

Brenton Brown: Worship in the Midst of Tragedy

When Brenton Brown was in high school in Cape Town, South Africa, he started playing the guitar and “fell head over heels” in love with it. He continued to play during college and received a Rhodes scholarship to Oxford University. He moved to the United Kingdom and joined the Vineyard Church, where he led worship and has appeared on many Vineyard worship CDs.

But then he got sick and was eventually diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome. In the midst of learning how to cope with his condition, Brown was inspired in his songwriting. The songs on his new album, Adoration, reflect his growth during this season of difficulty.

But Brown and his wife, Jude, experienced an even bigger test of faith when their first baby, Grace, died in utero and had to be delivered stillborn. With devastated hearts they chose to trust the Lord and worship. The song “Adoration” was Brown’s response.

The Buzz features Brown’s own words describing his experience of worship in the midst of unbelievable pain and hardship. (Click [here](#) to purchase this album.)

Amazing God, You Can Bear the Weight of Every Heart

Sometimes it feels as if the burdens of this life are just too heavy to bear. Sometimes they weigh down on us so hard that the thought of anyone being able to carry them seems ludicrous.

And then realizing that this kind of suffering is occurring across the world in thousands of cultures and millions of homes staggers and overwhelms us. Surely there are no hands strong enough to carry the weight of the world.

As a worship leader I have the privilege of traveling across the nations and listening to the growing anthem of worship rising to God from so many countries and cultures. I've looked out on people across the world who have endured enormous storms—from failing health to civil war to economic deprivation to acts of violence and terror to real hunger and real brokenness. And time and again I am surprised at the power of God to triumph over and transcend the most difficult circumstances life can bring. Worship rises from hearts placed in the most unbelievable circumstances on this planet. Are all these worshipers people of extraordinary faith? Perhaps they are. But what they definitely have in common is not the type of worshiper they are, but the type of God they worship. A God who can inspire inexplicable peace and joy in the middle of heartache and destruction.

One of the most extraordinary times of worship I remember is a small city hall packed full of Christians in a region of Eastern Europe called Kosova. A group of us from England and South Africa had traveled over to share what God had done in our country. I was expecting a room full of broken and destitute people. Women and children outnumbered the men due to the recent war, and there were many widows and orphans. The church in this predominantly Muslim region was not much more than 15 years old. But as the first notes of music sounded through that cold, neon-lit hall, the place erupted in joyful, abandoned worship to the Lord. I can clearly remember hearing the sound of weeping and turning around to see my friend Marc James on the electric guitar in floods of tears, amazed at the power of God! While we were expecting brokenness, God was revealing beauty and grace.

So cut to a hospital room in Southern California six years later. Again I can see a face so clearly. But this time it's the nurse holding the sonogram, searching for our daughter's heartbeat and realizing with horror that that was a sound none of us would ever hear again. A week away from her due date, in

what had been a very normal pregnancy, our little girl Grace died in the womb. My wife had spent the last nine months preparing the most beautiful little nursery for her first-born child. Her parents were flying in from South Africa. Friends were e-mailing her tips and best wishes. Life held so much promise. But instead of looking forward to the first blush of parenthood, Jude was facing the nightmare of having to deliver her first daughter, stillborn. It was a weight so crushing, so heavy, that it felt too hard for us to bear. I wondered if we were ever going to make it through the despair and sadness that filled our hearts that day. I will never forget the long list of friends I phoned to tell the awful news. At the start of life death had arrived and taken our little girl.

I remember feeling so much despair and sadness in the following months that when I considered all the tragedy taking place on the earth I was overwhelmed. I thought about how people across the globe were experiencing hardship and loss as great and greater than ours, and it left a gaping hole in my heart. We staggered beneath the weight of grief. We trudged through each day, numb with loss and bewildered. But we also remembered the saints. We remembered the faces and the stories and accounts of God's deliverance and comfort from saints across the earth. We remembered the songs of God's faithfulness through testing. And slowly, like the passing of the seasons, we began to see that our God is not just a good friend in a difficult situation. He is also the Almighty, the creator of the heavens and the earth. Right now the entire universe rests upon the word of His power. Can He bring beauty out of ashes? Can He turn tears into songs of joy? Are His hands strong enough to bear not just my burdens, but also the burdens of the whole earth, the heaviest burdens of our heart? Is He up to the task? Absolutely. His Hands are strong enough. He can handle it. The creator of all things can heal what He has made. He can clean what has been stained. Through Him all things are possible. He can bear the weight not just of my

burdens but of yours too.

It really boggles the mind. But He can bear the weight of the world. He is an amazing, mind-boggling God! His peace carried us through Grace's death and continues to do so. His love, faithful as the dawn, has given rise to "Amazing God" and "Adoration," songs that join a multitude of anthems of praise lifted by the cloud of witnesses across time and all across the earth. His hands are strong enough. He can heal the pain. He can clean the stain. He can turn our tears into songs of praise. He's an amazing God.

*You're amazing God, You're amazing God
You can bear the weight of every heavy heart
You can heal the pain, You can clean the stain
You can turn our tears into songs of praise
You're amazing God*

More information on Brenton Brown can be found at .