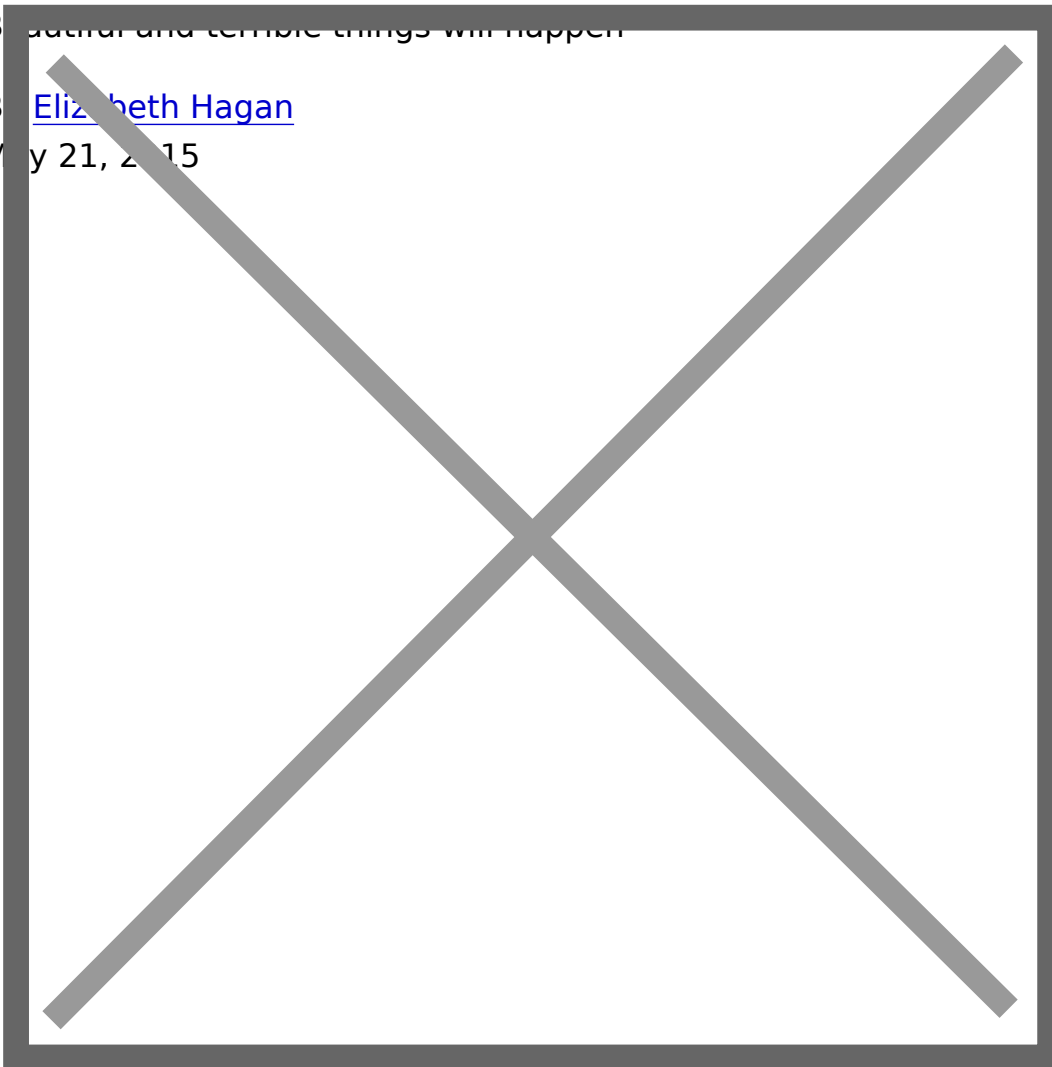


Beautiful and terrible things will happen.

By [Elizabeth Hagan](#)

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Years ago I was

turned onto this quote from my friend [Amy's](#) Facebook page. I remember reading it over and over again back then— thinking about how true the paradox was. Life is full of both beautiful and terrible things.

But, lately I think of these words all the time: *This is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen.*

Our human experience is always swinging the pendulum. And often it's not an either/or. It's sometimes a both/and—sometimes on the same day! The big and the small beautiful and terrible things are happening in our world all the time (just turn on the news and fill in the blanks).

Somedays it is just too much for words, isn't it?

And in our own little corners of the world, we could all tell stories . . . stories that begin like "I was just told I have cancer." Or, "My son is going to jail." Or, "I miss my Daddy so much."

Or stories that end like, "Joy has overwhelmed me with this new relationship!" Or, "Who knew that one day I wouldn't be so depressed?" Or, "I'm so glad I stayed alive to meet this grandchild!"

And, in the midst of the paradox, we are told not to be afraid. Buechner echoes the words of John 14:1 when Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me."

But it's often living in the in-betweens of *not* knowing that's the hardest.

Several weeks ago, I had what would call a "terrible and beautiful" full-circle experience.

It was lunchtime. I sat among some friends from my congregation. We all just attended a funeral together. The food was good and the company was delightful, but the moment of this meal was more than just this.

It was the same restaurant table I sat at almost three years prior.

The first time I sat at this table, I was there with my husband. We were angry. I was crying. We felt beat-up by a group of people who had no regard for our way of being in the world. We felt unseen at the deepest of levels. So, we stuffed comfort food into our mouths hoping that the cheesecake would soak up our pain. Our mealtime prayer could be summarized by, "God, we're so confused!" It was a terrible day.

And lots of life happened in between.

But several weeks ago *at this same table*, I sat with people who saw me as their pastor and friend. They told stories of how they'd grown to love me and why. They

talked openly about their lives too about what brought them joy and pain. We laughed.

And at the end of the meal *at this same table*, one person asked if we could pray. "Would that be too weird?" she wanted to know.

"No, of course not. Let's hold hands."

And together, we voiced words of thanksgiving of how good it felt to be in community with one another. Tears flowed down my cheeks. Who would have thought it? Who could have imagined it? Terror and beauty in the same place?

It was a beautiful day!

Resurrection is real, my friends.

This is what I'm learning: all of life can be redeemed. And, it can happen if we open our eyes and let life take us through the process.

*Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Do not be afraid.*

Originally posted at [Preacher on the Plaza](#)