

Week 4: You Kinda Remind Me of a Caterpillar

“Sometimes when things feel like they are falling apart, they are actually falling into place.”

I want to tell you about the full life of a caterpillar. The life of a caterpillar is a life that is filled with growth and transformation – any way you look at it. The caterpillar begins as a tiny larva and through a series of transformations and growth cycles, they turn into one of my favorite creatures on this Earth. Think about how inherently unappealing a larva is in appearance. Small, squishy, slimy – not really something that we want to think about when we think about quality characteristics that we find to be visually attractive.

However, through metamorphosis, it is transformed from its state of ugliness to a delicate and attractive creature that serves a purpose in the ecosystems in which it resides. So, the point of my message today is that just because we are starting in an ugly situation or are experiencing unappealing circumstances, that does not mean that we are going to be stuck in that ugly situation for our entire lives. However, **it does mean that oftentimes the trials and tribulations that we go through in our lives will prepare us to make beautiful changes and impacts.**

So, I finally just finished all my finance exams. I had to take four of them, and it created some of the most stressful times of my life. There were many nights when I got next to no sleep because I was so anxious and nervous about these exams. Many times, I would think to myself, *“If I fail these exams, am I going to get fired?”* Although I found myself to be extremely prepared when I actually ended up taking these exams, I would consider that period of my life to be a larva. Small and ugly could best describe my life during that time. It felt like the pressures of the world were pushing inward – they were beginning to feel like they were suffocating me. It’s all I thought about, 24/7 – for about 7 straight weeks.

Talk about something that takes a massive toll on your mental health, and this is a prime example. I wasn’t working out. I was barely reading if it didn’t pertain to my studies. I was eating poorly. So, not only was my mental health deteriorating, but so was my physical health, as oftentimes these go hand in hand with one another.

Does this feel similar to your life? I think we would not be telling the truth if we said that this has never been us in our lives. Maybe you're in a season that feels super messy, or it appears to be extremely complicated. This can stem from a multitude of issues – family issues, relationship problems, school problems, a falling out with a best friend..... The list could continue for a while. Some days, it is nearly impossible to see the path forward. In fact, it does not feel like there is any path going forward. I’m here to tell you that this is the narrative that Satan is trying to put in your life. **He does that so you turn to the world instead of turning to Christ Jesus.**

Imagine what Joseph went through. His entire family turned against him and sold him into slavery. Can you even begin to picture that heartbreak? Can you imagine what Joseph was probably feeling when this happened? Everyone he had known and loved had turned against him. I will give you some adjectives that I think probably describe Joseph. Hopeless. Worry-filled. Stressed Out. **He probably thought WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME, LORD?** Sound familiar?

However, we know that the story of Joseph does not come to an end there. Even when he was jailed & mistreated, God had a plan for his life. The trials that he went through & all the long years of waiting to be delivered were all part of a greater process. **WHAT SEEMED LIKE SOMETHING FALLING APART WAS ACTUALLY SOMETHING FALLING INTO PLACE.**

Joseph was in his cocoon phase when he was going through all these terrible & tragic events. This was his growth stage – and we cannot grow without events in our lives to make us stronger. Joseph's life seemed like a larva – small & meaningless – before he entered into his cocoon phase. When he emerged from the phase, he became a leader of nations. He became a beautiful butterfly that emerged from all that chaos.

Just like your current struggles – even the ones that feel unjust – Joseph faced struggles that some of us could never imagine. These ‘ugly’ periods of our lives do not define us. They are shaping us, strengthening us, and conditioning us for the sinful world that we will encounter.

What may seem like betrayals or temptations may be serving as the foundations for your growth. They may be preparing you to fly. Remember, butterflies start as larvae and caterpillars that don't even have legs (don't get too scientific on me, you know what I mean). They crawl around – seemingly helplessly. However, **through the changes in their lives, they turn into beautiful creatures that can fly.**

Remember this: **the larva doesn't argue with the cocoon, it surrenders to it—and that surrender leads to flight.** Today, surrender your fears, your anxieties, and your frustrations to God. Trust Him in the process. Let Him do the work inside you that only He can do.

Hold on. Keep trusting. Keep believing. And when you emerge, you will fly higher than you ever imagined.

Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”.

LOVE YOU ALL HAVE A GREAT WEEK - TY