

*Believing through
the
Tragedy of Suicide
The Story of Heidi McGovern*

This is the story of my daughter, Heidi Bickford McGovern, a sweet young lady, who made a tragic choice. This was a difficult story to write and may be a difficult read for you, but with much prayer and consideration, I believe her story should be told, that it might point people to God, giving hope, for He dearly loves you!

My husband's phone rings. Sitting beside him in the car, I hear my son-in-law's frantic voice. "I need help! I need you to look for Heidi! She has....." My husband then cries out, "Noooo! Call the police!" We jump on Maine I-95 Northbound to join in on a search for our daughter, who had left a note, apologizing for her determined intent to take her life and that she had taken their 2.5 yr old son with her.

Stepping back a few years, allow me to introduce you to our precious Heidi. Our firstborn and first paternal grandbaby brought a special sweet joy into our family. We loved her with all of our hearts! She was well worth the labor travail and we settled nicely into "Family Mode" adding 3 sisters to the picture in 6 years. When Heidi was 11, she finally had a little brother. Our family was complete! She loved each of her siblings dearly and the feeling was mutual. They looked up to Heidi with love and admiration, enjoying so many special times together, not the least of which was being read to by their big sister!

She was not only a joy and blessing to our family, but to her grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, in-laws, church family, friends.... I think it's safe to say that everyone that met Heidi, knew they had met someone very special! Her personal testimony, when she graduated from High School, read as follows:

"I am so thankful that I have been raised in a Christian family. When I was 6 years old, my parents led me to the Lord. I realized that I was a sinner, and that Jesus had died on the cross and risen from the grave to save me. I prayed and put my trust in Jesus Christ, and since then, I have had a wonderful 12 years, learning to walk with the Lord every day.

I am very excited about this new phase in my life.....that I hope will help me serve the Lord better throughout the rest of my life."

Off to college she went, soaking up all the knowledge she could from her teachers and making wonderful friends. Classes were not a struggle, obviously, with a 4.0 gpa! Upon graduation from college, she married the first and only love of her life. Her husband, Daniel, was such a gift from God, loving and encouraging her. She adored him and their two boys with her entire being. She kept herself plenty busy being a wife and Mommy and serving in various areas in our little church, especially with her musical and literary talents.

God Loves Us, Even When We Struggle With Our Thoughts.

While quite young, Heidi exhibited subtle signs of fear and anxiety, which were calmed by Scripture verses and comforted by family and friends. Being an avid bookworm, she read and reread MANY books, from Boxcar Children, Little House, the Bible and countless missionary biographies. She would “lose herself” in character roles, especially those missionaries she read about. Being a perfectionist, she began imagining she wasn't liked by people and wasn't a good enough person for anyone. The Bible does tell us in Romans 3:23 that “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” However, we also see in Romans 5:8, “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Yes, Romans 3:10 clearly tells us that “...there is none righteous, no not one.” However, Heidi had accepted the Lord as her Savior, who had redeemed (bought back) her life! “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Hebrews 8:12. Because of Salvation, her sins were covered with Christ's shed blood!

Christians Face Depression Too

There is a misconception about Christianity for those not familiar with it. Some people believe that becoming a Christian brings happiness and joy ALL of the time or that God will prevent horrible things from happening in a Christian's life. Heidi had many months when she felt well and was happy. Her gentle, kind spirit, her sweet soprano voice and the soft touch on her grandfather's violin in church was a special blessing to many. Yet, she struggled deeply on the inside. Though she received counseling from family, pastors, doctors and even introduced anti-depressants into her life, Heidi couldn't shake these misconceptions that had become her reality. Suffering for many anxiety-filled years (the last few of which were suffered mostly in silence), coupled with post-partum depression and psychosis, Heidi made a tragic decision to end her earthly life and find gratifying peace, yet bringing God's perfect plan for her life to a close.

Christians Make Tragic Choices

Now, we come back to that heart-sickening phone call on October 4, 2018. Daniel, while caring for their 10 month old son at home, had discovered Heidi's letter, just as she had planned.....too late! Two hours earlier, she had driven up a deserted stretch of highway, parked the car, took her son, Enoch, out of his car seat, wrapped him in her coat and ran in front of an oncoming fuel tanker. Our sweet Heidi was instantly propelled into the arms of her Heavenly Savior, which Daniel's second phone call sadly conveyed. That's when he also told us that Enoch had been rescued and was being life-flighted to the hospital. Believing that Enoch mirrored her personality and was destined to depression, Heidi feared that he would take his life without coming to know the Lord as his Savior and thought it best to take him with her to Heaven. But, her attempt failed. You see, God was in perfect control and brought an excellent team of actual expert first responders, who were each on their way home in separate vehicles on that remote stretch of the Maine woods highway. Within very brief minutes, Enoch was in an ambulance with two highly trained EMT's and a very comforting nurse.

God Can Bring Beauty From Ashes

Long, miraculous story short, Enoch suffered traumatic brain injury, was intubated and on life support for 5 days. If you know the story of Enoch in the Bible, “ [he] walked with God...for God took him” (Genesis 5:21-24), you'll understand that though God allowed Heidi to do this wrong and lovingly welcomed her to Heaven early, He took Enoch out of her arms, so that he could miraculously survive and heal completely. Once this story was introduced to the public, via the news media and Facebook, the community began showing their support in extremely amazing ways. We received encouragement from all over the world, letting us know our family was being prayed for continuously and that God had spared Enoch for a special purpose! Obviously, He has a plan for him, as He does for each of us!

God's Love Made Salvation Possible

First of all, God's plan for you, dear reader, is to realize that you a sinful being, as I quoted earlier from Romans 3:23. No matter who you are, small or great, young or elderly, down & out or rich & famous,...we are ALL equally the same in God's eyes...SINNERS! You may have heard this before, but it bears repeating again and again, until Christ comes to take His born again children home, that “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John

3:16) God's loving plan is that ALL men come to the Truth (I Timothy 2:4), repent of their sins (II Peter 3:9, "The Lord...is not willing that any should perish, but have eternal life.") and live for Him. Some wonderful day, he will welcome those who have trusted Him as their Savior to their Heavenly home to live there evermore! Matthew 25:46 says, "And these (those who reject God's free gift of Salvation) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." Please don't wait to partake of God's plan and accept this FREE gift of eternal life. One day, it will be TOO LATE! "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Romans 10:13

Upon trusting the Lord for salvation, we can joyfully serve, honor and glorify our Savior, which we read of in Titus 2: 11-12. Not only does God offer His loving, perfect will for our lives, He also allows us to choose our own will. Heidi's mind entered a different reality. She became convinced of ideas that were simply not true, and was tormented by these thoughts. With a quiet "I'm ok" smile, she led others to believe that she was fine. She so wanted to serve God with her whole heart, but her flesh was weakened and, of her own will, she chose to end her life, leaving behind grieving family, dear friends and countless acquaintances. Oh! How we miss and love our precious Heidi, but we know we will see her again in Heaven someday! As she said in one of her long good-bye letters to us, "I know the Lord is coming back soon and Enoch and the baby (yes, she was 17 weeks along with our 5th grandchild) and I will see you in Heaven. Soon. I love you and I'm sorry."

If You Are Suffering Today, You Are Not Alone

Dear troubled soul, God "knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." (Psalm 103:14), but He also is "our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Your distress may be consuming you, as it did Heidi, but there is Hope for you. God is your Ultimate Hope and He holds His hand out to you for help, wanting to comfort and dispel your fears. (Isaiah 41:13). As said before, apart from Salvation, you have no hope. Accept Him today! He's gone before you and knows what you're facing. Hebrews 4:15, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Has reading this story of Heidi's life resonated with your own fears and feelings of anxiety and depression? Maybe, you are a Christian, like Heidi and are ashamed that you have these feelings. Oh, dear one, no need for shame...you need God! He so longs to help and comfort you through His Word, the Bible, and through other people, who love and care about you! Don't suffer alone! Open your heart to Him, accepting His help and hope.

Can We Be Of Help Today?

If we can be of help to you, please reach out to us. It would be a joy to help you find true hope in our Lord and know that Heidi's untimely death was not in vain.

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