

## Threads of Hope Sewing Devotion 16

I cleaned out my sewing closet the other day. Do you have a sewing closet, or a bin or a box, or some shelves that you keep your fabric stash on? Organizing my sewing closet is not one of my favorite chores. I tend to drag fabric pieces in and out of there and once I'm finished with a project, I throw it back it all back in there willy-nilly. It reminds me of a little poem I know: (*14,287 Pieces of Fabric* by *Jean Ray Laury*)

Behind the painted picket gate  
There lived a quilter known as Kate  
She had one son, a boy named John;  
One daughter, whom she doted on.  
She had one husband and one house  
One pup, one cat, one little mouse...  
And 14,287 pieces of fabric.

I don't have 14,000 pieces of fabric. But I do have the scrap box. You are familiar with the scrap box—the place where you store all those pieces of fabric that are not large enough to use for a project but are too good to throw away. Oh, I'll use them all someday . . . and I do! I use mine for pockets for our dresses and shorts. Often, my scrap pieces are from some of the nicest fabrics I've owned.

You probably know another word used for the scraps: REMNANT. A remnant is usually described as a leftover but it is not without value. Remnant are the end of the bolt, the cuttings, the residual, the bits and pieces but remnants have all the characteristics of the original piece and sometimes they are just right for a particular purpose.

The Bible has a lot to say about remnants. The word "remnant" in a Biblical context usually refers to the people who remain faithful to God during a time when almost everyone else is going against God's plan. When God executes His judgment against sin, it's that remnant of people who He brings through to accomplish His purposes.

We can look at both the Old Testament and the New Testament to find references to remnants. Noah is an example of a remnant. God preserved righteous Noah and

his family in the Ark while He rained down, literally, judgment on the rest of the sinning world. Noah was protected and brought through the flood to accomplish God's purpose of re-populating the earth.

The story of Joseph in Egypt is also a remnant story. Joseph was sold as a slave by his brothers but God didn't abandon him to a worthless scrap heap. God took what was meant for evil and used it for good. Genesis 45:7 is a great quote by Joseph, who recognized that God is the Almighty Arranger of Circumstances. Joseph says, "But God sent me ahead of you {meaning his family} to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance." God protected His chosen people by using Joseph's position to provide them food during a famine, literally saving their lives and allowing the Jewish line to continue.

The whole story of Israel in the Old Testament has REMNANT written all over it. God chose the nation of Israel as His own special people but most of the Israelites rejected Him as their God. Their constant sinning, even in the face of multiple warnings, meant God had to execute on them the judgment that aligns with His holiness. But there were Israelites who chose to remain faithful to God, even when everyone else continued in sin and idol worship. The prophet Ezra recognized this when he said, "Lord, the God of Israel, You are righteous! We are left this day as a remnant." (Ezra 9:15)

It was God's purpose that the remnant of believing Israelites preserve His law and accomplish His will on earth. It was also out of this remnant line of Israel that Jesus was born. God not only preserved a remnant of Israel during Old Testament times, He promises that believing Israelites will be carried through to future times and once again gather in Jerusalem with God as their King. Listen to these prophecies from Isaiah and Micah:

"A remnant will return, a remnant of Jacob will return to the Mighty God."  
(Isaiah 10:21)

"In that day the Lord Almighty will be a glorious crown, a beautiful wreath for the remnant of his people." (Isaiah 28:5)

"I will surely gather all of you, Jacob; I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel. I will bring them together like sheep in a pen, like a flock in its pasture; the place will throng with people." (Micah 2:12)

The apostle Paul tells us the church is a part of that remnant. In Romans 11:5, Paul says, "so to, at the present time there is a remnant chosen by grace." As believers, we are added in to the remnant because of God's grace in providing us a

redeemer—Jesus Christ. Today’s believers are called to live righteously and proclaim God’s word to a world where the majority are not doing that.

Remember, a remnant is just a portion of the whole piece. Scripture tells us that even though God is offering salvation to everyone, most people in the world today and throughout history reject that offer. Still, imagine how many people *have* been saved throughout history. Revelation tells us that when we get to heaven, we will see people from every nation, tribe, people and language. That’s a pretty big remnant!

I love this imagery of a remnant. I love that God can take what others view as worthless scraps and stitch them together to become His glorious eternal prize. We see that in this big picture of His Kingdom but we can also shrink this image down to our own lives. Do you sometimes feel that God couldn’t possibly make something beautiful from the scraps of your life? And yet, He can! Just like a Master Quilter, God can take the pieces, and in His hand and under His artistry, our remnants become His treasure. God assigns high value to the remnants.

This month, as you choose your fabrics, go to your scrap box. Sit down and look at the pieces you’ve saved. Your remnants have value. You can choose just the right one to sew into a pocket or a trim. The remnant you add to a little dress or pair of shorts will be the finishing flair, the focal point of the entire garment. Imagine God choosing remnants throughout history to stitch the tapestry of His kingdom. Those pieces are His delight! Ask God to take the remnants of your life and create a lovely pattern from what you have to offer.

Enjoy the words of this little poem: (*I Think God Is A Quilter by John Locke*)

I think God is a quilter Who takes His needle and thread  
To piece our world from nothingness and give it form instead.  
I think God is a quilter and everything I see  
Are pieces from His careful hand from tree to bumblebee.  
I think we see God's stitches, His texture, everywhere:  
The velvet moss, the grainy sand, the silky strands of hair.  
I think God is a quilter stitching tight and tiny rows  
Adding to my scraps and pieces, seaming everything He knows.

I think He cuts the pattern from what I'd throw away.  
He shows me how to use each scrap in His redeeming way.  
I think God quilts a pattern from everything I live;  
But He can only stitch the quilt from what I choose to give.  
I think God is a Quilter stitching strength where I am weak.  
Showing me the life He touches embraces everything I seek.  
I think God is a Quilter from the patience in each thread;  
Proving length of time no barrier; treating time a gift, instead.  
I think quilts are lessons God uses just to teach  
That our pieces and our remnants have kaleidoscopic reach.  
So, in the life I'm living with pieces everywhere  
I'll give them to the Quilter to stitch with loving care.  
I'll give them to the Quilter unwanted though they be  
And with His work of quilting He'll make a quilt of me.