

Stories of Hope and Encouragement for Christian Mothers

WILLOWS *by the* WATER

Laura Nolt



Carlisle Press
WALNUT CREEK

© Carlisle Press September 2015 All Rights Reserved
All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage retrieval system, without written permission of the copyright owner, except for the inclusion of brief quotations for a review.

ISBN: 978-1-933753-58-4

Author: Laura Nolt
302 McCabe Road
Landisburg, PA 17040
clnolt@emypeople.net

Book Design by: Rachel Miller
Printed in the USA by Carlisle Printing of Walnut Creek



Carlisle Press
WALNUT CREEK

2673 Township Road 421
Sugarcreek, Ohio 44681
phone | 800.852.4482

1-920155M

Dedication

I would like to, first of all, dedicate this book to my dear husband. Without him, I would have no content for a book of this nature. Thank you for being a godly husband and a loving father for our family.

Secondly, I want to dedicate this book to my mother, who raised me with her love, and Christian mothers everywhere. May you be encouraged that no matter where you are in mothering, be it grandmother, mother, mother-in-law, or foster mother, or wherever God has placed you, may this verse from John 13 be the theme of your life as a mother regarding the many things asked of us daily: *“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them”* (John 13:17).

And may you claim the promise that God gave to Jacob and Israel in Isaiah 44 for your family as you press on in your high calling of motherhood *“For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses”* (Isaiah 44:3&4).

And most of all, I dedicate this book to Jesus, the One *“who was, and is, and is to come.”*

Introduction

It's not easy being a mother. From the very first days of having the tiny reality that "I just may become a mom!" to the following weeks of exhaustion and nausea, we begin a journey that will likely continue till we die. A journey that at times seems almost surreal. There are days of exaltation and richness when we know that nothing, not even being a royal princess in dazzling splendor, could compare to having a tiny living parcel placed in your arms for the very first time. There are days of fatigue (a young mother's worst enemy?) when we feel our obscure mission is certainly more than humanly possible.

How shall we walk this path of fulfillment, faith, and failures? I believe God did not mean for us to walk it alone. He gave me a supportive husband. He blessed me with parents to honor (and babysit!). He gave me His Spirit to whisper wisdom and hope. And He gave me dear friends who understand exactly what it's like to have these little independent hearts of mine running around outside my body. Isn't that why we gravitate to each other and pull these very books off the shelf? We so long for kindred spirits to give us inspiration in the lonely times and to compel us to reach higher and try harder for this noble cause with eternal consequences.

Being part of a large baptismal class in our conservative Mennonite church was my introduction to a group of young ladies among whom were familiar school friends and intriguing new faces. Loura was among those unknowns, and I still thank God we found each other. We shared our baby steps in Christ, the highs and lows of courtship, to now being thirty-somethings with eleven children combined. In Loura, I found the sister I never had. She still amazes me at her ability to draw even the shyest person out of her shell and make friends faster than I can get up the nerve to say, "Hello." As you read, you will find a friend who is willing to open herself with you and share real life.

May you be encouraged as you parent a generation who needs to know the pure truth more than any time in history. No mother is

perfect. No one has it all together. However, together as mothers may we help each other to be dedicated to our calling. So relax with a cup of coffee and enjoy these stories like we take in life—one day, one story, at a time.

—*Grace Martin*

Table of Contents

1. A Reminder in a Bundle of Pink.	1
2. Reality Hit... In a White SUV	6
3. May I Sleep in Your Lap?	12
4. To Be Where He Is?	15
5. Amazing Little People	18
6. Like a Fire	22
7. Let Me Watch My Children Grow	25
8. It's in Isaiah 40	29
9. What if God Says "No"?	33
10. Do You Like Church?	35
11. Like Daisy?	38
12. As Little Children.	41
13. Poison to Infection.	43
14. He Is Everywhere	46
15. Seven Little Lives	50
16. Sighs	54
17. A Tide of Impatience	57
18. Spirit of Fear	61
19. A Road Unknown (<i>3 parts</i>).	65
20. He Holds the Future (<i>Sequel to A Road Unknown</i>)	80
21. Miracle of Dreams	84
22. Just Another Day	86
23. The World of School	89
24. Fear of the Deep.	92
25. A Million Little Pieces	95
26. Do You Have a Story?	98
27. Stuck	102
28. A Sword in the Lips	106



| chapter one |

A Reminder in a Bundle of Pink

At times in life we need reminders. Reminders of why we are here. Reminders of God. Reminders to help us focus. Reminders to keep us in check.

Our family received a reminder from God. It happened February 24, 2015, at 5:02 PM.

To explain, it actually started a few days before.

As I waited for my labor to start, I felt this nagging feeling that something just wasn't right. I kept having labor off and on, very unusual for me, but it just wouldn't progress. Finally, I decided to go to my midwife. She confirmed that the baby was breech. And no, I wasn't progressing yet. But my due date was still a week away.

All through my pregnancy I had dealt with fear. Sometimes it would overwhelm me at night. The thought of having to go through labor was so frightening this time. I would pray through it and berate myself: *This is your sixth baby! Why are you so afraid?!* I had this very real fear that my

baby would not live. All through my false labor, I would pray (beg and plead actually) for the life of my unborn child.

This fear shot through me when I heard that the baby was turned wrong. After unsuccessfully trying to turn the baby, my midwife encouraged me that a breech birth was possible. After a few fear-filled questions from me, I was on my way back home.

And I was so scared...

Rational thinking aside, I called my husband. How I wanted *him* to do the delivery this time! He encouraged me to listen to the midwife. Wait and let things take care of themselves.

To make a rather long and complicated story short, I could not relax. I continued having contractions fairly close the rest of that day. My stomach churned in fear. I would pray, but I found no peace. *What is wrong with you?* I thought. *Just rest in Jesus.*

But I couldn't. I barely slept that night. Between contractions and worry and fear, I tossed all night. By morning, I had made a decision. Right or wrong, I wanted to at least do an ultrasound. During my night of tossing and crying and praying for the life of my child, I had somehow decided that an ultrasound might put an end to my fears.

My husband concluded that, yes, if that would help, he agrees.

At this part of the story, I still have to stop and marvel. We called to a doctor familiar with my midwife, and they wanted me to come right in. By the time we arrived, they were waiting on me. My room was reserved and ready. (Was it a slow morning in the ward, or was God paving the way?) They immediately hooked me up to monitor the baby, and we were relieved to hear that steady thump, thump, thump. They also confirmed that I was in labor.

In a half hour the doctor arrived. A large dark-skinned man with a booming voice, he immediately put me at ease. Using the ultrasound machine, he bluntly explained what he saw. To make matters even better for us, he was instructing a student doctor and so explained everything in detail as he went.

“Here is the backbone, the bottom, the head. Yes, the baby is breech. And not only breech, but abnormal breech.” As he talked he used

motions to explain what he meant. Not only was my baby breech, it was sitting on one foot with the other foot up and to the side. The reason the midwife could not turn the baby was because it was stuck. My fluid was also very low, with only a small amount around the baby's head. The doctor concluded with this statement: "Even if we stood this mother on her head, this baby would not turn. And it will not descend because the foot is caught."

The only option was a C-section. And even though C-sections had always scared me before, I almost cried with relief. After days of turmoil, the situation was no longer in my hands. I also felt affirmed that I wasn't just being afraid. God was working thus far, and had actually been guiding me. He was saving the life of my child.

We would only realize later how true that statement was.

As I lay waiting for my turn in the OR, I listened to the steady beating of my baby's heart. For the first time in days, I felt excitement. We would meet our baby today, if God allowed. I harbored only a moment or two of regret that it would not be a natural birth; that's how greatly I was relieved to have my fears confirmed. I even told my husband, "At least now I know I wasn't crazy!" He confirmed that I had said numerous times that *something doesn't feel right...*

To go into all the details of the next few hours would take so many words, but at 5:02 PM we welcomed baby Emma Faith Nolt into our world. It was then that we realized what a miracle she was. Her cord was around her neck three times, but greater than that was the knot the doctor found in her cord.

The doctors and nurses marveled together as they worked on our new little one. I heard the doctor exclaim, "This one wasn't going to come out the right way alive."

I listened to her feeble cries and cried myself. My baby was here. She was alive! And even though my desire was to have a calm, natural birth, I was never so relieved to be strapped to a bed in the operating room.

After one brief little kiss and a glance at my baby, they whisked her away. She wasn't breathing quite right and needed to be on oxygen. I didn't realize until later, when I was back in my room, that they had