

## Be Still // A Testimony

*The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still.  
Exodus 14:14*

**We moved to St. Louis 9 months ago** after my husband accepted a position for which he has been preparing for many years. After all the extended education and postdoctoral commitments were fulfilled, we prayed for over two years that the Lord would prepare a place for us, a community for us, a home for us for the next chapter. We prayed over this next season of our life, we prayed for another baby.

Now, I'm pregnant with our second child and into my third trimester. Two and a half weeks ago we found out our daughter had been growing in an unstable environment, if left undiagnosed, her chance of survival at birth was extremely slim, due to a rare condition (occurring 1/3000 pregnancies). The way she is attached in the womb is dangerous; the placement of vessels is unusual and precarious. The condition is hard to catch and goes largely undiagnosed, hence the high mortality rate...and by God's great mercy we found out...they caught it. We found out that now, she not only had a chance at surviving, but a 95% chance of survival with appropriate intervention and no complications.

Her future went from what felt to be a death sentence to a pardon in the matter of one breath. How like us in our sinful depravity unknowing or unrepentant, a death sentence and then, with one breath...the opportunity to Live, if only our condition is caught. If only we understand our diagnosis. We get to live. Why am I not always a pile of tears on the floor, overwhelmed by the mercy of my diagnosis and the fact that it has been caught?

Our days look different now, I must be still to prevent my body's preparation for labor. This means we've had to ask for help from people that don't know us very well, and that we don't know very well, but people who have been placed in our lives with intention. The time we spent praying for the Lord to prepare a place for us was not idol, was not in vain.

This is a desperate place.

It is a scary place.

It is a helpless place.

*But this is the place He has prepared.*

God is not surprised. God is not overwhelmed; he is not floored or baffled by how with all the ultrasounds and checks on our daughter, all the complications we have had throughout, this major issue was missed until now (ultimately his mercy and grace to us to put us in front of the right people to catch this latest development).

He is not scared and he is definitely not helpless. He knows the ending to this story. He is who he is, in all things and in this. His glory is not less or diminished in our desperation; His power, no less real, His mercy no less apparent.

**So let's talk about the Body of Christ.** God has been preparing this place, this community, this home, this pregnancy since before we knew to pray about it. Here is the discipline we must practice; we must trust that the Body he has placed us in is not by mistake. We must lean on the people he has provided. These are disciplines unfamiliar to most of us I think, trusting that being a part of a Body means not just serving, not just providing or acting on another's behalf, but calling upon it to respond and help when you are a pile of tears, helpless on the floor, in crisis, desperation, or sin; likewise with joy, celebration, and laughter. Sharing all of life together, as a Body. Being vulnerable is hard, goes against the self-preservation mode in which we regularly function. Being forced to be vulnerable when in crisis is like surgery to save your life without anesthetic, you just have to do it or you die. This is too much to handle on our own. Letting the Body know when things are not okay, trusting that the Lord did not make a mistake in putting you in a new (or familiar, for that matter) community of people at a moment of brokenness in your life.

The Body is by no means perfect, but it is powerful. Every person in the Body, we are all just broken glass, with wounds, sin, scars, histories, hurt, anger, bitterness, sorrow, loss, and ache. Beautifully, God takes these broken pieces we bring to the table to make the beautiful mosaic that is the Body of Christ. My brokenness looks different than it did two weeks ago and it will look different five weeks from now. I am trying to trust the Lord with my broken pieces, that he would reshape my already broken glass into exactly how he wants it to be for my place in his Body; even if it means I will be shattered in the process. It is excruciating. It is gut wrenching. It is helpless and unknown.

The beautiful part remains though, even when I am a piece of glass shattered on the floor, God does not stop being who he is. His character, his glory is no less when you look through the broken or shattered glass. New depth, new elements, new perspective of his consistent and unchangeable character, this is revealed as we look through the glass again and again, and though my angles may change as I am reshaped by the brokenness, he does not.

In November, right after we found out we were having another little girl, our 3 year old protested as I carried her to the car, "but I cannot see!" Her eyes were closed, face buried onto my shoulder. In a moment of Divine grace, the Lord had me listen as I spoke to my daughter reassuring her. "That's ok. You don't have to see. Mommy can see, and I will carry you."

This was my prayer as I prepared for advent and is my prayer as we embark upon this next season. When my eyes are closed or filled with tears and I cannot see, my

head buried into your shoulder as a child being carried by her parent, Lord help me trust you as you carry me and tell me, "That's ok. You don't have to see. I can see, and I will carry you." Lord, let my body relax and collapse into your grip, resting and trusting; for I am weary and cannot see.

And His continual response to me:

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*by Ruthie Vincill, February 2014*