

## Letter from Author

Throughout the Old Testament, our forefathers would build altars for the Lord God. They often built these altars after they had experienced God in a merciful and compassionate way. For example, in Genesis 8:19, after Noah, his family, and all the animals exited the ark, Noah built an altar and sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord, thanking Him for saving them from the flood.

In Genesis 12:7, “Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’ So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.” Abram built the altar because the Lord had appeared to him and blessed him.

When Jesus died on the cross and paid the final penalty for all our sins, as Christians we no longer have a need to sacrifice or burn offerings at an altar. Jesus was that sacrifice, that offering; He paid for it all. In that though, we as Christians have to guard our hearts from becoming self-righteous and having an attitude of entitlement. Since we no longer “need” to build an altar for sacrifice when the Lord has been merciful or had great compassion on us, we don’t. We don’t exert ourselves physically in thanksgiving for our Lord and what He has done in our lives. For me, I know the amount of thanksgiving I pour out to Him is greatly diminished. In the Scriptures, after an altar was built, the men of old experienced an intimate time with the Lord, communicating with Him. We are set

free in Christ, and in relationship with Him so we can experience an intimate conversation with Him from anywhere, anytime, without the need to build an altar. However, we can potentially miss out on the blessing of intimacy with Christ that comes from physically dedicating ourselves to a service like building an altar. The kind of service that flows from a heart filled with gratitude for what He alone has done.

An altar served as a reminder of what God had done. Years after having built an altar, these prophets of old would be reminded of the great works and love of the Lord when they came upon these “holy places.” Often times, they built alters after being delivered and saved from the hands of an enemy or saved from events such as the great flood. Many altars were built to remind them of God’s acts of deliverance.

The Lord has shown Himself a great deliverer in my births as He provided physical strength to endure and persevere. The Lord took something that could have been simply a means to an end (pain in return for the blessing of a child) and He redeemed my experiences, making them meaningful milestones in my spiritual journey. *Redeeming Childbirth* is my way of thanking the Lord for how He has blessed me. It is my altar to remember the great things He continues to do in the lives of those who love Him. For it shall remind me of the works of the Lord in my life and for His saving grace, both in birth and eternal life.

When I was a young girl, my pastor, Pastor Roluffs, used to say, “We are blessed to be a blessing.” That has stuck with me my whole life. Blessed to be a blessing. The Lord blessed me in my births, now it’s my turn to bless others and bless His holy name. God cares for us so much that He wants us to benefit from having a deeper understanding of His goodness by experiencing His grace and who He is. But He also allows us to learn lessons for the benefit of others as well. We are blessed to be a blessing. His blessings are not necessarily just for us, but to be shared.

Out of a deep desire and passion to fulfill an act of obedience to my Father in heaven, I am stepping out in this journey to write for Him. For years I have felt a yearning to share with you my personal experience of connecting with God in childbirth. Shortly after I gave birth to my first daughter in 2000, I immediately felt His call to share the gift of understanding with others.

After every subsequent birth I felt empowered by God to write, but the reality of my humanity humbled me, creating doubt that anyone would listen. So I journaled, studied the Word, prayed and waited, knowing I had so much more to learn from the Lord. Years passed, I had more babies, and every time I felt the Lord tugging at me to stand up and share a message of empowerment and hope. A message that I frequently, needed to remind myself of but felt it was not yet His timing.

During all those years it was my feelings of inadequacy that prevented me from taking action. I would get discouraged and listen to those whispers of doubt in my mind saying that women didn't need this message.

Who am I, Lord?, I thought. It finally occurred to me that while humility is good, not taking action is not. Especially when that action is a calling by God. The Lord has made it abundantly clear to me that even though I still feel inadequate and am equally aware of my own need for growth, He has called me to this act of obedience at this specific time.

Titus 2:3-5 is a compelling word from the Lord I cannot ignore:

“Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.”

We are all called to minister to one another, encourage, hold accountable, and teach one another. Am I qualified to teach? I am an older sister in the Lord to some. A woman who has naturally birthed six babies so far. I am in the trenches with you, and so desire for you to be blessed by pregnancy, labor, and birth like I and so many other women have been.

In an attempt to purposefully mentor women toward seeking God and inviting Him into their birthing experiences, I am excited to journey through the Scriptures with you on topics such as:

- What redeeming childbirth means and what it looks like?
- Lies women believe and false teachings about birth.
- Fears that bind us.
- Preparing your heart, soul, and mind for birth and motherhood.
- Experiencing the presence of the Lord in birth through prayer and worship.
- Being a missionary wherever you are, even in the midst of childbirth.
- Engaging birth with your spouse in a way that strengthens your marriage.
- Leaving a legacy with your children with regard to pregnancy and birth.
- Surrendering idols concerning birth under the headship of Christ

I am also very blessed and excited to share many different personal testimonies of like-minded mothers who have been blessed in one way or another in pregnancy and birth. My hope is that these testimonies will be an inspiration and encouragement, as well as impress upon you a thirst and hunger to seek God and His vision for your unique childbirth. May you be inspired with a new vision for the endless possibilities of what God may want to reveal through your birth.

Redeeming childbirth is not something we can do, it is something the Lord wants to do. We just need to surrender to Him. It will look different for everyone as we

are all unique women on our different journeys with the Lord, but we can all purpose to glorify Him through giving birth. Will you pray with me as we journey through Redeeming Childbirth together?

Jesus, thank you for these women you have called your daughters. Thank you for their desire to serve You and glorify You in their lives, their labor, and deliveries. Lord, thank You for blessing my heart, mind, body, and soul through childbirth. Thank You for giving me a deep conviction to share it with others. May You be glorified and the church be unified. I pray no woman would feel judged, but rather be encouraged to pursue You in every experience in life, including her pregnancy and birth. May they each experience Your presence and be strengthened in their faith and relationship with You. Lord, use this time in our lives during our pregnancies to prepare us for motherhood. Help us accept our duties and responsibilities as Christian women in this day and age graciously. Help us to speak in love and build one another up. Lord, thank You for this privilege to serve You and honor You for what You have done for us. Thank you for blessing me with this message and providing the time and words to share all that is here. May You bless these women, their families, and may they have God glorifying stories and testimonies to share in the future. To You be the glory forever and ever, Amen.