

## *Sherri Williams' Story*



During debate in high school, I remember hashing out the pro's and con's of abortion. I was adamant that it was wrong to take a human life, but was undecided about cases involving rape or incest. Little did I know that in a few short months, my life would be forever changed by the decision I faced concerning this very issue.

### **This is my story...**

I was seventeen years old, and about to graduate from high school. Freedom and independence were within arms reach. My plans were to attend a junior college and work and live in a "big town." My entire life had been spent in a town of 500 people, and I couldn't wait to get out of my "cocoon" and experience life outside the borders of this small town.

Just a month and a half before I was to graduate from high school, I was raped. It produced such a trauma that I block out the memory of it happening. It wasn't until a month later when I fell backwards on my bed, that I remembered the whole horrible event. The flood of emotion that followed was beyond what I could bear. Anger and hurt, fear and disbelief flooded my mind.

My mother, who knew me all too well, knew something was wrong. I told her what happened and also mentioned that I had not had a menstrual cycle. It was too unbelievable to think I could be pregnant from this, but my mother bought me a pregnancy test anyway. As I read the test the next morning, an overwhelming dread filled my heart and I seemed to just go numb. How could this be happening? What am I going to do?

I went to my mom and told her the bad news, “Yes, I’m pregnant.” She and my dad discussed it and decided an abortion would be the best solution. They even set an appointment for me. Upon waking, on the morning of the appointment, I climbed into the bath tub to get ready for the day. I began to weep and within minutes I was heaving from crying so bitterly. As I sat there, I knew I could not go through with the abortion. I had not created this life and I could not take this life either.

I told my mom that I could not go through with it. The next couple of months were rough as family, friends and even my doctor had some very harsh words and ugly names for me. To further complicate matters, I was filled with fear concerning the man who did this to me. What if he comes back to destroy the evidence, which is living inside me, of the crime he committed.

I left home and moved in with a very nice couple who were friends of our family. They lived several hours from my home town and I thought no one would find me there. I was scared of leaving the house and scared of people. Being raped makes you feel so venerable and helpless, and being pregnant seemed to add to that feeling.

The couple I was staying with were watching my deteriorating mental state and suggested that I look for a job. I was reluctant but after much persistence on their part, I consented to at least look through the job ads in the news paper. I looked through two papers from two different towns and only found one job ad in each paper that I would consider calling on. After calling and speaking to these two ladies on the phone, would you believe that they were best friends, and that they both worked at a crisis pregnancy center? I remember looking upwards, in the direction I believed God to be and asking, “Are you trying to talk to me?”

I did not know that God spoke through circumstances. I had grown up going to church, and I knew there was a God, but I didn’t know him personally. Even more than that, I didn’t know that he *wanted* a relationship with me!

One of the two ladies, who hired me from the ads I called on, told me about Jesus. I remember being almost giddy as I learned that Jesus loved me. You can imagine that I was not feeling very lovable. After being rejected by my friends, family and society I jumped at the chance to receive Christ and his awesome love for me. My friend led me in a simple prayer, which went something like this. “Dear Jesus, thank you for your love for me and for forgiving me of my sins, please come live in my heart and teach me your ways. Thank you for making me a part of your family, in Jesus name I pray, Amen.”

I suddenly had a sense of hope. To have hope for the first time in my life and to have it in the middle of this situation was nothing shy of a miracle. This was just one of many miracles the Lord Jesus would do for me in and through this situation.

The Lord led me to an adoptive family through the crisis pregnancy center. It was an open adoption, which means I met the family and we could continue contact even after the adoption.

My beautiful baby girl was born on January 1, 1990. I was terrified at the thought of giving birth, but again my Lord was faithful. I had no pain during delivery! Although I had lost 47 pounds during the pregnancy from stress, the baby was born healthy and there were no complications in the delivery.

I had my sweet little blessing for three wonderful days in the hospital. It seemed so strange to be so happy and yet in so much emotional pain at the same time. It was time to go home, and I left the hospital without my baby and began the agonizing grief process.

I lay on the couch in such pain from the loss that I couldn't get up without help. I just lay there praying the Lord would help me. Three days into this pain, the Lord filled me with such amazing peace and joy that I was able to get up, stop crying and never go back to that kind of pain ever again. Yes, it still hurt when I thought about not having her, but more than hurt I had a sense of peace knowing I had done what the Lord had asked of me and that He was watching out for little Bethany.

I moved to a new town and began nannying for a family. I felt God directing me to a certain church, and after attending several times, decided this was where I wanted to continue attending. I had been going to this church for a number of months when during a potluck dinner I noticed a picture of my baby and her family on the wall! They were missionaries in Taiwan and our church was their home church! Isn't God amazing!

They came home from Taiwan on leave when Bethany was two and a half. By the time I found out they were coming home, I had already signed up to work in the nursery. They came back to drop off Bethany in the nursery so they could attend the service. As they entered the door, Bethany ran from their side straight over to me and hugged my legs. It was all I could do not to bawl. How did she know? I feel like God was just reassuring me that I had done the right thing and that my precious little girl was in very capable and loving hands. Oh, the loving and precious grace of our Lord Jesus!

Fast forward now about 15 years. I haven't heard from Bethany or her family since we fell out of touch when she was 6 years old. I've gotten married since then (so my last name is different) and we live in a different state. My husband and I received a call from the attorney that worked my adoption, saying Bethany's parents were trying to find me. He knew how to find me, only because my husband, who is a plumber, had done a job for him back when we lived in another state. He said normally it is not possible to keep track of the birth mothers, but God had provided a way this time! I told him to tell Bethany's parents that they could call anytime and that I would love to talk to them.

I received a call early on a Saturday morning and had a wonderful time catching up with Bethany's mom. They lived two states away, but Bethany was actually at a conference 45 minutes from my house! My heart skipped a beat when I learned she was so close.

Her mom made arrangements and because Bethany was willing, I had the privilege to meet my grown daughter that following Monday. As I walked up to the house where she was staying, I entered the doorway and this beautiful girl wraps her arms around my neck and says “Hi, Mom!” Oh the joy that filled my soul! We had a wonderful time of questions and answers. I remember her looking at her toes and saying, “Look Mom, I have your toes!” Since then we have found out that we have many physical attributes that are similar and we enjoy many of the same things.

About three weeks after meeting Bethany, we flew her out to go on a trip to the mountains with our family and all of my extended family. She got to meet her grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. It was a terrific blessing all around.

After returning from our trip to the mountains, Bethany and I were enjoying a late night talk when she began asking some very pointed questions about her dad. Her parents and I agreed that it wasn't necessary to tell her about how she was conceived, but I told them if she ever came out and asked me if I had been raped that I would not lie to her. Further, I would trust that if she did come out and ask, that God had a plan and a reason for her knowing.

Bethany is a very smart girl and based on the questions she asked and the answers she was given, she came right out and asked, “Mom, were you raped?” I answered, “Yes.” She grabbed me, hugged me and said, “Thanks for not aborting me, Mom!”

Never at any point have I regretted my decision to have my daughter. I would not wish this situation on anyone, but I would not change it if I could. God brought me to himself through this and He has worked this situation out for a blessing to me and countless others. Most importantly, God created Bethany and He wanted her. I am privileged to have had the opportunity to be a part of her life and His plan!

If you find yourself regretting a choice you made, remember that God is not done with your story yet! You too will have a reunion with your little blessing as long as you know Christ as your savior. He is holding that precious little blessing and he wants to work in your life to heal you and empower you to overcome the pain and regret.

