41 NKJV
- Enoch is taken up by God in Genesis 5:24.
- Falling stars are actually meteors as they enter Earth’s atmosphere and burn.
- “The heavens declare the glory of God.”—Psalm 19:1 ESV

STANDING ON THE HILLTOP WITH BOTH HANDS IN THE AIR

I go to the sermon series on finding purpose and ride in the assistant pastor’s El Camino

- “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”—Matthew 6:33 CJB
- “For man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the the heart.”—I Samuel 16:7 ESV
- “Much learning earns you much trouble.”—Ecclesiastes 1:18 THE MESSAGE
- “The Hebrew text is beautifully unruly, often ambiguous, multiple in meaning and hard to pin down; many of the English translations are, above all, certain.”—Aviya Kushner
- Anxiety is the fruit of unbalanced teaching on purpose and plans.

NOTES

- “Don’t Try So Hard” is a song from Amy Grant’s *How Mercy Looks From Here*. Amy and I had a great conversation about misfits, radical kindness, and how to sneak a guitar into services at the Church of Christ. Find it at jamieblaine.com.

BLACK BELT BIBLE MONSTERS

in which my tattooed hairdresser tells me about her Jesus dream

- “Be merciful to those who doubt.”—Jude 1:22 NIV
- “Be quick to listen, slow to speak.”—James 1:19 NIV
- Psalm 9:9 says that the Lord is a refuge to the humble and a shelter in troubling times.
- “For you are my hiding place.”—Psalm 32:7 NLT
- In Matthew 6:6 Jesus says we should go to a secret place, shut the door, and pray to God in private.

CHRISTMAS CRAZY AT THE DOLLAR GENERAL STORE

struggling to find the spirit of Christmas, I stumble across a teenage mother and child

- Suddenly, an angel stood among them and God’s glory blazed all around. And the angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I’m here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in Bethlehem. This is what you’re to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a trough.”—Luke 2:9–12 THE MESSAGE

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- The secret to perfect fountain coke lies in the mixture of co2.
- God did call a truce. That's what Christmas is.

DRIVE ON

grace for all and a wreck in the rain

- Jesus chooses Peter—of all people—to build his church upon, in Matthew 16:18.
- The thief pleads, “Remember me,” to Jesus on the cross in Luke 23:42.
- “Beware the leaven of the Pharisees.”—Luke 12:1 ESV
- “Everything they do is for show.”—Matthew 23:5 NLT
- “Confess your faults one to another, and pray.”—James 5:16 KJV
- “Wisdom is the principal thing.”—Proverbs 4:7 KJV

THANKS FOR THE PUSH

where I fail miserably trying to impress the girl from church

- Pondering dubs on serendipity is a reference to Job 1:6–7. “One day the angels came to report to God and Satan tagged along. God singled him out and said, ‘And what have you been up to?’”
- “Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails.”—Proverbs 19:21 NIV
- “In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, LORD, make me dwell in safety.”—Psalm 4:8 NIV

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PRETTY DANG SWEET

in which a scruffy little six-year-old kid asks me to skate

- “Carry each other.”—Galatians 6:2 NIV
- “And a little child shall lead them all.”—Isaiah 11:6 NLT

BETTER THAN ZAXXON

where a man on his death bed teaches me something about life

- “I’m telling you a mystery: Not all of us will die, but we will all be changed.”—1 Corinthians 15:51 GW
- “And the last enemy to be destroyed is death.”
—1 Corinthians 15:26 NLT

LET GO OF THE ROPES AND FADE AWAY

in which I buy decent clothes for a job with the state

- “Can all your worries add one single moment to your life?”—Matthew 6:27 NLT
- The Bible speaks of going from glory to glory in 2 Corinthians 3:18.
- The devotion I read that spoke of living light and learning to walk in the unforced rhythms of grace was from *The Message*’s translation of Matthew 11:28–30.
- “Our passionate preoccupation with the sky, the stars, and a God somewhere in outer space is a homing impulse. We are drawn back to where we came from.”—Eric Hoffer
- “He made the moon and stars to rule the night. His love continues forever.”—Psalm 136:9 NCV

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777: FAVOR

late night pinball and Brooke's return

- In Hebrew tradition, seven is considered to be the number of perfection. 777 is sometimes believed to symbolize the threefold perfection of the Holy Trinity.
- “Seventy ‘sevens’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and anoint the Most Holy Place.”—Daniel 9:24 NIV
- The Bible says that God has my name engraved on his hand in Isaiah 49:16.
- “Live creatively, friends.”—Galatians 6:1 THE MESSAGE
- “And when two or three of you are together because of me, you can be sure that I’ll be there.”—Matthew 18:20 THE MESSAGE

WHEREVER YOU ARE TONIGHT

sweet church service from the balcony

- Strangers in a strange land is a reference from Exodus 2:22.
- “Finally, all of you should be of one mind, full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds.”—1 Peter 3:8 NLT
- “Save us, Oh God, for the waters rise” is taken from Psalm 69.
- “The wreck of your hands” is a rumination on Genesis

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6:6 where God regrets having made man and all the Psalms where King David is so brutally honest about his wrecked-ness.

- “Here’s what I’ve decided is the best way to live: Take care of yourself, have a good time, and make the most of whatever job you have for as long as God gives you life. And that’s about it. That’s the human lot.”—Ecclesiastes 5:18 THE MESSAGE
- In Matthew 28:20 Jesus says he is with us always, even to the end of the age.
- 2 Corinthians 5:1 says there is no end.

JUST KEEP WALKING

maybe every ending is only a beginning again

- “Walk with me . . . learn the unforced rhythms of grace.”—Matthew 11:28 THE MESSAGE
- “I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden wealth of secret places, so that you may know that it is I, The LORD . . . who calls you by name.”—Isaiah 45:3 NASB
- “The deep covered me completely.”—Jonah 2:5 GW