

Getting Through a Miscarriage

Steve Burchett

Sadly, miscarriages are common. Experts say that about 20% of recognized pregnancies end in a miscarriage, but the actual percentage is higher if one includes those that happen without the mother knowing.

Members of my church recently went through a miscarriage, and it brought back memories of the three my wife and I have endured. The first stands out above the others because we learned about it at an ultrasound when we didn't hear a heartbeat. "I'm so sorry," the doctor softly said. Those words were kind, but our real comfort through each miscarriage came from other sources:



God and His promises

"The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away." (Job 1:21)

I had heard (and said) that verse numerous times at funerals, but it became very dear to me the first time my wife miscarried. "God has done this," I reminded myself, which doesn't imply that God is unloving. Scripture declares God's goodness and that He always does what is best for believers (Ps. 100:5; Rom. 8:28). Seeing God as both sovereign and good gives hope to the hurting believer—The Lord reigns, so He *has* "taken away" the child, and He is good, so he has loving purposes for not keeping the baby alive. The tears rightly flow, but hope remains.

There is a level of mystery in the ways of God in a miscarriage, but looking back, I affirm with the apostle Paul that since God gave His Son for His people, He will certainly give them everything they need (Rom. 8:32), even when they lose a baby (Rom. 8:37-39). Because Christ was with us in the trial, my wife and I never lacked anything we needed, and we were able to say with Job, "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

The church

The hugs, prayers, and tears (Rom. 12:15) of other believers are precious to the suffering saint. I especially appreciated the meals the ladies of our church provided. These were not necessary, but they were tangible demonstrations of love that allowed my wife much needed rest.

I have heard people going through trials say, "I think I'll skip the church meeting this Sunday." There may be a physical reason why that is reasonable, but God has given us the church to comfort us in our affliction (2 Cor. 1:4) and to direct us to our Savior (Col. 3:16).

Hymns

Be still, my soul: your God will undertake
To guide the future as He has the past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.
(Katharina von Schlegel, "Be Still My Soul")

The themes of the Lord's sovereignty and providence in the above hymn might strengthen those facing a miscarriage. There is no command in Scripture to listen to hymns as a way of enduring suffering, but I speak from experience: Sound theology centered on the greatness of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ brings a right perspective and joy. I'm not against short choruses that repeat simple truths, but after each miscarriage, I was helped significantly by theologically rich hymns.

One another

I can only speak about this from a husband's perspective. After the third miscarriage, which I heard about over the phone, I remember thinking, "What am I going to say to my bride when I see her face to face?" Thankfully, I didn't preach a sermon to her on the sovereignty of God. Our discussion on that subject would, necessarily, come later. By God's grace, I said exactly what she needed to hear: "I love you."

Husband, you cannot fully grasp what your wife is going through both physiologically and emotionally when she has a miscarriage, but you should remind her that you cherish her and will do whatever is necessary to provide for her needs. And when your grieving process is over, and hers is not, remember Paul's words: "Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them" (Col. 3:19).

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