

Psalm 139:14-16

“I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed, and in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them.”

**Someone you know has been directly affected by abortion . . .**

A young woman, engaged to a successful, professional man for nearly a year, decides that she must break off their engagement. He responds angrily and holds her against her will for several days, alternately beating and raping her. When he decides to take her to another location so that when he ends her life, her body will not be easily found and associated with him, she manages to escape by jumping from a car traveling at high speed on a busy freeway. Amazingly she suffers no serious injuries, and she is free from him. She turns back to the safety of her parent’s home to hide and try to heal. Soon she discovers that she is pregnant. Her mental and emotional collapse causes her parents to secure an abortion for her. They fear she will not recover if she carries her baby to full term. They know that she will never be able to give her child up for adoption if she gives birth . . .

A mid-thirties, highly educated and professionally successful woman, having an intimate relationship with a man she is not committed to, conceives. As she struggles to decide what to do and when, she realizes that she is now in her second trimester and is running out of time to eliminate this problem. She goes to the local abortion clinic, without telling anyone (including the baby’s father) and has a painful, but successful, abortion. She leaves the clinic and resumes her life as though nothing out of the ordinary has happened . . .

A sixteen-year-old girl, involved with a married man, finds herself pregnant. When she tells him what has happened, she is devastated to hear him say that it will have to be her problem because, after all, he is a married man. In desperation she goes to her mother who aids her in a self-abortion attempt, not once, but three times. They fail. She carries her baby to full term and decides to raise her child by herself . . .

Each one of these women is real and each event is true. I am one of these women . . .

Jeremiah 31:15-16

“A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. Thus says the Lord: ‘Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears . . .’ “

Jump ahead in time 10 to 15 years . . .

Each woman is now living with the consequences of her poor choices.

The victim of violence is now happily married, but unable to conceive. She fears this is punishment for her abortion.

The career woman has discovered that nothing she has accomplished has brought any lasting satisfaction or peace. As she begins to reflect on her life, her invisible child begins to cry for her in the night.

The teenager is grown, married, and raising more children. She lives with the guilt and horror of her earlier decision as she looks into the handsome face of her firstborn.

For these women and the thousands, possibly millions, just like them, it's not just a mistake they made. Because of the way God has designed women, with that inborn need to conceive, bear, and nurture children, the consequences of taking a child's life, though pre-born, has very long and far reaching effects. Even those who don't recognize the cause of their grief or believe it really exists will notice one that no matter how well they are doing financially, professionally, or by any other measure of success, that something is wrong. It will affect small, barely noticeable things at first and only occasionally. Soon the hidden guilt will begin affecting each day of their life until they can no longer stand the pain. Only then do they begin the long journey to confession, repentance, and finally, mercifully, forgiveness . . .

Even after the painful process on the journey to forgiveness, when they know in their heart that our Lord has forgiven the sin, when they know their salvation is secure in spite of their sin, even after all that, there still may not be peace. For some, possibly most, there must be a definite date, time, and place to remember they not only have the forgiveness of our Lord, but they know they have the forgiveness of their child, or even, their children. It takes a special, anointed place for that to happen.

I had the privilege of accompanying a young woman to the National Memorial For The Unborn in Chattanooga, Tennessee a couple of years ago. She had shared with me the turmoil in her life that wouldn't go away. When I suggested that maybe she needed to find this place of peace and that I would go with her, I never really expected her to agree. But about two months later she called and said she would do this as a last resort. What did she have to lose anyway? Her life couldn't get much worse . . .

We left on a Tuesday morning, spent the night halfway, (although she spent most of the night sitting in a chair) and drove into Chattanooga the next morning. After we found a motel, we decided to make a practice run to locate the memorial since we didn't know anything about the city.

We drove into the parking lot and just sat staring at the front gate. I looked at her and realized that this was not going to be just for practice – *this was the time*. The pain in her eyes was so evident. I could see that she was struggling between running away one more time or actually going through the gate. I asked her what she wanted to do, all the time

praying that our Father would not let her leave. She said she thought she should go in. I asked her if we could pray. I knew I couldn't go in unarmed. Amazingly, she agreed. We had such a sweet time of prayer sitting in the front seat of the car, then we both took a deep breath and made our way through the gate.

We paused to read the dedication plaque giving the history of God's might in not only closing, but bankrupting and destroying a very successful abortion clinic and all associated with it.

Then we slowly approached the main area of the memorial. I wasn't sure we would make it inside. As we entered the room, we saw a very large granite wall filled with small brass plaques in vertical rows beginning at the top of the wall and ending at the bottom. Below the wall was a ledge reaching from one side to the other. On it were little stuffed animals, flowers, cards, baby booties, and so many other things that you would think of for babies. My sweet little friend went to one end of the wall; I went to the other. We each began to read the individual plaques placed there by wounded and hurting mothers, fathers, grandparents, and sometimes, brothers and sisters. The sentiments were all different, yet completely the same in spirit.

Each baby was represented with a plaque that had their name imprinted on it, the date of their home going was recorded and a short but powerful statement was made by those who needed to make this right. Some were apologizing for their decision, some were begging forgiveness for believing the lie of the enemy, some were proclaiming love and asking for the same and just said, "I'm sorry". While few words were engraved on the plaques, the depth of the hurt was there in volumes. My friend and I met in the center of the wall. As I turned to look at her, she collapsed into my arms. The enormity of a decision made so many years earlier had finally become too much to bear any longer. All I could do was hold her while she sobbed.

After a few minutes, when her shoulders slowed their shaking, and her tears began to diminish, she looked at me and asked, "Why should my child want to forgive me for taking his life?"

I began to pray that the Lord would give me the right words to say. She had come so far that I didn't want any of my poor efforts at consolation to move her further away. And, as He is always so faithful to guide when we can't see where we're going, I said, "Because you're his mother and we love to forgive our mothers. Besides, he is happy and at peace because he's sitting on Jesus' lap and he is being held closely in His arms. He's completely safe and warm and loved. If you asked him for another chance to be his mother here on earth and the decision was all up to him, he'd say, 'No thank you'. What could life here offer that could possibly compare with his life now?"

With that, she stopped weeping completely and the most amazing thing happened. Her shoulders began to straighten; she brushed her hair from her face and her eyes cleared. Her whole countenance changed and I could see the grief begin to leave her body. She

understood. She knew she was forgiven and she knew she could finally forgive herself. As we left, I knew she would sleep well that night.

The next morning we went back to the memorial one more time on the way out of town. This time I waited in the car. When she returned I knew her life would not continue the way it had been, for there was new purpose for her. She was at peace . . .

It says in Isaiah 49:15-16, the Lord tells us, “I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before Me.” This passage is a precious picture of restoration, not only of Zion, but also of each heart and life fractured by sin.

I mentioned earlier that each of you knows someone who is living with the pain of abortion or with the truth of having considered it as the only “way out”. Picture them coming to the place of forgiveness – first forgiveness from the Lord, but then forgiveness from themselves. What a blessing and a privilege to be part of walking that path with them.

There is an opportunity to have a place of remembrance closer to home. Bob and Teresa Nix have felt the prompting of the Lord to include a memorial as a part of the ministry of The Abiding Place. They have invited us to join them as they begin to pray for our Lord’s direction and His resources to accomplish this . . .

Please be a conduit of healing the Daughters of Zion through the ministry of Gilead . . .