



## Ready for the Storm by Jodi Whisenhunt

*"I am ready for the storm. Yes, sir, ready! I am ready for the storm. I'm ready for the storm,"* I used to sing along with a song by Rich Mullins. On November 27, 2002, our baby, Rachel Faith died. That day I regretted declaring such confidence to God.

The pure joy Richard and I felt about expecting our second child was brief. The first sonogram revealed too much amniotic fluid and too little baby. My doctor suspected Trisomy 18, a fatal chromosomal defect. A level 2 ultrasound and amniocentesis confirmed her diagnosis. The perinatologist told us there was no hope. Our baby would die.

Rich Mullins's song, *Ready for the Storm*, rang in my ears, *"And the lightning strikes, And the wind cuts cold, Through the sailor's bones, Through the sailor's soul, 'Til there's nothing left that he can hold, Except a rolling ocean."*

The specialist recommended terminating the pregnancy but we declined. We didn't determine the beginning of Rachel's life and we would not determine the end.

Tuesday before Thanksgiving, at 28 weeks pregnant, my checkup revealed I was 1 centimeter dilated and the fluid level dangerously high. My doctor advised, "If you don't have the baby today, your life might be jeopardized."

The song droned on, "*Oh, give me mercy for my dreams.*"

Rachel arrived just after midnight. Blue and still, she gasped twice and was gone. We held visitation Thanksgiving evening, her funeral the day after. My heart was shattered and crushed into fine dust, blown and scattered to all parts of the earth... irreparable.

The apostle Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." Really? Be *joyful* Rachel died? Were my prayers in vain? Give thanks for what? *This* was God's will? Nice!

I sank into a pit. I pondered pursuing joy in this life. If the Lord gives, and the Lord takes away, why bother seeking joy? I wallowed awhile in the safety of the pit.

Richard and I blamed ourselves for past sins. But that's not God's way. In John 9, Jesus said of the blind man, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." Oh! This happened for God's glory.

*Ready for the Storm* now gave me comfort, "*And when You take me by the hand, And You love me, Lord, You love me, And I should have realized I had no reasons to be frightened.*"

We had been ready for the storm.

"*Be joyful always.*" Yes, we could rejoice. God spoke through our heartbreak to bring healing to others. A friend held our Rachel and said good-bye to a baby she had lost. A young woman chose not to abort her baby. Some were introduced to God. Rejoice? Yes!

"*Pray continually.*" We did, though I struggled. God knew the desires of my heart and the Holy Spirit interceded for me when all I could manage was a moan. My weakness didn't matter.

"*Give thanks in all circumstances for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*" Had Rachel survived, she would have faced innumerable surgeries. She may never have

walked. Her mental faculties would have been compromised. She was graciously spared such difficulty and struggle.

Rachel's birthday is near Thanksgiving and Richard and I have many reasons to give thanks. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful" (I Timothy 1:12).

He found us worthy to weather the storm.



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