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Sanctity of Life Sunday  
New Life community Church  
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## THE STORY OF US

Have you ever wondered what makes up the essence of me? Not you thinking of what in the world is Denise thinking, but you asking what in the world are you yourself thinking makes up the essence of yourself. Do you ever look around this world and think what is beyond my eyesight? What is the true reality around me?

It sounds surreal impossible to describe, unless you talk to someone else who has been wondering the same thing. Then, it's like they can finish your sentences, and can almost speak for you in agreement with your thoughts and deepest beatings of your heart.

This is what I am hoping for when I tell you the "Story of Us."

Bill and I were one of those love stories you hear about and think, isn't that nice. We both really, to this day, remember it as love at first sight. I can remember even what his shoes looked like. We always wanted to have children. Whenever we saw couples with kids, we would talk about what our children would look like, and how we couldn't wait to have a family. After we were married, and we were on the 5<sup>-year</sup> plan so we could be financially stable, we had 4 children in 8 glorious years. We really had a blast with those kids. Whenever I could I would share the Scriptures with my kids, like when we were at the park or sitting on the floor in the living room, or teaching them how to pray. So over the years, I would do little Bible studies with them. I especially enjoyed reading my last two, that were boys, the Proverbs in the morning while they ate, and then we would pray together to put on the armor to live through another day.

My daughters were gone, one married, one in college, my oldest son leaving at 0-dark-100 in the morning for high school, so that left Bradley and I for some one-on-one. When I heard about a 5-day study for teens called "Wonderfully Made", I ordered it from Focus on the Family, my staple of marriage and family what-to-do's over the formative years of my kids. We were doing the lesson on the sanctity of life and we were reading stories of women who had tough situations, but had not aborted their babies. My son got real quiet for a minute and asked me if I knew anyone who had ever gotten an abortion. I asked him why, and he told me about a girl he knew who thought she was pregnant. I asked him what he thought she should do, and he said he knew that she should not have an abortion, but she couldn't face the thought of her father knowing. She said she was so ashamed, and that her father might do something to the boy involved.

We continued reading the stories, and I told him about a 19 year old girl who was raised in a Christian home, where her father was the Chairman of the Finance committee, and her mother prepared the communion once a month for their church. She accepted the Lord as her Savior at 11 years old, and read through the whole Bible by the time she was 12. The things in her home didn't match what they looked like in church on Sunday mornings, and she started looking for the love her mother and father were unable to give her in the boys around her who found her to be

very attractive. By the time she was 16, she was very successful in finding love from many sources, and she turned her face further away from the Father in Heaven she had known and loved in her youth. She was very successful in school, earning every award possible, and receiving approval from everyone around her, as beautiful inside and outside. By 18 years of age, she was medicating herself with alcohol and sex whenever she could on the weekends, but never enough to get into trouble, or that anyone would find out. She was Salutatorian of her high school class, and knew by October of her senior year that she was accepted to a somewhat prestigious out-of-state university. She met the lover of her life the September of her Freshman year. They were going to get married eventually, so she continued her "party" lifestyle. An amazing thing happened; she found she had an affinity for the French language, the language of love, after all! Her French teacher told her about a Junior Year Abroad program. So, in the beginning of her sophomore year, she applied and of course was accepted into the program. Wow! She was to leave the next September. That January of 1973 was like a thrill ride. A dream come true, to live in Europe, travel, her dreams of maybe making a new life were laid out before her. She and her now fiancé celebrated her new life! But a month later when her period was late, she couldn't bear the news that she was pregnant. She wouldn't hear of it. Her future was set, and nothing would get in the way of her happiness. The clinic told her some exciting news. Just the previous month, on January 22, 1973, legislation called *Roe v. Wade* had passed to make abortion legal and available for a girl just like her! They told her it wasn't even a baby, that it was just cells forming. After all, she was only 5 weeks pregnant when she found out. She called the number they gave her that day and arranged for the abortion in Washington, D.C. Two of her friends, one of whom had an abortion in high school drove her up to D.C. She cried the whole way home, and never told her parents.

By that time Bradley was staring at me with his mouth hanging open. I looked at him, and I said, yes, honey, I know someone who has had an abortion. He asked me if his brother and sisters knew. And then we stalked about his friend, and I told him what he could say to her, and how he could comfort her. And I told him to guard her secret because she trusted him.

Well, I guess it's pretty obvious that the girl was me. I'm now 52 years old and I took a risk in sharing this with you. In the book "Captivating", I read a monumental quote: "Then the time came when the risk it took to remain right in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom."

God has been preparing me for my blossoming over many decades through many people he has placed in my life, through his Scriptures and through circumstances that have come my way. I don't believe in coincidences, so standing here today is where I need to be. God is calling me to put a face on the pain of those who have had abortions. In this room at the grocery store, in your office, at the stoplight, 1 out of 3 women have had an abortion. The majority of them would tell you they were "religious people." When the subject of abortion comes up our heart beat quickens, we stop breathing and fear grips us that you might know we are one of those. At a baby shower, when a baby is born to one of us, or when we can't have a baby, we hide our grief in fear that we will be condemned. Because you see, we live in a prison of shame and denial and regret. We don't like to talk about the one who is feeding us lies and is whispering in our ears that we are not worthy to live with joy and in freedom. But we need to face Satan with power and truth. I am here to proclaim freedom to the prisoners of abortion.

I wrote a poem about my journey to freedom. My inspiration is Isaiah 42:1-9. It is no coincidence that Rob drew us a picture of Paul in a roman dungeon last week. God makes a preparation for his Word.

### The Prison Cell

I stand alone in my prison cell  
Wondering how long my sentence will last  
The regrets of my yesterdays strewn all around  
The cell crowded with the same of my past.

The pain of my sorrow thickens the walls  
My self—pity splashing the floor in tears  
The memories of each event played out  
Like an epic of war lasting years.

The "what-ifs" arrive in a bucket  
Thrown into the pool of regrets  
The "should-haves" form a line at the door  
And they are welcomed in lest I forget.

The party is a marvelous success  
Grief and Despair show up for the bash  
The warden is ushering them in  
When an old friend decides to crash.

The One who promised me comfort  
Heard my cries from deep in my soul  
He had bought me when I was young  
And I had trouble giving Him the control.

He had watched me through every morning  
And He had cradled me through each night  
But I was too focused on me  
To see the Savior holding me tight.

He took the keys from the warden.  
He banished Grief and Despair  
He picked up each of my regrets  
And summoned the "what-ifs", pair by pair.

He told the "should-haves" to vanish  
He emptied the cell of my shame  
He gathered each tear as a triumph  
And my sorrows did each one He claim.

Then He handed me the keys to freedom  
And said to His Kingdom I belong  
He's conquered these things I held onto  
And the door to the cell was unlocked, all along.

I wrote that Feb. 26, 2005. God has been preparing me for this very day.

So, my desire is that our hearts beat in unison, and you can finish my sentences for me. That we have a vision beyond this surreal world around us, and we delight in each other's company. There is a Savior that delights in you. He longs for you to ask Him to set you free. We are called to seek out those in the dungeons, to bring them refreshment, and to not be ashamed of their chains. But first we have to walk out of our prisons. I am thankful and praise God that He has shown me that I am His Sacred Delight.

You are His Sacred Delight, too.

Sacred Delight  
By Sunday Drive  
Words and music by Westley Willett and Matt Huesmann

Did you smile when You made the moon  
And gave the sky its color  
Did creation dance in rhythm to  
Your song of life, I wonder  
Did the angels know you knew my name  
Before I existed  
Did You tell them out of all You made  
Why you gave me Your image?  
Is it true I'm Your heartbeat  
And You love me more than anything?

Chorus:

What sacred delight  
What infinite wonder  
That I'm precious in Your sight  
You love me like no other  
No other  
Oh, sacred delight

Did You think of me the day You died  
That I would dare intend this  
Did you know one day I'd come to You  
In search of Your forgiveness  
And is it true I'm your heartbeat

And You chose to die than to live without me.

What sacred delight  
What infinite wonder  
That I'm precious in Your sight  
You love me like no other  
No other  
Oh, sacred delight.