Teaching: Living in the Ruins

Day 1: The World Is Not As It Should Be

Scripture: *We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves… groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. — Romans 8:22-23*

Reflection: Something in us knows this world isn't right. We see the pain, the injustice, the broken relationships—and deep down, we groan. We long for restoration, for peace, for things to be made whole. That longing isn't weakness—it's evidence that you were made for more. Paul reminds us in Romans that this ache is part of being human in a world that has fallen from Eden. Creation itself is groaning, and we join in with that cry for redemption. The good news? This groaning doesn't end in despair—it's the groaning of *birth*, not death. Something new is coming. And our job is to wait with hope, even in the ruins.

Today's Practice: Today, take five minutes to name what's broken around you—or in you. Write it down. Don't rush to fix it or make it sound better. Just be honest. Then, in the same space, write the phrase: "God is not done." Sit with that truth. Let it speak louder than the pain.

Prayer:
Father, I feel the weight of the world's brokenness—and sometimes, my own. Thank You that my pain doesn't push You away but draws You near. Teach me to hope in You, even when nothing seems to change. I trust that You're not done yet.

Day 2: Jesus Wept

Scripture: *Jesus wept.* – John 11:35

Reflection:
In just two words, the heart of God is revealed. When Jesus stood at the tomb of His friend Lazarus, He didn't brush past the pain or preach a sermon. He wept. He knew resurrection was coming—but He still entered into the sorrow of the moment. That tells us something powerful: God is not distant from your pain. He doesn't expect you to hold it together. He

grieves with you. If Jesus—the Son of God—could stop and cry over brokenness, then we have full permission to do the same. You are seen. You are not alone. And your tears are sacred.

Today's Practice:
Find a quiet place today where you won't be interrupted. If there's something you've been holding in or brushing off—grief, sadness, frustration—let yourself feel it. If you cry, let the tears come. If you don't, that's okay too. The goal isn't emotion; it's honesty. Invite Jesus into that space—not to fix it instantly, but to sit with you in it.

Prayer:
Jesus, thank You for weeping. Thank You for not rushing past pain. Help me to believe You're with me in mine. Give me the courage to bring You my real self, not just the cleaned-up version.

Day 3: Beauty in the Broken

Scripture:
To all who mourn in Israel, He will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair. – Isaiah 61:3

Reflection:
God doesn't just help us *escape* the ruins—He builds something beautiful right in the middle of them. Isaiah paints a picture of transformation: ashes turned to beauty, despair into praise. This isn't spiritual optimism or toxic positivity. It's the promise that God can create something good even from what's been shattered. You might not feel that yet. That's okay. Sometimes the first step to seeing beauty is choosing to believe it's still possible. And with God, it always is.

Today's Practice:
Look for one thing today that speaks of beauty in the middle of brokenness. It could be a kind word, a moment of peace, something simple like laughter or light through a window. When you notice it, pause. Thank God for it. Let it remind you: even here, in the ruins, He is creating something new.

Prayer:
God, it's hard to believe beauty can rise from the ashes. But You say it can—and I want to trust You. Open my eyes to see the good You're already doing. Thank You that You never waste pain.

Day 4: The Power of Presence

Scripture:
The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.– Psalms 34: 18

Reflection:
When we're hurting, we often think God is far away. But Scripture tells us the opposite—He's *closest* in those moments. Not just aware, but near. Not just watching, but actively

working. You might not always feel His presence, but feelings aren't the measure of truth. He promises to be near, and He keeps His promises. When you feel crushed, you're not forgotten. You're held. And sometimes, just knowing that is enough to keep going.

Today's Practice:
Repeat this phrase to yourself throughout the day: "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted." Say it when you're stressed, frustrated, or just going through the motions. Let it become a kind of breath prayer—a reminder that no matter how you feel, God is with you, right here, right now.

Prayer:
Lord, thank You for staying close when I feel far away. Thank You that I don't have to chase You down—you're already near. Help me lean on Your presence today, even if I can't see the whole picture. You are my comfort.

Day 5: Hope That Holds

Scripture:
We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. – Hebrews 6:19

Reflection:
Hope isn't just wishful thinking—it's an anchor. It holds us steady when life gets chaotic. The world may fall apart but hope in Jesus never does. That kind of hope doesn't come from things going our way. It comes from knowing who holds our future. The storms will come—we're not promised an easy life. But we are promised that we don't have to face it alone. Jesus is our anchor, and He's not moving. In Him, we're held fast, even when everything else feels like it's slipping away.

Today's Practice:
Today, draw or write the image of an anchor on something you'll see—your journal, a sticky note, your phone screen. Let it be a daily reminder that your hope isn't in circumstances, but in Christ. When fear or frustration creep in, take a breath and say, "My soul is anchored in Jesus."

Prayer:
Jesus, You are my anchor. Steady me when I feel like I'm drifting. Root my hope not in what I see, but in who You are. Thank You that You never let go.