



Before We Said Hello

Finding Hope
after Pregnancy Loss
and Infant Loss



devotionals by
BECKY NORDQUIST
with stories by guest contributors



Before We Said Hello

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BEFORE WE SAID HELLO

We were so excited

What anticipation

We'd prepared a place for you inside our hearts

Oh, how you were wanted

We had plans and dreams

Then in an instant it all came apart

Like a flower that was crushed before it could bloom

Like a story just begun that ended much too soon

We grieve love interrupted that has no place to go

We said goodbye before we said hello

They say you're in Heaven

and someday I'll see you

But that doesn't fill the ache I'm feeling now

Your life was so special

Such a miracle

Now life goes on but I just don't know how

Like a flower that was crushed before it could bloom

Like a story just begun that ended much too soon

We grieve the child who's living in our hearts but not our home

We said goodbye before we said hello

You are my angel and we'll never be apart

I may not hold in my arms but I'll still hold you in my heart

Like a flower that was crushed before it could bloom

Like a story just begun that ended much too soon

We grieve the hopes cut short

The memories we'll never know

Why? Tell me why...

Why did we have to say goodbye before we said hello?

DAY 1

From the depths of despair, O LORD,
I call for your help.
Hear my cry, O LORD.
Pay attention to my prayer.

PSALM 130:1-2 NLT

When you least expect it, another trigger sends you spiraling downward. You wonder if life will ever return to the way it was before you were forced to say goodbye.

No parent should outlive his or her child, yet here you are, trying not to feel the pain. You have never before sunk into a hole as deep as this one. The darkness threatens to overtake you and chokes breath from your already exhausted soul.

Barely able to form the name, you whisper again . . . “Jesus . . . help.”

We long for Him to remove the inconsolable ache within us. We long for Him to remove the flashes of gore that remind us of the end of our babies. We long for deliverance from the pain. Instead, Jesus comes with His presence. He comes bearing strength. He comes bearing peace that we simply cannot understand. He fills us as we inhale and strengthens us as we exhale. When we think we cannot take one more step or raise our head one more time, He holds us together and we survive.

But you, O LORD, are a shield about me,
my glory, and the lifter of my head. (Psalm 3:3 ESV)

DAY 2

As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?
My tears have been my food day and night,
while people say to me all day long,
“Where is your God?”

PSALM 42:1-5

Many wondered where Dave and I found the strength to stand as we traversed 20 months of continual loss: two miscarriages; the stillbirth of our son Niklas; the losses of my mom, my brother, and my father-in-law; and finding my dear friend dead of a heart attack in our family room.

Trauma and grief can either root us more deeply *in* God or cause us to run away. Deciding we will consistently turn toward Him in trauma and loss *before* it comes is a crucial decision.

This doesn't mean we ignore pain or throw Christianese answers at painful questions. Honest wrestling is crucial to our growth. This is where our relationship with God gets real. Acknowledging that He is always present and holding to the truth of His word are essential. This is true even if we can't feel His presence, see promises coming to fruition yet, or understand what happened.

We cling to God and His word, not our circumstances, not our emotions, and not our control over things. He is our solid

HOPE AND A FUTURE

Kylie Scott

For my husband and me, November 16, 2017, was the most joyous day of our lives. That day we found out we were pregnant . . . finally. We had struggled for six long years to have our little one. I remember jumping up and down with excitement and crying happy tears. We called our close friends and family because we were not going to wait another moment.

January 5 was the day we went in to hear our baby's heartbeat. By that time, I was eleven weeks along. On the way to the doctor's appointment we were giddy, discussing names and dreams we had for this baby. We had waited so long.

But when we got to the office, we were told our baby had no heartbeat. We went in as the happiest couple in the world and left with our hearts broken. The doctor said I had lost the baby around six weeks, and my body just hadn't released it yet. I'd had a "missed miscarriage." For five whole weeks, I had been a walking tomb and didn't realize it. I went from having a womb to a tomb.

I thought about how cruel it was for my body to allow me to believe I was still carrying a healthy baby. I'd had no symptoms of miscarrying. In fact, I experienced pregnancy symptoms well after I found out I had lost the baby. The doctor was worried I would get sepsis since I had already carried the baby for five weeks by the time we discovered it had been gone. So I went ahead and had the baby removed under anesthesia. We

felt betrayed by God. I felt God had blessed us with this gift we had repeatedly asked for, only to take it away. I struggled with this thought.

In the days ahead, I would soon come to know who my true friends were. I lost relationships due to the fact that people did not know how to respond. They just quit talking to us altogether. To this day there are some who have not acknowledged that we lost our baby, and that *hurts*. Most of the support I did get was from people saying things like “You can always have another one,” “At least you know you can get pregnant,” or even “It was for the best, something was wrong.” People need to know those things cut deep. People have good intentions, and I remind myself of that. But churches and communities need to raise awareness about how to respond when someone loses a child.

Although the pain of losing our baby still hurts today, I have grown to lean into God even more. We have not been able to conceive again, so we have chosen to foster babies in honor of our little one. I am reminded daily of Jeremiah 29:11: “For I know the plans I have for you . . . plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Sometimes the process is painful, but I trust Him.



DAY 3

All my longings lie open before you, Lord;
my sighing is not hidden from you.
My heart pounds, my strength fails me;
even the light has gone from my eyes.
My friends and companions avoid me
because of my wounds;
my neighbors stay far away.

PSALM 38:9-11

In the aftermath of infant loss, the blanket of grief can cover us for what seems like forever. Many people do not understand the deep grief associated with the loss of a pregnancy or a still-born baby. They deliver “well-meaning” words and trite clichés in hopes of stifling our wounded cries. The litany of “at least” statements they often offer only inflicts fresh and painful wounds.

“At least you have other children.” “At least you can have more or try again.” “At least you were only x amount of weeks along.” At least . . . I always wanted to reply, “At least you aren’t the one choosing a casket for your baby, deciding what to dress him in, or whether or not to place toys and your favorite books into the ground with him.”

At least.

The people you thought would remain faithfully by your side disappear into the shadows. Many duck and walk the other way to avoid asking you how you are doing. They avoid you because of your wounds, and you look heavenward, enduring more tears of loss you didn’t expect.

