No Such a "Hallmark Movie" Faith
December 15, 2025

Somewhere along the way, we got sold a version of Christmas—and honestly, a version of faith—that sounds like a Hallmark ending:

- the music swells
- the tree lights sparkle
- the problem resolves neatly in 88 minutes
- and everybody learns "the true meaning of Christmas" right on schedule, all while living happily ever after, with everything tied up with a nice, giant bow

But then real life shows up.

In Kate Bowler's Everything Happens episode with Nikki DeLoach ("A Not-So Hallmark Christmas"), Nikki talks about getting hit with stacked pain all at once—her dad's aggressive dementia diagnosis and her son's congenital heart defects, in the same week. And she names what so many people feel but don't say out loud: sometimes hope is hard to come by, and uncertainty isn't a season—it's the atmosphere you're breathing. (The episode also includes heavy topics like postpartum depression and suicidal ideation—so take care of your heart as you listen.)

Click here to check out the podcast!

"Mom, we cannot think about what's going to happen next week. We cannot think about what's going to happen in three weeks or a month or two months. Right now, today, this is what we're dealing with and this is where we're at, and then we're going to go to bed tonight and tomorrow we're going to wake up and we're going to see what we have on our plates tomorrow and then we're going to tackle that. OK?"

Don't skip to the end.

Because here's what happens when we skip to the end: we abandon the only moment where we can actually receive what God is offering right now.
Right here. In this breath. In this waiting room. In this day you did not choose.
Skipping to the end tempts us to live in imagined pain instead of actual grace. And Advent gently—but firmly—calls us back.

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And Advent gently—but firmly—calls us back.
Not to denial.

Not to pretending things aren't hard.
But to presence.

Jesus will later teach it plainly: "Do not worry about tomorrow."
Not because tomorrow won't matter—but because tomorrow has its own weight.

And today already has enough.

Some of us are living with diagnoses that don't resolve.
Some are carrying relationships that won't magically heal by Christmas.
Some are holding grief that has no expiration date.

Advent doesn't ask you to feel hopeful about all of that.
Advent asks you to stop time-traveling with your fear.

To stop rehearsing losses that haven't arrived.
To stop folding future sorrow into today's fragile moment.
Because this moment—right now—is where grace is available.

Not fixing grace.
Not silver-lining grace.
But sustaining grace.

The kind that keeps you breathing when five minutes ahead is too far.
The kind that steadies your feet when your heart is spiraling.
The kind that whispers, You are not alone here.

So if you're tempted this season to skip to the end—to imagine the worst, to brace yourself, to outrun disappointment—consider this your Advent permission slip to stop.

Stay here.
Name today's reality.
Receive today's grace.

Tomorrow will come when it comes.
And when it does, God will already be there.

Grace and Peace,
Andrea