

How God Is Healing This Bethel Worship Leader After Her 2-Year-Old Daughter Died

Many people are quarantined to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. For most, this hasn't been more than a few weeks, but for Bethel Music worship leader Kalley Heiligenthal it's been over three months. She has been in self-quarantine since the death of her daughter Olive—because Jesus asked her to.

Heiligenthal explained on her Instagram that God gave her this time of isolation as a space to heal. “I'd resisted it, downplayed it, overplayed it and then gave into it. I'd rather have stayed up and moving, looking triumphant and unfazed, but I had broken bones and He's too good to let me move around like normal on them. He was clear they weren't broken from defeat—there's no defeat here. But pain? Yes. Loss in this lifetime? Yes.”

You may remember back in December when Kalley and Andrew's 2-year-old suddenly stopped breathing. A global movement of prayer erupted in response to the Heiligenthals' request to contend for Olive's resurrection. “We are asking for bold, unified prayers from the global church to stand with us in belief that He will raise this little girl back to life,” she wrote in an Instagram post that went viral.

Although many critical voices questioned the approach of Bethel Church and the Heiligenthal family, testimonies of the impact of their faith also flooded in. The story and accompanying videos of the grieving parents worshipping God whole-heartedly spread across the world. Although their prayers did not get answered as they had hoped, the Heiligenthals and their church community never stopped boldly declaring God's goodness, even in their heartache.

Bill Johnson, senior pastor of Bethel Church in Redding, California, shared in a sermon titled "Transitioning in Hope" that he and his church continue to believe in prayer for resurrection. "Jesus illustrated it and commanded us to do the same," Johnson said. "I have never been more impressed with a body of people than I have this last week, where thousands of believers gathered to worship and to pray. No hype, no manipulation, no trying to persuade Him to do as we please. It's not about that. Worship is about absolute surrender to Him and His purposes."

Kalley, writer of songs like "Ever Be," shares about the way she's walking through the grieving process together with God. "I tried to play it cool, tidy, right and holy, but could only do that so long before it all started to come out. I never doubted His goodness, but anger, disappointment, searing loss had to get out," she writes. "I'm learning that shepherd Jesus, who's acquainted with valleys, [is] not afraid to walk it with can be honest with Him because He's holding me."

Drawing from her relationship with her oldest daughter Elsie, she talks about God not being a Father who expects her to have it all figured out. "He never left, didn't correct me. He pulled in closer. I thought He'd wish I was further along, but I would never do that to Elsie. When she's afraid, we listen. When she cries, we validate and hold her close. And He's much better. We never outgrow our need for a good Father."

Kalley shared on Valentine's Day that she wrote and released songs as comfort for trauma. God told her six weeks later that "[the songs are] for us, for Elsie, to be played over her as she sleeps. The sound of my voice, my lyrics, He uses as a lullaby over my 3-year-old when I can't find the words."

Now, the songwriter points people back to this good God during this time when "the planet is gripped with a fear of death, grappling for control." She encourages people that rest comes from God, not from answers, solutions or things going back to

normal.

"I'll never have my old normal, who knows when you'll get yours. But He does make all things new," writes Heiligenthal. "In what the world is facing now, He's King, He's Shepherd. He defeated death, disease and torment and from His confidence in this time."

Kalley leaves believers with the vision of how God can make all things work together for good, like Romans 8:28 states. "He's making us soft, strong and unafraid. Let's let Him."
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