

Recent Ramblings * Miscarry

Once upon a time 15 years ago, after 6 years together, a husband and wife decided to have a baby. It was a very conscious decision, one that came with a lot of thought. Many of their friends were having kids and while the typical new-parent struggles are very real, for the most part, they seemed more fulfilled for doing so. And as someone once pointed out, "All you really need is love."

Long about the time the wife realized that she may be pregnant, she got the flu. A long, dehydrating week later, the husband and wife were at the doctor's office where the pregnancy was confirmed. Scared with tremendous elation, the wife shared her news with her boss, along with the doctor's note for being out for more than 3 work days. No sooner had she gotten home to rest when the bleeding started.

Lying down kept the worst of the pain at bay for a few days, but eventually she had to rejoin the living. Still unsure what was happening, but convinced by the internet that some bleeding in early pregnancy was normal, she got up to shower. The pain became overwhelming and after much effort getting dressed, asked her husband to take her to the emergency room.

After sitting up in the truck on the way across town, he had to carry her inside. She writhed on the hospital bed, unable to open her eyes. Eventually they got an IV going and some medicine started to dull the pain enough to hear the answers to the questions her husband was asking. She lost the baby. No, they don't know why; could have been anything. There doesn't appear to be anything abnormal; she should make a full recovery.

Physically, yes. Mentally, emotionally, spiritually, ...no.

Why would God give her these desires and dreams to have a baby if she wasn't supposed to have one? There are far worse parents in the world who had kids; she saw it every day. Kids who weren't wanted. Her baby would have been wanted. VERY wanted. VERY loved. Maybe she didn't want the baby bad enough. Was this a test? Was she supposed to want it more and didn't? Was there something she didn't do? She was healthy age and weight, taking all the proper vitamins... How many women got pregnant on ACCIDENT? This pregnancy was totally on purpose. How much more was she supposed to want it?

She knew there were women out there who struggled to get pregnant and just never could. She COULD. So why wasn't she allowed to keep hers? What was the point?

The doctor in the ER told her husband that statistically 1/6 pregnancies end in miscarriage, typically in the first 6 weeks. She knew of 2. Two of her aunts had them. So, *statistically*, that didn't add up.

There was a lot of anger. Resentment, but not directed at any one thing. She didn't want to talk about it. She didn't want to think about it anymore. She tried to put it behind her. She tried to prove she was good enough to be a mom. She tried to resign herself to the fact that she may never have kids. But she didn't really believe that. Somewhere beyond her circumstances, she truly thought she was to be a mom someday. But then WHY this? Why suffer through this?

One spring day months later, she got an international call. Her best friend had called to catch up. After the superficial stuff, they fell back into their old pattern that made- and kept- them best friends: they told each other the worst things about themselves. Her best friend had miscarried as well. As they spoke, filling in each other's sentences and putting words to feelings neither had fully formed alone, it buoyed each of them in the knowledge that they weren't alone.

"I'd rather hoped that by my going through this, that statistically, you'd be saved from it," she said to her best friend. "It gets easier. I manage to forget for a few hours at a time on the better days."

Then on Facebook, another high school friend had reached out to her. While catching up, it came up that this high school friend had miscarried at 6 months along because of fibroids. She couldn't imagine having 6 months invested, getting to feel the baby move, going through the baby shower, having everyone know and being excited for you only to

have it suddenly gone one day. But she still knew there were worse stories and situations out there. It eased her shame only slightly.

Then there was the most surprising realization of all; guilt. Guilt with the thought that she had to admit that a small portion of her heart was relieved. What if she just didn't want it bad enough to be a good mom? What if she was one of those moms who would end up on the news? But then what about those dreams and desires?

She was invited to a baby shower for a work friend. But she couldn't bring herself to be happy for someone else. Not yet. She hadn't quite figured out how to forgive herself for her inadequacies, her feelings, or her unrealized shortcomings. Her own mother was confused about her reactions and the longevity of these feelings.

"Mom, did you ever miscarry?"

"No."

"Then you don't get it."

Her depression lasted 10 months. She changed jobs. Her husband was nothing but loving and supportive, waiting for her to come out of the fog of the past and rejoin him in the present, looking forward to the future- whatever it may hold for them.

Eventually she did open up to more women friends about it to realize that the 1/6 statistic is probably closer to 1/2. If most women feel as she did, they don't want to broadcast their failure to carry a healthy baby to term. It's hard enough to admit to oneself, much less to people who aren't invested in you.

On the day that would have been her due date, she followed the advice she'd read somewhere: not to bury the fact that it happened, but find a healthy way to remember. She took the day off from work and, by herself, planted a weeping willow tree in her yard as a living reminder.

It turns out her dreams and desires were not unfounded. 15 years later, this husband and wife are now the parents of 2 healthy kids. The kids enjoy climbing the lower branches of the weeping willow tree and sometimes their mom shares the story of that tree with them.

Every year when she fills out the annual health update for her primary care physician it's the same reminder: # of pregnancies?

3.

of live births?

2.

At least they don't ask why. That's on my list for God someday.