

3 Reasons to Hope Even When Your Best Friends Try To Talk You Out of It

It was on the same day the baby was born that I sat with her. Her body had been drained, almost all the life she thought she had was poured out into 7 pounds of flesh that had her eyes and his chin. She was a mother now. In mere hours of labor she'd inherited a lifetime.

Just as I couldn't relate as her body morphed and stretched to incubate this life, the woman she was when she walked into Martha Jefferson Hospital and the woman that I was now sitting beside seemed ... different. Except this wasn't just a difference, it was a painful estrangement from my own experience.

She was fruitful. I was barren.

"After all that, you think you could do this again?" I asked naively, ignorant of the heart-swell that motherhood can produce and blind to what her answer might elicit in me.

"Of course," she said, without a thought. "It's a rite of passage."

I left her hospital room an hour later in a fog – those words hovered around me so much so that I could think of nothing else. She gave voice to what I'd felt for years but couldn't say out loud – because then it might really stick.

She shared this "rite of passage" with billions of women across languages and colors and boundary lines – and that rite of passage had a "Do Not Enter" sign on it, seemingly scripted just for me.

It was too painful to make fourth-floor visits to Martha

Jefferson Hospital and watch soon-to-be mamas open wrapped packages of onesies and bibs. It would have been easier to shut myself off to these mothers or to shut myself off to hope. Either option would provide a reprieve (because how else do you grapple with unmet, God-given desire and a room where you're kept waiting?).

Everything in me wanted to shove down hope.

Whether it's a financial setback while the surrounding world seems to be padding their accounts, or being asked to stand (again) next to another friend as she makes vows with a now-husband, or as a child screams in public while other parents look askance at your seemingly irresponsible lack of discipline – we all have our waiting rooms.

So, you, with your waiting room and friends telling you to just “let it go” – knowing that God is sovereign and that His will might very well be that He says “no” to what you're asking – why hope?

Hope Invites A Vulnerability Before God

The nexus of our inner expectations and the outward waiting room is awkward. We become good at skirting circumstances that leave us vulnerable, that make us bleed. But could it be that this learned proficiency is the very thing that's preventing us from a brush with God that might change us – the kind we said “yes” to when we were young and wide-eyed about our faith?

When my external circumstances were yet barren and I chose, still, to be a little girl on the inside, full of hope – suddenly He wasn't just a Man on a page, but He had lines on His face and calluses on hands that He carefully cupped around my story. I felt that I could even smell His broken skin.

He does that. He so beautifully allows a thwarting in some of our deepest desires so that He might allure us to a

vulnerability with Him that opens us.

We are made to be raw before God – it's the invitation to communion. And choosing to hope when everything in front of us tells us otherwise can be the very choice that ushers us, real close, to His feet.

Hope Opens Your Eyes to the Unseen

We struggle through the tension of walking in the seen, yet praying to an unseen God. Growth in Him, according to Scripture, is an ever-expanding belief and understanding of what our hand can't physically hold. I want to grow in Him, yet, I still have to pay the bills and call the plumber to fix the leak in my sink and exercise off that chocolate cake.

Hope cracks us open to that unseen – to the place where God dwells.

Hope – when it's foolish and unlikely and you have more than a dozen physical reasons not to hope – is the entry point into a life of keeping your eyes locked on an unseen God while living in the everyday reality that doesn't yet match that for which you're praying.

Hope Makes Him Marvel

We may think dozens of thoughts in a week about how God's movement through life's circumstances impacts us. We sit over coffee with friends and chat after church about our new job or relationship or our parent's illness – all through the lens of how we're receiving God's choices for our life. I gave years away to thinking about why God opened my girlfriends' wombs and left me barren.

I think we give little thought, however, to how we might impact the heart of God.

Consider the centurion from Matthew 8. He made the son of

God ... *marvel*. The Jesus who wept over His people and bled His life into the messy dirt underneath the cross is capable of being moved by our perspective on His ability.

To hope that He can do the impossible while also recognizing that He may sovereignly choose not to leaves us in the unique position of reaching for the emotions residing in His heart. Hope opens up new, broken-yet-faithful ways to approach the almighty God. Hope makes accessible an unconventional, but deeply alluring, love.

If my womb stayed barren forever – yet I kept praying that He'd heal me, open to the possibility that He just might not – I still had the chance to move God's heart by my hope.

Hope moves us from intellectually relating to Him as a transactional God, to sitting on His lap and calling Him Daddy. This perspective shift, birthed from holding on to tenuous hope, may be the very reason He keeps us in that waiting room.

By Sara Hagerty. A mother whose arms stretched wide across the ocean for her children, and who lives in Kansas City, writing and hoping. She is the author of ***Every Bitter Thing Is Sweet: Tasting the Goodness of God in All Things*** (Zondervan, October 2014) – with foreword by Katie Davis, author of ***Kisses from Katie*** . Visit <http://book> to learn more.