**Restoration**

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Have you ever brought something back to life? Oh, I don’t mean a Lazarus rising from the dead kind of thing, but something you saw value in that others didn't see? Maybe something others had given up on or simply thought it was too busted up and too much work to restore. But you saw what it could be- with a little help. You saw something valuable there... worth restoring.

We walked in to the old farmhouse to visit Lori’s grandparents on Saturday afternoon. We were still in college, poor, and had just gotten married. We had old farmhouse we were renting outside of the city about 15 minutes from campus. It was old, run down, smelly, cheap, and perfect for us! We were looking for a few furniture pieces to fill the place, and we had yet to find a kitchen table.

After some time of chatting and eating, Grandpa brought us downstairs to show Lori something. I followed down the steep and narrow stairs to the musty concrete smell of the farmhouse cellar. Grandpa reached up and pulled the chain on the single incandescent bulb hanging from a wire in the middle of the basement. And then... there it was, hidden behind the cobwebs and dust, under a pile of empty jelly jars and junk you keep but somehow never touch again. I looked at the table and wondered if they might be willing to part with that precious beauty? I didn't dare say anything. After all, this was Lori’s grandparents, not mine. Lori eyed the hidden gem as well and after grandpa was through showing her something, she asked, “What are doing with old table grandpa?” A genius question, because she knew she was still the darling of the grandkids and could win grandpa’s heart yet again with her smile.

Grandpa responded, “What? That old thing? Oh my! What do you want that old thing for!?” He walked over and wiped some dust off a corner to show us the paint splatters all over the top.

“Ahh, If you want that old thing, you can take it. I’d be glad to get it out of here anyways.”  He stepped away for a moment and shouted up the steps, “Flo!? We’re gonna get rid of that old table down here, the kids want it”.

Grandma shouted down in a concerned voice, “Oh, I don’t know about that. Where will we put the jars?” Grandpa responded as if her words were only a fleeting thought in his mind.

And with one firm command, we were carrying the table up the steps and into the back of the pickup truck... Grandpa still confused about why we would want such a thing, and grateful we took it out of his basement.

What grandpa saw as junk worthy of the garbage pile, we were thrilled to have. I began immediately stripping the piece down to it’s bare wood. Carefully removing years of stories that old table could’ve told. The first year they painted it. The water stain from Uncle Ted that Christmas. The dent from dropping a hammer on it while working on the light above the table. Years of paint, varnish, and memories. I scrubbed them off. Clean. Exposing some of the most beautiful antique oak my young eyes had seen. Made even more beautiful by the hours and hours of work it took to get there.



That table was over a hundred years old when we dragged it up from grandpa and grandma’s basement. It has been our kitchen table now for over 31 years. We added some inserts to match the old oak as best we could, and that table has been in every kitchen we have had since that day.

In 1981, I had a passion for restoring old furniture. My passion was born partly out of need as a poor college student who wanted something nicer than a milk crate to call “fine furniture”, but more so out of the appreciation and satisfaction I received in the process of bringing something back to life. What was old was made new again!

Sometimes we wonder if there is a way to restore what has been lost and start all over again. Sometimes we feel so broken we believe we cannot be restored. The good news is, God is in the business of restoration. Thank God he is in the business of restoration. There is no junk pile made for our broken lives that we are simply discarded upon. There is no brokenness beyond repair.

***“He gave himself for us … to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:14)***

***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17- ESV)***

***“Don’t you realize that this is not the way to live? Unjust people who don’t care about God will not be joining in his kingdom. Those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use and abuse the earth and everything in it, don’t qualify as citizens in God’s kingdom. A number of you know from experience what I’m talking about, for not so long ago you were on that list. Since then, you've been cleaned up and given a fresh start by Jesus, our Master, our Messiah, and by our God present in us, the Spirit.” (I Corinthians 6:9-12- The Message)***