

REBEKAH'S STORY

A testimony by Dianne L. Coventry

I wish I could tell you a life time of stories about Rebekah; the truth is she never had a chance to live out God's plan for her because I exercised my right to choose. Rebekah died July 8th, 1980.

I was 17 years old and had enrolled myself in High School. My parents were divorced years prior and the dysfunction in the new family environments was prevalent in either household. I went back to my home town, where my grades improved and I was hopeful to go to college and pursue a career. I never felt I was destitute while being on my own at such a young age. My outlook on life was a very positive one. We were raised with humor and love seeing the glass half full and I had a zest for life. Whenever I needed a job to pay rent or a meal or a place to live God would send an earthly angel to accommodate. I never felt in danger, although looking back I could have traveled many paths of destruction. Looking back, God was with me every step of the way. I am so thankful that He protected me.

Being a trusting person, always seeing the bright side of life with a smile, I was easy prey for the enemy. He convinced me differently during my crisis.

I met and fell in love with Rebekah's father, J. S. (using his initials as I have not asked him if I could use his name). We were going to be married some day. Too young to make such grown up decisions but we crossed that line of intimacy before marriage. Although we were "smart" about contraception, we experienced the 1% failure of the protection choice and I became pregnant.

We shared the news with his mother and we had a meeting at their dining room table where JS's father proceeded to tell me that if I kept the baby I was not welcome ever again in their house and that J.S. would be kicked out and they would not help him pay for college. I was told by JS's father..." I never want to see your face or your baby's face ever again." I was told about adoption and if I chose that route I was not welcome in their house until after the baby was adopted and removed from their presence. I was also told about abortion.

The enemy began his destruction by telling me I was abandoned by my father, unlovable and unworthy of being loved, unable to care for a child or go to anyone for help. I looked inward and listened to the world instead of following my first instinct. I had actually been happy and excited about being pregnant although definitely scared, too. But the dinner table discussion left me feeling abandoned yet again, this time by my future family. And if I chose to keep my baby, I would feel responsible for JS being abandoned by his family as well.

[Psalm 68:5](#)

[A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation.](#)

JS and I left the house and he told me that he didn't care what his parents said; if I wanted to keep the baby we would find a way. But JS didn't know that I felt abandoned by my father. I myself didn't put that together until later in life. At that moment I was in survival mode and was making a decision based on fear. I remember the feeling; I remember the exact moment in his driveway to this day. I felt so alone, so responsible for everything in my world. I was supporting myself at age 17 and now I was responsible for JS's abandonment if I chose to keep our baby.

I was told I didn't have a lot of time to decide because I was approaching 8 weeks gestation. The pressure was on. I believed the lies of the enemy (satan), and I trusted man instead of God. My instincts were screaming, no! all the while right up to that moment the nurse put the needle in my arm.

Proverbs 14: 12 says:

...There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death...

JS and his mother walked me through a crowd of pro-life activists. "Keep your head down and stay close," his mother told me. A part of me died that day with Rebekah. Could God ever forgive me? Could I ever forgive myself?

After the initial relief I quickly entered denial. You see, we didn't talk about it at all. JS's family acted as if it never happened. I don't remember JS and me discussing it either. I went home and cried and then I had to get back to surviving. The guilt and shame soon encompassed my private thoughts. I challenged death on a winding road near home, just hoping I would hit a tree or an oncoming car, feeling I would be better off dead than living with the guilt. I hated what I did; I hated myself because of it.

Jesus was there because I am still here.

How that "right to choose" affected the rest of my life: Gagged by Guilt and Silenced by Shame

Stuffing my feelings about my choice, I continued in denial for 29 years. I was hurting but no one could know about it. Society doesn't believe you need to grieve the loss of your child because society doesn't believe it is a child. Terms to describe abortion are emotionally detaching from the reality of what you are really doing.

When I found out I was pregnant I called it a baby. Abortion took my baby away (end of story).

In recent years God has been bringing this to the forefront of my mind. I was troubled because I thought I dealt with this a long time ago, when Geoff was born (my first live birth). Holding him and watching him grow at times brought deep sorrow and horrible feelings of guilt about my previous choice. One time I remember holding him while he napped (my arms wrapped around him) and I sobbed. He was soaking wet when I was done crying (his head, his shirt) and I was amazed he didn't wake up or even move the whole time I sobbed. God kept him so still so I could grieve.

That was 20 years ago. So many decisions in my life were tainted by my low self worth from that choice I made so many years earlier. I was experiencing bouts of depression and deep sorrow.

My second son was born (premature at 26 weeks), and later I was divorced. Once again, I found myself in survival mode raising two boys, working full time. I started going to a different church, one that taught me the Bible. I participated in studies and learned all about Jesus and his personality. I began to ask Him for advice instead of listening to the world.

It became obvious to me that I needed more help with this. I was still experiencing uncontrollable crying, consuming sadness, guilt and shame all stuffed on the inside. I could not let go of the reality of what I did, how I could choose one child over another. I couldn't tell anyone of my pain and shame.

Isaiah 54:4

Do not fear for you will **not** be ashamed; neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth...

I kept stumbling on forgiving myself and the other people involved in that decision that ruined my life. The Bible told me God forgives but until I truly confessed to Him and repented I continued hitting a road block.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. NKJV

Luke 6:37 says

...Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

How truly humbling it is when you realize what it really meant for Jesus to die on the cross for us. Our sins are washed away!

Romans 3:25-26

...Whom God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

I participated in a Bible study that was designed for women seeking healing from the decision of abortion, which walked me through my grief and loss. I was able to mourn the loss of my child and to forgive myself and others. Most of all, I was able to accept God's forgiveness.

Mark 11:26

...if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

God has an answer for every feeling you could ever feel, a way for every situation you could ever find yourself in. He is the Way and I found great comfort in His words.

JESUS HEALED BY FORGIVING SIN

As individuals, we express ourselves uniquely as does the expression of illness.

Matthew 9:2 and 6

Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you"... NKJV

...vs 6...that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins – then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house". NKJV

When I was ready to walk through the Mended Hearts Bible Study I prepared myself for a flare up of fibromyalgia. I felt this was going to be the emotional ride of my life and figured I would experience a lot of physical pain from it.

Fibromyalgia symptoms first appeared when I was in high school. As the years progressed and other stresses in my life transpired, the symptoms continued to get worse and harder to live with.

I was so surprised when it came to mind that I hadn't had any pain during this study. One morning I was reading Matt 9 when I realized I hadn't felt any symptoms since that study started and still haven't felt any pain.

Jesus healed the sick by forgiving sin,

[Psalm 32:5](#)

[I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, I will confess my transgressions to the LORD, and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.](#) NKJV

I believe that by confessing my sin and repenting, **God healed me.**

My symptoms are non-existing at this point. I believe my illness was a direct result of the guilt of my sin and my healing was a direct result of my acceptance of Jesus, confession, repentance and forgiveness. How awesome is that!

Church's role in healing

I'm thinking that if people feel shame and guilt for their sin and are suffering as a result, then the church needs to be a safe place for us sinners. We can't judge others until we remove the plank out of our own eye.

And how many people won't come to church because they feel unworthy or shame and guilt for a decision that was made so long ago or even last week?

How many men and women have died from a disease that stems from shame or guilt of sin? How many men and women out there don't know that God loves them and He already knows all about them and their sin?

You can't hide if from the Lord, so don't. Confess, and walk in the light. **It is freedom!**

[Isaiah 25:8](#)

[He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the Lord has spoken.](#) NKJV

Isn't that good news? God's words are so comforting. Come to Jesus and confess your sin, forgive yourself and others, repent and you will be set free!

[Psalm 100:5](#)

[For the LORD is good and His love endures forever, His faithfulness continues through all generations.](#) NKJV

God so loves you and He doesn't want you hurting anymore.

I hope and pray that my testimony will help men and women understand that there is healing for them and there is hope.

I also hope to share with our young people in crisis the consequences that I lived with in hopes that they make a better "choice".

[Psalm 30:11-12](#)

[You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.](#) NKJV

I am forgiven. His love has made me whole. I have PEACE.

Resources: National Helpline for Abortion Recovery 866-482- 5433 www.conceptsoftruth.org , CareNet of Manchester and Nashua, NH www.Carenetnh.org (Mended Hearts Bible Study) 603-623-1122, www.ramahinternational.org, www.heartbeatinternational.org, and www.focusonthefamily.org.