

# Living at the Corner of Beautiful & Hard

Our local street address here in Amman is 12 Silwan, Jabal Hussein. However, recently it seems like we are living spiritually on the corner of Beautiful and Hard, with life switching rapidly back and forth in several areas: personal life, ministry life and Jordan life. First, a personal example. On May 24, we celebrated our 56<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary at our favorite courtyard restaurant on Jabal Amman, eating delicious food and enjoying the balmy evening. We then took a short trip through the old city center, again enjoying the crowds, seeing little stores and cafes that have been special to us through the years. As we came up the hill to our house, we could hear strange sounds from our motor; just as we parked across from our house, the motor sounds became death sounds. Final death! Even before we could get out of the car, our thoughts changed to logistics mode: Who should we call? Where can we get a winch? Where should we take the car? How much will it cost? How long will it take? Beautiful instantly morphed into Hard and very stressful! (And the whole car repair procedure has gone on and on, the same way as our marriage, but not as fun!)



On the ministry level, a few months ago we were just getting ready to leave for a long-awaited Arab wedding for a family of the majority faith that we have loved and worked with for many years. Arab weddings are festive, loud, noisy, interactive, happy events, usually held at wedding halls built for just such occasions; we were very much looking forward to this exciting event. Just as we were walking out the door, a friend called to tell us of the sudden death of a wonderful believer in Jesus who had come to faith through a vision of Christ and had become a faithful disciple. Bob had done studies and

visits with him for many years. Yousef loved to walk all over Amman, but that day he died from a heart attack on a stone stairway near his home. Yousef was buried by his family before we even got the call, but suddenly life became Hard, as we knew the next day would involve visiting his family in the midst of their sorrow and ours. Marriage and death; Beautiful and Hard.



At the country level, on a beautiful day a month ago, Jordan celebrated its 79<sup>th</sup> year of Independence with a holiday, parades, music, flags, plus fireworks in the evening. On the same day in nearby Khan Younis, Gaza, a young pediatric physician was working at Nasser Hospital when a missile struck close by and rescuers started bringing in bodies. One by one, they brought in the dead bodies of 9 of her 10 children, as well as her severely injured husband who soon succumbed to his wounds. Happiness and horror on the same day.



A favorite author, Kate Bowler, writes about the dilemma of holding the tension between “the beautiful and terrible...so as not to despair but to figure out how to become people who live differently.” Frederick Buechner once said: “the place God calls you is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s great hunger meet.” Perhaps we (and you) might be living at the right spiritual address after all, right at the Corner of Beautiful and Hard! As we think of becoming different people responding to this tension, we are grateful to know that each day when we wake up, we have new chances, new choices, and new mercies!



Bob and Suzanne  
Summer, 2025