There are times when life is unfair. When someone we love is hurt, when we need to deal with a serious sickness, when someone we trust betrays us, it’s easy to say, “I don’t deserve this.” The anger of those times leads us to question our ability to continue. It’s easy to doubt whether there’s enough strength for us to go on. Jesus tells us that when God is active, there’s always enough. God can find life in our darkest moments. If Jesus fed five thousand with a few barley loaves, then certainly we can count on God to be present in our time of need. But if we’re to see that, we need to let the flow of our life play out so that we can understand the specific way that God is guiding us.

Kevin was twenty-five years old when his doctor told him that he had bone cancer. The only way he could survive would be to have his right leg amputated. He agreed but it left Kevin angry. He couldn’t understand how life could be so unfair to take away his leg at a young age. He found a therapist who began to work with him, discussing the events of his life. Over a period of two years he began to accept the loss of his leg and look for meaning in life. What he found was that he had a gift of sharing his experience with others who were undergoing similar losses. The medical community began to know of Kevin’s ability and asked him to visit their patients who had undergone a serious disability. On one occasion he was asked to visit a woman about his own age who had just lost both of her breasts to cancer. Kevin came to her hospital room wearing a pair of shorts that clearly revealed his artificial leg. But the woman wouldn’t even look at him because she was so embarrassed of her disfigurement. The nurses left music playing in the room and in an attempt to get her attention Kevin turned up the volume, removed his artificial leg and began dancing around the room with one leg, snapping his finger to the music. The woman looked up and watched him for a few moments and then began to laugh. “Man,” she said, “If you can dance, I can sing.” Kevin discovered purpose and direction in his life. He decided to meet with his therapist to review his progress. When they got together and she opened his file, out fell a drawing that Kevin had made early in his therapy. His therapist had asked him to draw a picture of how he saw his body. He had drawn a large vase and, with a black crayon, he had drawn a jagged crack down the center of that vase. Kevin remembered how his teeth were clenched in anger as he drew that crack and how hard he pressed the crayon on the paper. The crack represented how his body was broken and no longer whole. He felt he could never live life fully again. Holding the picture years later, Kevin took a yellow crayon and began to draw broad lines of yellow emanating out from every area of that crack. He said, “I now realize that it’s from this crack that the light shines forth.”

Those things that attack us, that are unfair don’t need to destroy us. We believe that, with God’s help, there will be enough strength for us not simply to continue, but to grow and to thrive. The choice is ours. When things in life attack us- problems in our family, sickness, addiction, loss- we can receive those things either as a blow that ruins us, or, with God’s help, see them as a crack from which in time the light will shine forth. When we’re worried about one who is struggling with addiction, faith is believing that God knows the problem and will lead the person to a better place even though we think the situation is hopeless. When we have a relationship that keeps hurting us, faith is believing that God sees that rupture and is working to bring it to a place of reconciliation even though we can’t imagine how. When we have to recover from something traumatic, faith is believing that God knows our fear and will give us strength even though it seems impossible. Faith isn’t knowing how God will work, but believing that God will work to provide for our needs.