



As shared by Paulette with congregation of Christ the King Presbyterian Church, El Paso, TX, Sunday, January 3, 2010.

Exactly one year ago today, I received **the** phone call that every parent fears. My three children, along with my parents, were in a single-car roll-over accident. My parents and Garrett were fine, Lauren had a pulse and she was breathing, yet it was unknown the extent of her injuries, and Alexa was in "bad shape". Today, Lauren is my miracle, not only surviving, but she has healed completely. And I never saw Alexa alive again.

People constantly ask me 'How are you doing?' Usually my response is that I'm fine, and while this **is** a true statement, the real truth is that I hurt. Badly. The hole in my heart and the ache in my soul are my new best friends that never leave me alone. The ghost of grief stalks my every minute. God's grace is not an anesthetic. It doesn't remove the pain.

My inability to fix my broken heart has increased my awareness to the sting of pain all over this world, that, in all honesty, I'm not really sure I ever really understood before. Pitied the pain of others? Yes. Empathized? Maybe. But now....I'm just stunned by the extent of sorrow and grief around me.

Tsunamis in Asia, execution-style killings in Juarez, abuse, abandonment, betrayal....CANCER. What kind of "Lord of Creation" allows natural disasters to destroy lives? Has this world gone mad? Has evil won out over good?

The Sunday school song says that Jesus loves me. Our doctrine which we are so proud of proclaims God's authority over each and every event. But now, this Heavenly Father that I've known all my life seems so strange to me. My heart is so wounded. The war between peace and doubt is fierce. Can I trust Him? I AM SO CONFUSED!

We have just passed the season of Christmas. You may recall the decree by Herod the King that upon hearing that the Christ Child was to be born, ordered the slaying of male children under the age of two. I've always thought "bad Herod"...Now, I am stunned. What about all those mothers who've had their baby boys ripped out of their arms, ripped out of their hearts? How....WHAT could ever make their world right again? This holy baby was to born in a season of great sorrow in the land.

After Jesus was born, Mary took her new baby to the temple to see Simeon. He told Mary - this child will 'pierce your soul.' Being His mother will grieve your spirit.

And our Savior himself appealed to His Heavenly Father to 'Let this cup pass from me' before going to the cross. The pain appeared to be just too much.

Why did our Creator God allow this world to get so messy and ugly? I do not know.

Why will I never again hear my treasured Alexa neither sing...nor giggle? Why will I never get to see her fall in love, nor will I ever know what she would finally decide to study in college? I don't know.

Why did our Heavenly Father choose to save you from your sins in such a revolting and violent manner? I don't know that either.

I am a woman in process. And while I have many questions that will never be answered this side of eternity, I can tell you this: the only God that could ever be trusted is the one that cried my tears before me - the One that lets me beat on His chest and scream "I don't understand!" The scars on Jesus' hands are proof that the depth of my agony is something that he IS very much acquainted with.

Hear the Word of our Lord from Isaiah 49..."Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne?

Even if that were possible, I will not forget you!

See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands!"



Thanksgiving 2009, Lauren age 13, Garrett age 9, Alexa in our hearts

"I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross. The only God I believe in is the One Nietzsche ridiculed as 'God on the cross.' In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it? I have entered many Buddhist temples in different Asian countries and stood respectfully before the statue of the Buddha, his legs crossed, arms folded, eyes closed, the ghost of a smile playing round his mouth, a remote look on his face, detached from the agonies of the world. But each time after a while I have to turn away. And in imagination I have turned to that lonely, twisted, tortured figure on the cross, nails through hands and feet, back lacerated, limbs wretched, brow bleeding from thorn-pricks, mouth dry and intolerably thirsty, plunged in God-forsaken darkness. That is the God for me! He laid aside his immunity to pain. He entered our world of flesh and blood, tears and death. He suffered for us. Our sufferings become more manageable in light of his. There is still a question mark against human suffering, but over it we boldly stamp another mark, the cross which symbolizes divine suffering. 'The cross of Christ . . . is God's only self-justification in such a world as ours.'"

From John Stott's, "**The Cross of Christ**".