

SOURDOUGH  
*and the*  
SAVIOR



GANEL-LYN CONDIE

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*To Sue.*

*Thank you for sharing and starting  
something miraculous.*

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# 1

## BEGINNING



ONE LATE, COLD FALL EVENING IN 2023, I CAME HOME TO DISCOVER A delicious delivery on the front porch. In a neat brown bag was a freshly baked loaf of sourdough bread and a jar of homemade strawberry jam. The bread was artistically scored, professionally wrapped, and sealed with a printed pink sticker: *Sourdough by Sue*. The giver of this gift, my friend and neighbor Sue, had included a handwritten note of support. She knew that the previous few months had been really difficult both professionally and personally. I had gone through quite a few endings and was grieving both a change of identity and a loss of purpose. Knowing that she was thinking of me helped lift my spirits, but little did I know then that this generous gift was the beginning of something really magnificent and meaningful.

Let me share a little of the backstory. While doing some research on her own growing health concerns, Sue discovered that sourdough can be one of the healthiest things you can eat. Because of its properties and simple ingredient list, sourdough bread is literally *living* bread. It's made from a live culture that acts as a rising agent combined with high-protein bread flour, salt, and water. Primarily due to its fermentation process, sourdough is often easier to digest, may support gut health, and is more nutritious than other yeast breads. So Sue started learning how to make it. Soon she was sharing and selling her glorious creations in a thriving business.

As someone who has struggled with a lupus diagnosis for more than thirty-five years, I too have researched many health tools and adjusted my diet to help control inflammation in my joints and organs. By this point, I had explored supplements and best practices to support my autoimmune disease, and as a result of that research and the subsequent changes, I had eaten very little bread in the previous fifteen years.

That all changed when Sue's unexpected offering arrived on the front porch.

After toasting one slice of her bread and slathering it with a layer of butter, I devoured it. And I soon discovered, joyfully, that there were no inflammatory responses in my body. Within a day, I had eaten 80 percent of the bequeathed cherished loaf. Then I ordered more. After just a few weeks of constantly ordering and eating Sue's bread, I had a fleeting thought: *Maybe it's time to join the rest of the world and start learning how to make sourdough.*

By that time, obviously, I had developed a bit of a bread habit. I knew I wasn't ready to officially commit to learning how to make sourdough bread right then, but I *was* at least curious. So in the beginning, I just started scrolling. I surveyed Instagram accounts and YouTube channels trying to understand the "how-to" of this bread phenomenon. How easy or hard was it really? Soon all the suggested posts on my feed were about things I didn't really yet understand—things like feeding starts, scoring tools, and bread flour. I quickly realized that the rest of the world had already discovered the magic of fermentation and feeding with flour, and I was just beginning to.

With all the recent endings in my life, maybe I was ready for something new. When I was only eating and not baking, I wish I could have told the hesitant Ganel-Lyn, "Don't delay! Just start your sourdough bread journey! You're not only going to learn a new skill, but you're going to discover a deeper relationship with and understanding of God in the process."

So after weeks of scrolling, I bravely decided to do what everyone does when they want to start something: I jumped onto Amazon to order baskets and a special sourdough jar. It was a baby step. And I was soon to discover that endings are where beautiful beginnings begin.

\* \* \*

The Crucifixion of Jesus is one of the most pivotal events in Christian theology. It was a massive ending—but also the ultimate beginning of eternal new beginnings. The Savior’s Crucifixion marked the end of His earthly life and public mortal ministry. For His followers, this moment in history initially felt like a total and complete tragic loss. But the Crucifixion is paradoxical. The death of Christ completely redefined what it meant to live, die, and be saved. Because of Jesus, even our endings can become beautiful beginnings.

In your life, you don’t have control of what happens to you, but you *can* decide how you respond to what happens. Even in the wake of our most painful of betrayals and losses, yoking with the Savior can transform endings into seasons of growth. Jesus is the ultimate example of how to react: Show up when everything is working against you. He was abandoned in the Garden of Gethsemane by His best friends at the time of His greatest agony. Betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, and convicted on false charges, Jesus was mocked and then crucified on Golgotha’s Hill. What did He do in response? After all that had happened, how did the Savior respond to such ridicule and rejection? He forgave.

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Then said Jesus, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.* And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. (Luke 23:33–35; emphasis added)

Jesus’s mission and ministry weren’t meant to be the unattainable proverbial bar that we mere mortals can never reach. The Savior’s life and death are the way. He isn’t separate from our challenges and cries. God is in all of it. Because of His sacrifice, He can be found in the beautiful, ordinary, and heartbreaking moments of life. God can not only be discovered but can be better understood in your job layoffs, crashing ocean waves, children’s ear infections, unexpected funerals, church meetings that go too long, peonies blooming, and infertility battles. And He can even be found in making sourdough bread.

“I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:51).

Most things don't last forever. But because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, His grace gives the gift of eternal life to each of God's children. From the garden to the empty tomb, hope and healing can be found even when jobs, things, and people we love die. I am not sure that Jesus questioned the effectiveness of His mission when He learned that Judas had sold Him out for thirty pieces of silver. We don't know if the Savior may have questioned how it would all turn out. We do know that "Jesus cried with a loud voice, . . . to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). But we know Jesus trusted His Father to the end, and we know that He did not run from the sacrifice required. These perceived setbacks in Jesus's ministry were, in all actuality, setups for our salvation.

\* \* \*

In the spring of 2023, I had just finished speaking in the Marriott Center for Brigham Young University's Women's Conference. My youngest child then left on her mission. The balance between work and life seemed to be getting easier to juggle. The Condie family nest was now empty.

It was my fourth year of cohosting a weekly podcast that I dearly loved with a partner I respected. The show had a loyal following, including more than a million downloads and awards in the industry. We talked about faith, real life, and complex questions. With a new book scheduled to be published before the end of that year, I felt like my professional world was in a major growth cycle.

That being said, it's funny how mortality works. It seems that just when we start to make plans, life surprises us with the unexpected. One afternoon in late May, my podcast cohost and I were called into a sudden meeting with our producer and company executives. They announced that they were canceling the show. Little explanation was given. After some consideration, we decided to do our final taping within a few weeks without finishing the season.

That was a drastic ending for me, but it was just the beginning of the endings that were coming.

With my daughter out of the house and the podcast ending, I was feeling lost. Professional relationships and projects that I had invested in for more than a decade had abruptly ended. It's difficult to describe how much this

termination shook up my sense of identity. I wrestled to make sense of these big changes. With no babies at home, I questioned what my purpose was.

Even though I was still doing regular television and speaking events, I was without a core, consistent work project. And with no kids that required the daily mothering I had been doing for twenty-five years, life had gone from a busy, long list of to-dos to a whole lot of quiet. It would have been easy to drown out the quiet by jumping into something else. But I could hear God in this silence. I didn't want to miss what this slow-down season was really about. I didn't want to miss the meaning in this middle-age messiness. But truthfully, I was struggling.

When the news broke about the show being canceled, questions came flooding in. I was constantly stopped in the temple and at the grocery store by heartbroken fans crying because something they valued and had come to rely on had ended. In response to their questions, I couldn't give a very reasonable reason why. And all those questions brought on more questions for both me and the viewers.

In the midst of it all, a manuscript I had submitted to my publisher was rejected. The rejection was not something I had been accustomed to after working with them for over a decade.

I think it's important to emphasize something at this point in the story. I am sharing a very vulnerable time in my life, but I am totally aware that this crisis of identity and purpose wasn't a season of homelessness or financial ruin for our family. Not having the podcast anymore and getting the manuscript rejected didn't prevent us from paying our bills or putting food on the table. We had lived through major periods of unemployment; I know all too well the stress of trying to decide how much gas I could afford to put into the tank and still have money to get milk. This wasn't that kind of trial. It was something different—deeper and somewhat disorienting.

Maybe you haven't lost a show, a book project, or your family identity. But can you relate to seasons of loss, shock, and betrayal from other things? Can you remember a time when you wondered if what you thought you had been called to do wasn't going to happen or that you had failed?

The ending of the show converged at the same time I became a menopausal empty nester. Professional associations ended. People I once trusted had all but disappeared overnight. This series of events fostered immense self-doubt and confusion. I questioned my mission. Did God want

me to stop doing what I had been working so hard to do? I was at that time so susceptible to drowning in comparisons. Everyone in my world of content creation, faith education, and publishing seemed to be flying high and being recognized and rewarded. At least that's how it felt to me at the time.

I reached out to a fellow faith educator who had made huge contributions in the Latter-day Saint world as an author and speaker. He was a leader and had become a friend. Brian<sup>1</sup> counseled me not to second-guess my previous promptings and not to minimize my contributions. He shared a personal experience when he too had lived through some big professional endings and questioned his own purpose. He advised me to not think about this ending as a setback or evidence that I had done something wrong. Brian encouraged me to trust God's timing and believe that I was being prepared for something more.

Over the next twenty-four months, I revisited and reflected on the guidance my colleague and friend had offered. It became a solid anchor when the GPS didn't make sense or when I seemed to be heading nowhere. I wondered how long the wandering and wondering would go on. I didn't know where God was leading me, but I could sense that this season of slowing down was sacred. Even if it was confusing and painful—and maybe *because* it was.

During this time of turmoil and uncertainty, I thought a lot about Joseph of the Bible. He had received a clear mission and blessing. It even came with a one-of-a-kind coat of many colors. Joseph had been set up to excel. What must have been his self-talk as he found himself at the bottom of a pit and then later in jail? Thoughts of failure and confusion must have frequented Joseph's thoughts as he considered how his brothers had rejected and ghosted him. Oh, how I love this scripture story. It gives those of us at the bottom of our own pits a long view. It's a powerful reminder that the detours are actually a redirection to destiny. Joseph not only became a powerful leader, but he also ultimately forgave his brothers and saved their lives. Like Jesus, Joseph teaches us what it looks like to not let betrayal make you bitter but actually better.

\* \* \*

My first sourdough supplies were delivered by Amazon to the same front porch where Sue had left her bread weeks before. The baskets and my scoring tool were signs of something new that was starting. I didn't know yet how to

make sourdough bread, but I would soon discover that it would give me something to care for, feed, grow, create, and share. This was the beginning of my journey with bread. It was an expedition that would bring bread and bring me closer to the Bread of Life.

### *Sourdough Tip*

Buy a bread box.

It will be a safe space  
to keep your bread  
fresh. And honestly,  
don't we all need a  
safe space to just  
be?

As I stood in my kitchen trying to read a sourdough bread blog and figure out where to even start, I had a thought: *If I didn't trust God in this unknown and uncomfortable quiet, I could easily become hardened.* More important even than trusting God—and believing that my plan of happiness hadn't been permanently derailed—was a whisper to forgive the people who had really hurt me. C. S. Lewis once wrote, “To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.”<sup>2</sup> I wasn't sure how to forgive and move forward, but I knew it was key to my healing and beginning again.

Standing at the counter, measuring that first scoop of flour for that first batch of sourdough bread, I questioned how long I would feel this lost and sad. But I noticed something bubbling inside my hurting heart. Trying something new was comforting and hopeful. It was an uncomplicated sign that God wasn't done with me and that I still had some learning and creating to do. He would not leave me alone because alone Jesus had borne my sins and grief. And I witness that He bore yours too. Through Him I could forgive and begin again.

Because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, you too can find the way through the endings to new beginnings.

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1. Name changed.
2. "To Be a Christian," Goodreads, accessed Aug. 4, 2025, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/103229-to-be-a-christian-means-to-forgive-the-inexcusable-because>.

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