

The Holiness of Being Still

Life is funny, you know? It's funny in ways that make me laugh and cry and hope and hurt. It's just funny. For several Christmases we have navigated the murky waters of this ALS storm. We have been treading water as we try to absorb the beautiful moments while anticipating a difficult future.

This year is different. This year, the difficult future has invaded our present. Steve's condition has rapidly declined over the past couple of weeks and he will be placed on hospice this week. We are grateful for the resources and support hospice provides. We are grateful for our kids and our friends and our home (which currently feels more hospital than house.) We really are grateful, but we are also weary and heartbroken. And while I've sometimes been able to wrap those emotions into hopeful words, right now I feel surrounded by a sacred sort of silence. It's not bad. It's just quiet here in my heart, where so many memories and dreams are swirling.

I am taking a leave of absence from my job for the month of December, so I can focus on Steve and my family during this important holiday season. I will write when I feel it and I won't when I don't. Today, I don't. But I do have something wonderful for you and it is this update from my friend, Michaela. Remember her baby, Florence, who is Steve's comrade on the neuromuscular disease battlefield? Well, Michaela's baby, Teddy (Theodore Brave!), is here and you should read this for a beautiful start to advent.

I hope your season is unfolding with grace and I am thankful for so many of the notes I've received to let me know you haven't forgotten us and are still praying. We do not sorrow as those without hope. Especially at Christmas.

Bo Stern is a blogger and author of *Ruthless: Knowing the God Who Fights for You, When Holidays Hurt and Beautiful*

Battlefields (NavPress). She knows the most beautiful things can come out of the hardest times. Her Goliath came in the form of her husband's terminal illness, a battle they are still fighting with the help of their four children, a veritable army of friends and our extraordinary God. Bo is a teaching pastor at Westside Church in Bend, Oregon.