

The Lovelight Stories

PODCAST

Ep: 10 | OUR STORY: MISCARRIAGE AND LOSS WITH STEPHANIE JACOBS SHOW TRANSCRIPT

Please know this transcript has not been edited for quality in grammar, etc. We wish to be socially-inclusive and provide another means of accessing our podcast to those who have difficulty hearing, so please enjoy if that's you! 😊

Well hello there, Lovely! Welcome back to the LS Podcast, where we create space for real personal stories to be seen, heard, and understood.

If you haven't yet, be sure to rate the show, follow, and share it with your family and friends!

After a very unexpected 2-month hiatus from this show, I'm so happy to be back! Today's episode is a solo episode discussing a very difficult topic...I'm finally opening up and sharing about the miscarriage my husband, Sam, and I experienced earlier this year. We actually initially planned to do this episode together, but as we sat down to record, he just wasn't ready and couldn't do it. I would have loved to have him join me for such an important story we share together, but I honor and respect where he's at in the grieving process.

So what I decided to do is first write out this episode, so that I can capture what I really want to share with you. It's an emotional topic, and without Sam here to do it dual-interview-style, I thought this would be the best way to share what's on my heart.

But before we dive-in, I want to fill-you-in on what's been happening here the last 2 months and why we took such a sudden break on this show. It has certainly been a whirlwind!

Right about the time The Lovelight Stories Podcast was launched out into the world, I found out I was pregnant again! Yay! Praise God! We were surprised and overjoyed at the little babe God was blessing us with so soon after loss. I know that's not the case for everyone, so we truly feel so blessed.

And along with new baby, came new symptoms, and wow! In what seemed like overnight, morning sickness knocked me right off my feet! It was much more severe than the first pregnancy and I was totally not expecting it to be so difficult. Basically, I didn't do much of anything for 2 full months - I was unable to keep food and liquids down, I was losing weight, and often sleeping up to 15-20 hours a day. Which seems crazy! If it was any more severe I would have been in the hospital. And I know this isn't necessarily uncommon - some of you probably had it even worse, or just as bad. Others of you are probably feeling lucky right about now that this wasn't you! And thank goodness for that! For me, I was just basically trying to survive and keep our little babe healthy. There would have been absolutely no-way I could produce this show, so I just took a break.

In the meantime, we made it up to MN for the summer, and we've been continuing to work on projects (well, Sam has been working on projects) to restore this lake property into something we can share with family and friends, and of course, our new baby BOY! Yes, he's a little boy! We had a sweet gender reveal with close family on the same beach I grew up on at the lake! We're so excited to watch our babies enjoy summers here doing all the things I did as a little girl!

At the time of this first episode back, I'm 18 weeks pregnant and starting to feel SO MUCH better, and I couldn't be more excited to begin podcasting again! However, I'm still not feeling completely well, so I've decided to launch new episodes every 2 weeks instead of weekly for the time-being. While I'm starting to feel better, I'm not totally out of the weeds and I want to make sure I can commit to producing a quality show that's physically doable in this season. As we go, we'll re-evaluate to see if it's working for you too! I'm just so anxious to get back to podcasting, and this feels like a great compromise to try! I hope you're excited to listen-in again too!

And I definitely was not planning on mixing a baby announcement with our intimate story of miscarriage, but it's just how things have fallen into place. I'm simply sharing our real-time experience of how it's actually happening for us. And it's becoming this beautiful story of restoration and God's faithfulness - so why wouldn't we share!?

We experienced deep grief and pain and are now rejoicing at the rainbow baby coming our way! And again, I know it doesn't necessarily happen this way for everyone, so I want to honor each and every story through this episode - whether you've experienced both loss and the joy of a new baby, or you're still waiting for your rainbow.

In a similar way, I don't want this pregnancy to overshadow the loss, because the truth is, for anyone who's experienced a loss, it's not something you really ever get over and forget about. You learn to live with it. This baby doesn't take away the sorrow of our first.

At the same time, I've tried to be careful not to let past loss take away the joy of this miracle growing inside of me - which at times has been hard to do. I feel sad to say it took me longer to feel attached to this baby, because I know what it's like to lose one, and the night before each appointment I get anxious. All the feelings flood back in and I have to intentionally rationalize myself back to peace, ultimately leaving it all in God's hands. But even though I've had to battle some fears, overall I feel like I've been able to embrace the joy of this pregnancy so far!

Again, this is just another example of the battle of darkness and light that co-exists in our world and life stories. There's a place for both...And it certainly makes for a more beautiful redemption story, don't ya think?

So, as we dive in together today, you'll hear our personal experience of walking through an unexpected miscarriage to both: gain an understanding of those with a similar story, AND feel seen in yours. I hope to honor each and every story of miscarriage and infant loss with this episode, whether it's similar or drastically different.

With that in mind, let's dive in!

It all started with a surprise pregnancy last November! We've been told for years that it would be difficult for me to get pregnant, so we were preparing for a potentially difficult journey. To find out we were unexpectedly expecting was such a joyful gift! One evening I came home from a friends house, and as I was getting ready for bed, I all of the sudden out of nowhere had this feeling that I was pregnant. I hadn't been thinking about it at all, and in one second I found myself

saying "there's a baby in there." It truly felt as if God was telling me or something! The next morning I took a pregnancy test, and sure enough, it said "pregnant". I didn't believe it, so took about 5 tests, ha! And spent the rest of the day thanking God, journaling, and walking around the house giggling in disbelief. Sam was on a work trip and was scheduled to come home that evening, so I had the whole day to plan how I was going to tell him. He was shocked!

We had our first appointment the week of Christmas, and decided to tell close family, but I felt a sense of hesitation about it all, and to this day I still don't know why - it's almost as if a part of me knew or something? or it could have just been that it was so early yet. I'm not sure.

We had a healthy ultrasound the first week in January and the next week we left for our annual life planning retreat together at Amelia Island. This year, I planned everything out around the baby of course, spending extra time relishing in the fact that we were going to be parents and anticipating the big change ahead. We even had announcement photos done on the beach - taking pictures with a girl and boy balloon, because it was still too early to know, but we had an appointment scheduled in 2 weeks to find out! We just planned to share whatever picture it turned out to be!

And while we were there, I had an eery dream that I lost the baby, and it stuck with me that next day...but I eventually shook it off, focusing on the joy of pregnancy instead.

Little did we know that next week after we returned from Florida Sam would also have a dream, and that's when everything began to happen...

He woke up that morning from a dream in which he was sure it was God speaking to him, telling him that the baby had significant genetic disorders and it was going to be too much for him to handle, so the baby was no-longer with us...

It freaked him out, and he went to work without telling me until I called him later that afternoon to come home because I was bleeding...

That night was difficult, as we sat in limbo unsure of what we were going to learn the next morning. I think we were mostly in denial though, as we kept telling ourselves that it was probably fine. We even decided Sam would stay at work and I'd go alone...looking back, I wish he'd gone with me...I'll never forget the words "I'm sorry, there is no heartbeat". I silently sucked in my tears, as they ushered me into a private waiting room for the doctor. It was a quick appointment where they confirmed the embryo had stopped growing 2 weeks prior, and they sent me home with medicine to help pass the baby.

I honestly don't remember much of what happened other than the feelings and reactions we had that day. I was numb. People would call to ask how I was doing and all I could say was "I don't know. I feel numb." But I started to wake up to the fact that it was real when the physical pain began to happen and my body went into labor-like contractions. The absolute hardest part of the whole experience for me was the emotional experience of passing the actual tissue - I won't of course share any more details than that - but I'll just say, the experience of watching your body expel what would have been your baby is so hard.

Not to mention, the physical pain was horrible! I bled for over 2 months and would wake up in inconsolable pain in the middle of the night for 2 weeks after the miscarriage. I remember thinking how I had no idea this is what it was like! People don't seem to talk about it much, and I

just thought it happened and was over. It felt like the ongoing symptoms were a cruel reminder of what had happened and held me captive in that place of grief.

As I started to move through the grief, one of the other hardest things for me to grasp was the realization that for 2 weeks I was relishing in the bliss of being pregnant, while the baby had already passed...those photos we took on the beach...my baby was inside me but not living. And I had no idea.

And now feels like a good time to say, I know that not everyone believes it would have been a human life at this point in the pregnancy, but as a Catholic, I believe life begins at conception, and therefore, I'm simply sharing my experience today.

It felt like life was turned upside down. All of the thoughts, plans, dreams, the clean products I was using, the clothes I was buying/not buying - it was all gone instantly.

And interestingly, I struggled with my plans changing. I was angry. Everything was seemingly going to work out perfectly. We were going to have our August baby at the lake near family. I'd worked out my podcasting schedule, maternity leave time, our finance budget, everything - my entire life planning weekend felt like a waste, and I was angry. Yet I was also feeling guilty for feeling angry, because I knew my plans were trivial and it didn't feel rational! I guess it was all just part of moving through the grief process, and I know that now.

Even though Sam didn't join me in this episode, I asked him if I could share some of his feelings and reactions too. For Sam, it didn't feel real right away, and once it did, all he could think about was the life that was lost - what our baby would have been like, what he would have looked like, what he would have done in his life...so many things we'd never know.

At the same time, he was tremendously touched by his dream. It wasn't a normal dream, and he knows without a doubt God was speaking to him as a way to prepare him for what was about to happen. In fact, we both have felt so covered by God's mercy and grace through that experience. It gave us a level of peace we wouldn't have otherwise, and whenever I found my mind wandering and questioning whether it was something I did, ate, or didn't do, the reminder of God's gift of understanding took that away. It's helped us both cope with losing our first baby. I no-longer feel anger, but gratitude for such grace and mercy given to us. We know our baby is in Heaven with Jesus, and there's nothing more we could hope for our child!

There's a number of other things that helped us on the path to healing too. I'm going to share them here, so they can be helpful ideas in the instance that you or someone close to you has to walk this unfortunate path...

- First, we honored the dignity of our baby with a cremation, formal funeral, and burial in a memorial garden. This felt right for us, and also created a support system with our faith community.

- We named our baby "Finley Jacobs", a gender-neutral name, even though we really felt like it was a boy!

- We surrounded ourselves with community - One surprising outcome of sharing our loss publicly, was that it gave others permission to step out and say "me too". I was surprised at how many people reached out who'd been going through the same. It actually even created space for a few of us to get together for walks and coffee to talk about our stories and heal together. Some sweet friends even brought dinner, sent flowers and other momentos, and took time to just hang out together too. We felt so covered by prayers and loving support of so many! Sharing about

loss isn't for everyone, but if it's something you ever feel called to do, I'd really suggest just doing it! It brings people together and is healing - After all, we were made for community!

- I tried to also give myself time to grieve, spending a lot of time in prayer, reading devotionals, and reading about Heaven. I started a journal too, with letters to my baby Finley where I processed feelings, captured moments, and wrote prayers to God. I still write our baby letters occasionally and plan to continue doing so, because he is forever a part of our family and I don't ever want to feel like our family is whole without him. I long for the day we can see his sweet face in Heaven!

- If you're curious, my favorite book about Heaven is called "Imagine Heaven: Near-Death Experiences, God's Promises, and the Exhilarating Future That Awaits You" by John Burke

- And the devotional I loved reading is called "Loved Baby: 31 Devotions Helping You Grieve and Cherish Your Child after Pregnancy Loss" - A Devotional Book on How to Cope, Mourn and Heal after Losing a Baby, by Sarah Philpott

- Lastly, momentos of our baby has really helped me feel close to him. I bought a necklace with his name, little angel wings, and birthstone that I still wear almost every day. I bought personalized watercolor art, and made him a scrapbook of his short life too. Friends and family also gave us sweet momentos - which was so thoughtful and we truly cherish them!

Of course, there's so much more I could share, but for the sake of trying to not overshare, I'll stop there. If you haven't experienced this type of loss yourself, I hope our story, while it is only our experience, helps you to better understand some of the thoughts and feelings, sensitivities and grief, parents can experience when going through miscarriage or loss of an infant. Until it happened to us, I didn't fully understand it, and I think it's partly because it's not widely talked about publicly very often - so I hope this helps in that way!

If you have had the unfortunate experience of miscarriage or something similar, I'm so sorry. Maybe some of your reactions were similar, or maybe not. Regardless, I hope this episode helps to validate your own feelings and experience with grief.

And if after listening to this episode, you feel compelled to share your own story of miscarriage, loss, or grief on the podcast, check out the show notes for this episode, where you can submit your own story!

And before we wrap-up, I want to invite you into community around this topic. Like I mentioned earlier, I don't think we have the opportunity to hear about miscarriage and infant loss enough, and therefore don't really understand it or know how to support those close to us who may be going through it. At the same time, getting into community was one of the biggest things that helped me move through grief and heal! Therefore, I want to create space to both share about our own experiences and heal in community, while also providing an opportunity to learn from others' experiences too! So, I'm inviting you to join me in an intimate online gathering where we can share about our experiences while also discussing how best to support a friend/family member who might go through something similar - this means whether you've experienced miscarriage yourself or not, you're invited! I'll facilitate time for both groups to share and also time for dialog across everyone. It will be an intimate, safe space and not recorded for privacy purposes. There's no cost either. If you're interested, go to the show notes for this episode and submit your name by sending me a quick message! If there's enough interest, we'll gather at a time best for everyone!

Well Lovelies, I think that's about it! Darkness and light are both part of our story. It's one close to our hearts that we chose to share for the sake of honoring our baby Finley, and propelling more awareness and understanding. For anyone walking a similar path, my heart is with you.