

From life to Life to LIFE

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It has been one week since the sudden, unexpected loss of my son Ezra. Ezra, 15 months old, was the perfect piece to complete our puzzle. He was the fourth child, second son. Two parents, two girls, two boys. A match for everyone; multiple playmate combinations. Since last Tuesday at two when the call came in, the questions have ravaged my mind like a relentless river flowing from melted snow. Ever flowing, not ceasing; an end is not in sight.

Hell came to Earth March 1st around two in the afternoon for the Smith family. Once the nightmare became reality, the discussions and decisions that had to be had were on onslaught to our desire to hold our son. To grieve in peace. To cry out to the Almighty, All-powerful God and scream "Why?" Life felt like I had loaded my family onto an out of control train, headed for a bridge that I knew was out, and I am the one driving.

Yet, in the midst of the chaos and crying, a Word from the Lord pierced through the darkness to throw a lifeline in the river. A line that I am holding onto with all that I have. Friday night was the Viewing and I had the honor of driving both of my daughters to the funeral home. What came from my heart to them at that moment, was from the Holy Spirit to me. The Comforter did come as promised.

In the beginning all you know and all you believe is right around you. You can touch it; you can taste it; you can hear it; you can see it. The world is perfect as far as you know. As you grow you begin to become acutely aware that there is "something" more outside of what you can see. You experience the feeling of movement, but not moving yourself. You experience sounds that do not come from you. You start to recognize the same voices again and again. Your world is getting smaller.

You are beginning to fill up the space that you are living in. You are now fighting against the forces you cannot see; looking for more space. You push against the wall; something pushes back on you. You try to get comfortable and something reorders your world.

Suddenly, without your permission, your world begins to change dramatically. You are pushed and squeezed in a way that is not natural to what you have known. You are moved to a position, you may not want to be in. You are forced down a path that you did not ask to travel. Life as you know it is over and something drastic is happening. You have no control. If you could stop it, you would. You remember the days of peace and happiness. You long to return to those memories, but it is too late. Life as you know it is over. You have left your mother's womb.

Life now is totally different, yet quite the same. You taste, see, hear, feel like you did before. You recognize voices and people. You grow and learn and laugh and live. You have good days and great days. You get set into your routine; set into your ways. You stretch out your area as you did before and Life is good.

You still experience the feeling of something more out there. There are things that happen, which have no explanation. Things that you can feel in your spirit, but words do not accurately describe them. You have questions and you seek answers, but Life is Life. You have a job, a family, a plan, a future. You have things to do and places you feel lead to minister.

Then suddenly, without your permission, your world begins to change dramatically. You are pushed and squeezed in a way that is not natural to what you have known. You are moved to a position, you may not want to be in. You are forced down a path that you did not ask to travel. Life as you know it is over and something drastic is happening. You have no control. If you could stop it, you would. You remember the days of peace and happiness. You long to return to those memories, but it is too late. Life as you know it is over. A child has died.

The problem with this version of Life's events is that it can only be experienced by Life's players as it is being played. There are no do-overs, no take-backs, no mulligans. We are playing from the wrong side. We are looking at our past, because that is all we know. The future is not clear and comfort is in clarity. Confusion causes concern. What if we took the same two scenarios we started with and told the story from the "other side?" Rather than telling the story from those in the game, telling the story from those watching the events unfold.

For nine months, the parents carefully monitor the mother and the baby. Is mom sleeping enough? Does mom drink enough water? Are there GMO's in this or that? How much caffeine can I have? How much Chick-fil-a is too much Chick-fil-a when someone is pregnant? The preparations are made. The rooms are painted; toys bought. Towels are monogrammed. Everything is ready. The only thing missing is the baby.

Finally the time has arrived for the baby to come. The parents are so excited and so nervous. The grandparents come to town. Relatives from across the country begin to wait by their phones for the first pictures. The occasion is a joyous celebration. The news of arrival is created with cheers and with tears. The parents are excited to see the baby, hold the baby, talk to the baby, and take care of the baby. They want what is only best for the baby.

Yet, for the baby to get to the parents, the baby has to go through the "event" that the baby does not understand and quite frankly does not want to go through. The baby must be changed in position, location, and destination. What a paradox. The parents know the event and are good with the baby going through the event. They want the baby to go through the event. The parents are anxious for the baby to get through the event. The baby does not know the event and does not want to go through the event.

Is this not the same for us when we move to the next phase: life to Life to LIFE?

Life transitions us from the womb to the Earth Life to real LIFE. From where I sit right now, I hate playing this game. I can only see the pieces that I have seen and those pieces say I have lost my son. My family has been put through an event that we did not ask to go through, to a place we did not want to go. We are now not understanding what event just happened.

Yet, from the other side of the veil, what does it look like? Does it not look like the delivery room of a newborn? Are there not people waiting to see my son upon his arrival? Scripture tells us that preparations were made for him. That a place was prepared for him. Rooms painted, beds made, food ready. Just as family gathers for the birth of a newborn, doesn't our eternal family gather for a welcoming to a new reborn?

The first to hold the baby is the doctor guiding the baby from the womb to the world. Will not our Great Physician do the same for my son? Guiding him from one world to the Real World. The next to hold the baby would be the mother and the father. So as my son Ezra crosses into the eternal family, out from the crowd stepped out those who were so excited to have him.

Scriptures speaks of a "Cloud of Witnesses" watching us, rooting for us, cheering us on. His grandfathers are there. His grandmothers are there. His cousins are there. People were waiting for him, just like family wait for a newborn.

Christ says we see through a veil. "All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely." Things become clearer as we move from glory in the womb to Glory on Earth to the GLORY of LIFE with Christ.

What if we don't see through the veil anymore? What if we tried to look not with the eyes that have failed to show us the real world since our conception? What if we actually tried to look with the eyes of faith?

From the womb to the Earth requires a traumatic event that you cannot understand as long as you are in the womb. The only way understand it is go through it. The traumatic event that took my son from me cannot be understood by me as long as I am on this side of the event. Even now, as he runs and laughs on that side of the event, he is waiting patiently and longingly and expectantly for his family to go through the event to join him on the other side. The Real LIFE.