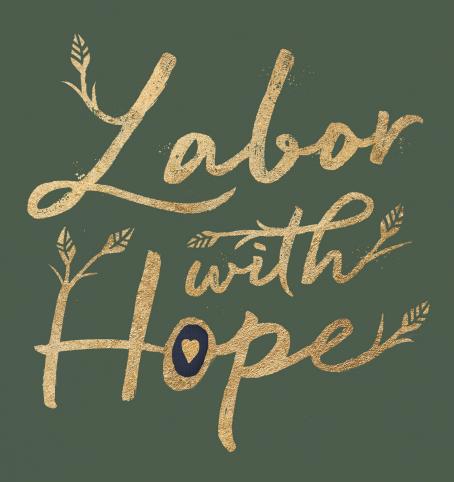
# GLORIA FURMAN

WITH JESSE SCHEUMANN



GOSPEL MEDITATIONS ON PREGNANCY,
CHILDBIRTH, AND MOTHERHOOD

## **GLORIA FURMAN**

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Labor with Hope: Gospel Meditations on Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Motherhood

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This book is a devotional to encourage your spiritual life. It does not offer medical or health advice regarding fertility, pregnancy, the birthing/labor experience, or the post-birth/labor experience of the mother. Further, this book is not intended to substitute for the advice or care of a physician or medical professional. Readers, especially those with preexisting medical conditions, should always consult a physician or medical professional for any health-related matters or questions.

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# The Gospel Is the Ultimate Cure for the Abortion Epidemic

You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth.

Deuteronomy 32:18

Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:13

Friend, it took me many attempts to sit down and write this chapter. I would sit down with my laptop open and just weep. One weeping spell in particular lasted on and off all day. The grief was so great that I considered deleting this chapter from the table of contents entirely. But God is kind, and I beheld his love for me at the cross where Jesus bore the penalty for my years of apathy and disregard for human life, because in my

youth I considered abortion to be a "sad, but necessary choice" if I were ever to become pregnant before I felt I was ready. I commended friends who aborted their babies, thinking they "did what they had to do" and deliberately closed my eyes to the truth of what abortion is—an assault on the image of God.

When I became a Christian, I repented of this sinful attitude, and on the occasion of writing this book the Spirit has once again comforted my conscience that my guilt is paid for on the cross. And so wherever you are coming from—and from whatever place you are reading this book right now—please read and consider these things where I have considered them: at the foot of the cross of Jesus Christ. And if abortion is part of your story in any capacity, there is no better place for us to consider such a weighty topic than in view of the Savior who has atoned for every sin of every person who places her faith in him.

### **God's Purposeful Patience**

As we saw in the last chapter, our sin makes us think ridiculous thoughts. We act on our maligned beliefs, feelings of hopeless desperation, and even our ignorance. Praise God that he is long-suffering in his patience.

Now, one can exercise long-suffering patience with different intentions. We can all think of people who have waited for the right moment for ill intent, whether they waited to make a snide comment or to take revenge. But the Bible teaches that God's intention in his long-suffering patience is for our repentance: "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

What is this promise? "The day of the Lord" is the promise in view here—the promise that Christ will return. Peter tells his

readers that God isn't slow. He's deliberately giving us time and opportunity to trust Christ, repent of our sin, and live by faith. Friend, if you woke up this morning (and I can safely assume that you did), then God is showing you his mercy. If you are in Christ, you get to glory in the gospel even now—what a blessing! If you do not know the Lord, he is giving you time right now so that you may yet repent and believe in Christ crucified in your place.

### How Long, O Lord?

God's patience is a grace to us, which is particularly striking in light of the grievous sin of abortion. A tide of innocent blood sweeps over the globe and cries out from the earth. When we look at the statistics of abortions across the world, our hearts stagger. So many of us close our eyes to the truth, and so many of us are content with callous layers of apathy on our hearts. So many of us feel utterly hopeless, to the point that we neglect to pray.

We marvel at the Lord's extraordinary, grace-full patience and worship him. He is the epitome of patient love. Recall how Yahweh delivered the Israelites from Egypt. With plagues of blood-rivers, lice, frogs, hail, and the angel of death, he punished the Egyptians for their sin, but from all of these judgments he spared the Israelites. When all of that was said and done, it was through doorways covered in the blood of the Passover Lamb and through walls of water at the Red Sea that Yahweh led the children of Abraham to safety. One would assume that such mercy on God's part in drawing them out of slavery would draw out of their hearts a never-ending current of gratitude. But the human heart is poisoned with corruption. When faced with a trial at the rock of Meribah, the people failed the test . . . miserably. Instead of praise and prayer, complaining and spite flowed out of their hearts.

By his perfect nature and for the sake of his holy name, God cannot tolerate sin. So what would he do? Long-suffering in his patience, not willing that any should perish, Yahweh stood before the rock and received the judgment blow for the people in their place. As God symbolically received the just punishment for the people's sin, life-giving water gushed out of the rock. There at the rock of Meribah, Yahweh gave birth to his people. Sin was judged, and new life was given.

### His Life for Ours

"You were unmindful of the Rock that bore you, and you forgot the God who gave you birth." This song was to be on the lips of God's people and echoing in their hearts as a witness and a warning. Don't forget God! Don't *ever* forget God!

Yahweh's willing self-sacrifice for sinners should give us pause. Who are we that he would love us? Who are we that he would pour out his grace upon grace? The answer is not that we are lovely, but that God is love. He is God; he defines love. When we love, we are to love like he loves; he isn't constrained to love us in the way we define love. Praise God for that!

This is why arguments for abortion are diametrically opposed to the heart of the gospel. Yahweh could have struck down the nation of Israel or "aborted" Israel there at the rock, destroying the people with just judgment. Instead, God symbolically received the judgment they deserved in an act that foreshadowed the redemption we receive through the cross, where the God-man experienced death so that we might experience new life.

We gasp and cover our mouths with our hands at the number of abortions committed in our day. It hits close to home for many of us personally. Those numbers represent *our* babies, *our* nephews and nieces, *our* friends and neighbors' children—gone.

Our hearts are heavy, burdened by despair, guilt, and hopelessness. But the gospel gives life and hope! Jesus has borne the guilt of every abortion committed by those whose hope is in him.

Jesus was cut off from his Father on the cross so he could give life to those who have cut off children from life. Jesus writhed under the birth pangs of judgment to remove the bloodguilt of people who have taken life. For the joy set before him, Jesus willingly paid the price to bear spiritual children and redeem them out of this wicked world. Abortion perverts both mercy and justice by means of child sacrifice: your life for mine. But the self-sacrifice of Jesus exemplifies both mercy and justice perfectly: *my life for theirs*.

It should not surprise us that when our culture rejects the gospel, men and women blind themselves and try to escape suffering and sacrifice. In motherhood, a woman mimics the grand narrative of redemption, as she tastes a thousand deaths to give the child life day in and day out. The heartbeat of a birth mother's sacrifice and emotional journey after she has borne a child for adoption is *my life for his*. It is the grace and mercy of God that carries a birth mother through this kind of self-sacrifice and suffering. Jesus said and showed that "greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Only the message of the gospel offers forgiveness for abortion. Only the gospel is able to empower sacrificial love when we're faced with the choice to take life or nurture it. Only the gospel can reverse the course of the rising number of abortions in our lands.

