

Mariah Roehrenbeck - Part 2

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SPEAKERS

Amanda Valentine, Mike Stone, Mariah Roehrenbeck



Mike Stone 00:00

Hey, thank you for joining us. It is a new season at Behind the Mike: Conversations of Hope. If you're new welcome. Our goal is to share conversations of hope from guests with amazing stories that will encourage you and point you to Jesus, even in the darkest times. At this point, you guys are divorced, I guess I want to step back when know how you were doing physically and emotionally. Where were you at at this moment spiritually? What was your relationship with the Lord like at this? At this point?



Mariah Roehrenbeck 00:46

My relationship with the Lord was so hot and cold. There's so many thoughts on that I was very angry with God, number one, was very angry with with the pastor that felt like he could speak into my husband's life and tell him it was okay to leave his family and be a pilot. I lost a lot of respect for people that spoke into other people's lives. Because I thought you don't even know our situation. And the only thing that he said to me at that altar was all I want to speak over you is everything's going to be okay. And everything was far from okay. So, I lost a lot of respect for pastors that felt like, I have to give people a word. You don't have to give people the word. If you're listening. You don't have to give people a word. Man. Yeah. I because that changed our lives changed the trajectory of our lives. But the other part of it was I was angry with God, that Josh was gone so much. And I was angry with God, that my life was like this. And I felt trapped. And I felt like it part of it was God's fault. Like if if, if these wouldn't have gone this way, we would have never been here. And now I'm doing all this stuff. And I'm just, I'm raising these kids. And I don't have any help. And I'm exhausted and where are you? And I still was under the legalism of go to church Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night, dragging the kids along and I'm exhausted. And I just I was struggling. But on the other side of that, I had started going to a new church where there was much less legalism, and a lot more acceptance. It was almost overwhelming to me. When I first got there. It was where I really learned about God's grace for the first time. We were taught grace growing up, but we were really taught merit, and works. And people would say we weren't taught to earn stuff, but you were basically told you better be involved in everything. Or when Jesus comes back, you're gonna get left behind. One thing that I've heard a lot of pastors say that I have to disagree with

just because of my own personal experience is growing up. I heard a lot of pastors say, when you sin, when you're living in sin, you are separated from God. I don't believe that. Because God was the only person with me still in the pit I was in. So I don't believe that it separates you from God. I still believe that God is coming after you saying I love you. You're my child. I'm not giving up on you. We are not separated. Did I was I agree with that? And I was walking away a little bit. Yeah. But I'm going to tell you what I journaled to God, I talked to God. I never stopped talking to God. And some people would say, well, that we are a hypocrite. And if you think if you think that's hypocrisy, that's okay. But for me, it was my lifeline. If I wouldn't have had that opportunity to still have a relationship with God, even though I was making horrible choices. I don't know where we would be. But God's loves big enough that he can see past all of my junk, and he can still want me. And that's huge for me. So that's where I was spiritually. The fact that God did not abandon me in that time. When I really believed in my heart from being taught growing up, I'm separated. Like, this is all fake. I'm not really feel I would feel God's presence. When I was praying to on like, Well, that can't be God's presence because God's away from me, but it was God was still chasing me. So I was struggling with God and he was still chasing me. So spiritually, it was really an interesting dichotomy.



Mike Stone 04:47

I love that because it is so true that that resounds so much with me. Because I've experienced that for myself to everything I see in Scripture. Perfect example, the prodigal son. He ran away he left he was far from God, but God never left him. And the and the father, who really represents God himself when he returned, that's that's how he welcomes us back. It's not with shame. It's not with disgust. He loves us. He loves you where you're at. And I know that there are people listening right now who are going, what? God loves me where I'm at right now. Yeah, you're never too far from God. If we if you hear nothing else in this podcast, you are never too far from God. Right? God was there for you. He's there for me. He's there for Amanda. Even when she shoves people up against lockers. It's so true, it is so true. And we want you to understand and believe that, I guess I'll let you finish your story. And continue on unless Amanda wants to jump in there. I think we, you and Mariah and myself kind of had a similar background growing up in that we didn't, my church wasn't really legalistic. But I took that on myself to, you know, read the 10 commandments, and to see all the things that God required of me. And so as a 12-13 year old kid, I grew up making myself believe that if I failed, I didn't know where that put me with God. So as, as Mariah is going through all this, I mean, my goodness, she got a divorce, and her life is full of it's just a wreck. What are you seeing, from your perspective? And what were you thinking coming from a church that was thinking the legalistic mindset?



Amanda Valantine 06:56

I've always been a very black and white thinker. And this whole situation caused me to pause and realize that not everything is black and white. Not everything is so perfectly dissectable. And this is in this category. And this is in this category. And this is in this category. That's how my brain works. That's how I work. This experience more than anything, well, more than more than a couple of things. You know, I had my own intersection with grace, later in life. No, no, no, no, no, no, I take that back. I had my own intersection with grace. God's grace in, right when Mariah and I were going through this when we weren't talking, you know, I went through a class called Grace walk. And I was shocked. I mean, I was convinced this book we were reading was

heresy. I can not believe, I couldn't believe the pastor was letting this girl teach this class, because I'm like, she clearly, you know, is not on the right side of the tracks. If you know what I mean. Like, what kind of teaching are we? Are we are we in like, watering down the Word of God, all of a sudden, you know, and



Mike Stone 08:25

all of a sudden sin is not so bad. Why is this happening? It really challenged me because she, this woman became my mentor, really, when it came to grace. And she challenged me, you know, she'd be like, I think that you need to go do this and know that God still loves you. Not like, you know, something horrible, but you do. I'm gonna, I'm gonna continue to say throwing something up against the locker. That's never gonna leave my mind. As old as I get. I'm gonna remember Amanda smashing someone up against the locker and threatening them.



Mariah Roehrenbeck 09:08

Let's remember that, Amanda. violence.



Mike Stone 09:13

Violence. Everybody's gotta label that's your label for me now. That's right. I did not believe that for myself. I believed it though. For everybody else. Yes. So I looked at my sister. I thought God has her. God still loves her. Things are going to work out. I remember the Christmas Eve service at church when they shared with my parents about the pregnancy. And I was like, thanks a lot. It's Christmas Eve, Christmas was ruined for you. And I ended up that night taking my mom out to eat. And we talked through some of this and she was struggling because we were just all very my mom is very black and white too. You know, it's just it's right it or it's wrong, there's nothing in there, you know? And I went from I don't want to get too theological, but I went like from complete. Every time you sin, you know, you're dangling over hell, like Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. Right. Jonathan Edwards,



Amanda Valantine 10:21

Jonathan Edwards, right. One of the scariest things you'll ever read in your life, go all the way over to, you know, there's a much there's much more security in Christ than I am for now. Yeah. And that really opened my eyes, you know, this whole situation, my life situation forced me to have to reckon God's grace with real life. That's right, because I was never going to be good enough. I was never gonna earn it. I was, you know, right. Even though we're gonna I was a pastor, and I was a minister, and, you know, helping people and working through things with people and starting Celebrate Recovery. I was a wreck, too, to. Yeah. And I had to reckon God's grace with that. And that took me on a journey that took me from self sufficiency, where I was reliant fully upon myself. And I was still living by the 10 commandments. I'm not saying I'm not living by the 10 commandments, but they're not hung on my wall anymore. You know, they're not right. Because Christ fulfilled the law. And these were things I, I never read Romans the same way. When I first understand God's grace, and I got to Romans four, I literally read

Romans four for a month, because I just had never put it all together. And I was so excited. It was like I was newly saved. That is what forced me to have to say, Okay, Amanda, you don't have to be so rigid. God is not so rigid. He sent His only son.



Mike Stone 12:13

If anybody broke rigidity, it's God. And, and he did it for me. And he did it for Mariah. And he did it for anybody that I think is like the worst sinner in the world. Like, for me, it would probably be people who hurt children. You know, he died on the cross for people who hurt children. I, you know, I slammed someone against the locker once. But if, if our God, I can't even tell you what I would do to people that hurt children. Its hard to reconcile, yeah, it's hard to reconcile,



Amanda Valantine 12:46

And I remember a song that came out years ago, like on Christian radio, that was Jeffrey Dahmer went to heaven, or else he died on television, because they talked about how someone prayed with him before he died. And there was so much flak about that song because people are like, there is no way someone like Jeffrey Dahmer gets into heaven. And I'm like, Okay, well, if Jeffrey Dahmer doesn't get into heaven, I don't get into heaven. You know, if he prayed if he invited Jesus to save him from his sense, which I honestly wasn't there. So I don't know. But if he did, he's in heaven. Yeah. And he's, you know, I'm not any better like my once you start giving, looking at self sufficiency, and you look at legalism, there's really only two ways you can be, you can be proud, or you can be drowned in pity, because you're never going, you don't understand God's grace, God's grace gives us a level playing field. And that is this whole situation, which started in 2009. Through everything through the breakdown of our sister relationship, through the hurt in both of our marriages during this time, to other factors. There was God's grace. And I love in the Bible where it says that it's like an open field. It's, you know, you see people running through an open field, and I would always joke because I ended up teaching the graceful class. Tell people, right, one of the chapters, I'm telling you, I read the first sentence and I yelled out of the bathroom. I'm throwing this book away. But, you know, and I would tell people I'm not going to be running through any field unless there's like a Reese's peanut butter egg. It's the other side of the field. But I, this is this is one of those things that brought me to my knees, where I had to look at everything again. Everything And I think that that is part of the redemption of what happens even in my story is she has to do the same thing. She had to look at the 10 commandments in the way we were raised, and we had to memorize them. We had a song for him. And you know, we knew him, too. Can God's grace be enough for me? Yeah. And for my marriage, is it? Is it really restorable? Yeah. And so, you know, she has an awesome, you know, part of this story, where we start to talk about the after that, like she said before, after that, this is what happens. And so I wanted to share a little bit about that.



Mariah Roehrenbeck 15:48

Yeah, for sure. So yeah, we were divorced, I can remember the day we got divorced. And I would just say this, to those of you that think that, you know, your divorce is going to bring this wave of happiness. I thought that, like I thought, I'm going to be free from this, I'm going to be able to event go on a new adventure, you know, get something new. And I was devastated. I

was broken. Because I just don't think we realize how connected or connected we are one with this person. We are interconnected. They are our person, we have shared everything with them. And then it's like, you don't even have any relationship anymore. Just like you're done. Now go your separate ways. And that it shocked me that I was that upset about that. That was the first thing for me. It shocked me that that upset me. My, my husband, he he never gave up. He, his family. With the exception of his dad, his dad was always telling me that he was praying for me. He would send Josh things, sermons about marriages that, you know, went through the worst things ever and made it and I would just get angry. I'm like, That's not us. But that's not us. That's not going to be us. And I specifically there were a couple of very specific instances where my depression was at an all time low, because I was just giving into myself constantly. There was nothing greater than me that I felt that I was answering to it was just what does Mariah want? What? And Mariah thought that that would make me feel much better. And it never did. It was like, I felt so much worse. And I felt trapped. I almost felt like an addict. Like I could not no matter what, stop what I was doing. But I couldn't do it. And it's hard to explain that because people like yes, you can you just know, I couldn't. I, I was sitting in my when I lived in the apartment of sitting in the parking lot. And I'm a nurse that for those of you that don't know. It's not a rewarding career. Don't do it. So



Mike Stone 18:09

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Mariah Roehrenbeck 18:21

They will kill you. I was sitting in my car and I know how medication works. I knew what I needed. I knew I didn't want to live anymore. I didn't know how I could get out of the mess. I was in my head. Nobody left. Now I was done sitting in my car. And my husband and I we did not get along during this time. I mean, there was no love there. And it was him and usually would not answer the phone. I didn't want to talk to him. But I answered. And he just said, you know, I just I'm concerned. I'm concerned, which I didn't want to hear. But he did say, right, I just I'm worried you're on a you're on a road, that there's nowhere to go. And I'm concerned right now, you know, what are you doing? Where are you gonna tell them Come on my way home from work. He said, I want you to know that I'm praying for you. And that, you know, even if everybody around you, you've lost everybody around you. God's right there with you. And it was just such a shocking moment because that's not something he would do. So I sat there in my car for a long time and I just wept. And he said, You know, I still care about you. I'm concerned for you. Which I didn't think would be possible after everything I had done to this man. I mean, over and over hurt this man. And I just didn't think that was possible. And then when I moved into my house, he came over and shared with me a sermon that his dad sent him about or something like there's always another move or I can't remember. But it was a, they were talking, it was a couple that wrote a book called I do again, that was in our same situation. And when we were going through a divorce, Josh would always tell me, there's nobody ever in our situation, this is probably the worst thing that's ever happened. You're a terrible person. There's nobody, because that's what you do when you're hurt. Sure. But to read something that somebody was in our situation, and divorce, actually were in other relationships, and then ended up getting back together, I thought, wow, that's really interesting. And, and we talked about that, and we prayed together that night, and I wept still wasn't out of the trap I was in. But it was I was taking steps in the right direction. And I started going to a different counselor

was actually very open with this one, I thought, I'm just going to do it this time, like, I'm not hiding anything. I'm going to let him know what's going on what's in my heart. And he was so accepting that that was another big step for me, where I made it seem like I was the worst person, Scarlet A. And he's like, there is love for you. Like, this is not the end of the road for you. There is love for you. And I started to believe that for myself, which was the most important thing, feeling love from my husband, or my ex husband at that time, that was great. But I had to start to love myself, and learn to forgive myself. Because I hated myself. I didn't think I was deserving of anything. The counselor said, you know, my, that's really a murderous mentality. And I thought was that what we're supposed to believe as Christians that we're not worthy of anything? Like, we're not worthy? And he's like, No. No, you are worthy of God's love. You are. And I'm like, you are. And I thought, This is so different than what I'm used to. Like, I'm supposed to just like, completely say, I'm a horrible, terrible person. And I'm not worthy of God's love. And, but he's like, No, until you can believe that for yourself, you're not going to believe anything from anybody. And so that continued the path of healing for me. And then my husband and my mom got diagnosed with breast cancer during this time. And that was another big wake up call for me. And the first person I thought to call was my ex husband, which is crazy. And he offered to just let me rest at his house. He's like, just go to sleep. Didn't bother me. There was this is a great story. And it's hard to share. But I just think somebody needs to hear this. The whole time I was sleeping there. This guy that I was seeing during this time, that was very difficult for me to get away from. He kept calling my phone. And Josh could see my phone and see that this person kept calling me over and over again. He said Mariah, it took every bit of strength for me not to break that phone. But I had to continue to trust God, that you were going to continue on the path of healing that you would that was starting, and you had to do it. I couldn't do it. Nobody could do it. You had to do it. That meant a lot to me that because he could be very controlling. And I thought he's really giving some of this up and saying, This is in your hands. So we started we actually started dating on first date. And like I said before, he's not a big talker. But he actually was like talking and asking me questions about myself. We started communicating, and I'm like, Oh, are you? Yeah, you talk. And then we ended up going to another restaurant after that. So we could talk longer. And we just talked it talked about the kids. We talked about each other. My my husband and the kids had become big hockey fans, and I hadn't been to a blue jackets game and they were like, Let's go and I had such a great time with them. And my heart began to heal. It just my heart began to heal because this is where I lose it. So stay with me. Because I know I've hurt people. I know I've heard adults but when I think about hurting my children... ..that's what rips me apart. Because that wasn't they didn't do anything to deserve that. And it was just me looking out for me and looking out to them. And that crushes me and to be able to have a relationship with them again, and I had a real I mean, I was hoping to raise them but it was difference. I was in my own world. I didn't have the relationship I wanted to have with them. I was very focused on myself. But to be given a second chance more to me than anything in the world. And the relationship that I have with him today is only by God's grace because of so close, and I wouldn't trade that for anything. So we've started healing. And go ahead.



Mike Stone 25:35

It seems that God was giving you a glimpse into his relationship with you at that point.



Mariah Roehrenbeck 25:43

Yeah, I think so. I think so I, I needed that. From him. And that's the thing about God is He

knows what we need. We think we know what we need, he really does know. So our whole family began healing my, my son, one of my older son, he wanted nothing to do with his dad at first. And it was so hard because I felt like I was doing what God wanted. So I'm like, God, if I'm doing what you want, why isn't everything falling into place? Like why? For the first time, I'm actually like, I'm, I'm going to be honest, I'm going to live by I'm going to focus on my relationship with God, my family. And I just feel like things are still so hard. Why? And it was a revelation for me that life is just hard. You know, we can make good decisions, we can make bad decisions. Sometimes life just sucks. And it's hard work. It's hard. It's so hard. And that that relationship with my husband and my son has mended. And my son actually just got married October 1, and my husband did their wedding. And that was a huge moment. What a what a picture of God's grace in that day. It was sprinkling. And then the sun came out. And there was the biggest rainbow ever, over the whole ceremony. I get goosebumps talking about it, because God was God was present. He was there for some reason.

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Amanda Valantine 27:28

I knew you were gonna have a caveat. Some of it was interesting. But so most of it was great.

M

Mariah Roehrenbeck 27:38

But Josh, Josh and I, he proposed to me in Hawaii, and we got we got engaged. They're not a great proposal again. But you know, but but in my mind, and my heart was in home, but it was in our hotel room. But what Hawaii so, what. But it was, what was great is, I learned that was important for me, because there was personal, I needed to learn that our relationship was about me and him, not about anything surrounding us not about anybody that was gonna give us attention, not about people cheering us on, it was about us. And that needed to start right then. It was us on each other's team being for each other. It was, yeah, it was great. And then we got we got remarried in our home. It was just our children and my parents and his parents. And you know, it was wonderful. And we can say that everything was happily ever after. But after we got remarried, we were there were a lot of attacks from the enemy. I got sick, and then I got mentally sick. And there were so many opportunities for us to look at each other and say, this was not a good decision. But instead, we chose each other. And we're before we were kinda like two people facing like, or like two people facing each other and going at each other. Like you're just, we were now this team where we're facing us facing everything else. And God is right there in the center. And one of my favorite things that we learned in counseling was, you know, looking at No, we always hear people listening to this might say, what does that even mean? God at the center, like people say, you have Jesus at the center of our relationship like, I can't, I can't see that. I don't understand that. So we had a pastor that we really respected that did our wedding that drew us a triangle, and it was my husband, and me and then Jesus. At the top, and he said, it's not like Jesus is in the middle of the triangle and you both are just trying to jump to get to him. It's as you draw closer to Jesus, and he draws closer to Jesus, you're getting closer together as you're getting to Jesus. And that meant so much to me, I thought that makes so much more sense than just, well, we've got Jesus in the center of our relationship, I thought, we're both striving toward Jesus. And in doing that, we're not distracted by everything around us. We're striving towards Jesus together. And it's bringing us closer to Him and to each other. So yeah, you know, one baby that was born when I was 17, is now 25.



Mike Stone 30:42

Wow. Wow. Yeah, you know, we hear that a lot. And I love that I've seen that diagram before. And it really does. It illustrates it very well. But we also hear, you know, and Jesus Himself said, you know, you got to be willing to lose your brother and your mother and your family. And that never made sense to me. And again, it just kind of clicked one day. And it was probably due to that. That same triangle diagram that you're talking about was we focus on Jesus, Jesus takes care of the rest. It's not like he wants us to forget about our kids or neglect our kids. That's not That's not at all what he wants. He wants us to focus on him, because he's going to take care of all the other stuff. And then you like you said, as you both are, focusing on him. And drawing closer to Jesus, you draw closer to each other. And it's such a it's such a profound thing. It's such a basic, we learned triangles, and what preschool so Wow, amazing. That's great.



Mariah Roehrenbeck 31:54

Those shapes, they help us? That's right.



Amanda Valantine 31:58

For sure. I can say now that just like I said before, with the ripple effect of the bad choices, and the difficulties and things like that, that that the redemption can be in also a new ripple effect. And like you were saying, a new opportunity with your children, a new opportunity with Josh, and then you know, selfishly a new opportunity with with us, you know, for us to be able to have a relationship again, and we are besides the marriage story. We are now like, closer than ever, you know, we we sang in the choir together, we have dinner together multiple times a week. My I have a brother who cares about me, and has helped me so much since my divorce with many different things. My sister who's grounded in God now, and is a source of wisdom. Now that I can turn to wear for a while, she wouldn't have ever even called herself that. But that's how far God can take us. He can take us to the complete other side. And our life can have a positive impact even on the people that I have negative impact on. So I'm just wondering, you know, where do you see that positive impact? How has that influenced your family? Other people? How far have you seen it reach? Yeah.



Mariah Roehrenbeck 33:49

So good question. It's really amazing. You know, I haven't shared my story publicly like this. But you know, when they're, it's amazing. The people that find me that don't know my story, but they have a similar story. That God sends my way. People that are dealing with divorce people that are dealing with unexpected pregnancy, people that are walking alone, raising children. For me, it's it's been a huge part of my healing as well to be able to come alongside those people. And to be able to tell them just like the lady did at the altar for me when I first found out and felt like I am alone in this and she just said you're not alone. I've been there. I like to be able to tell people hey, I've been there. And in some most instances I've been further you haven't gone down the whole road yet. So stop now. The ripple effect for me has touched not only my immediate family so me and my husband To, you know, we continue to work at marriage, marriage is a lifelong journey. It's, it's, it's work, it's the most important relationship in your life. So if you're willing to work at friendships and you're willing to work at your job, you

got to be willing to work at your marriage. It's impacted my husband, he's seen a change, he, he, you know, it's impacted his wife, my children, they have it, they, they see a huge difference in their mom. And it's impacted who they've become. Because I am willing to help people, I see my children willing to help people. And for me, that's huge. I love it, when they come home, they're like, I really want to help this person, and what can I do to help this person and I'm just mind blown, because that's just a huge testimony. And it's not because I've told them, You need to help people, it's because I've modeled it, they've seen their mom model bad behavior. And they've seen their mom completely turned around and model the complete opposite behavior, and show which one works. In which one impacts people positively. And then my friends, I mean, the people that I've shared with, it's impacted them a lot of people that were jaded from the church, you know, thinking they had to be perfect to be in the church, you know, explaining to them that's not what the church is for. And you, you have to be able to be real with people in the church. And if you can't be, you got to find another church. Because when you can have a church where you can be who you really are, and you're still accepted. And not only that, but they look at you and they say, man, your story is, it can touch so many people instead of oh, you should never be on the worship team. Like, there's a big difference. In feeling like I really taught, I told my husband, as I said, I don't believe I'll ever be able to be used again. And I had to come to terms with that. But with the choices I had made, I may not ever be in any kind of ministry, I may not be in any kind of leadership role. I may not ever be on a worship team. But God, he opened those doors for me. And I've met so many people that are suffering. Just because people are smiling at church does not mean things are good. And for the most part, if you'll just take a moment and listen to somebody, you find out they're hurting. And you can be that person. And I love to be that person for them that can say, Man, I know, I know, a God that is there for you all the time. It's touched my family, it's such my sister, such my parents, my parents, their dream was for us to have a great relationship again. And this sounds morbid. And if my children end up watching this, I'm sorry. But I really wanted that to happen before they passed away. I wanted us to be close, you know, before I wanted them to experience our family being together and you know, some things I've had to have some very hurtful things have had to happen for that to happen. But you know, God is working in that as well. So I've seen it, I've seen it there too. So really everywhere I see this ripple effects and and that means the world to me. I try not to ask, you know, leading questions I like to have, I don't like to push somebody to something, but I am trying to push you to something. I want you to share how the faculty got back. I know right? Near the locker. So share with us how the fact that you guys got back together

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Amanda Valantine 38:49

how you've been able to bless another family, because I know that that Mike and Tammy, they are they're very involved in the foster and adoption communities. And you don't necessarily have a foster child through the system. But you are supporting a single mom, and have become really a parental figure in the lives of a couple children. And that would have never happened. Had this know, had there not been a reconciliation or a restoration that shared a little bit about it.

M

Mariah Roehrenbeck 39:25

Definitely. So I got involved in a ministry at our, at our former church and definitely needed the support of my husband in this. So yeah, the fact that we were together was a big deal. couldn't do this without him. coming alongside a single mom, which has always been something I've

wanted to do, like come alongside a single mom, depending on you know, a pregnancy that she's considering, you know, maybe she doesn't want it. But if she just had somebody because she has no family here if she had somebody walking beside her Mmm, that she might make a different decision. So I became a mentor to a young lady, special young lady who had a rough life, a very rough life growing up. And as I got to know her, found out more about that and really broke my heart. She has a daughter who her dad died of an overdose. And the daughter is old enough to remember that. And so that that's been very difficult as well. But I came alongside her in her pregnancy. And I was able to be in the delivery room with her. immediately got to hold this little blessing. My daughter was all my family's involved, if this is what you're pushing toward. This was part of, you know, the reconciliation of our whole family, really, because this family has become our family. They come to all of our holidays. Chloe is me. She's part ours. Basically, my husband is just submitting absolutely smitten with her. She almost died. Right after she was born of sepsis. Related to RSV, we almost lost her, and she's our miracle baby. We've had her now for three years. We have her every weekend. We've had her every weekend for three years. And we support her and her sister, her older sister and her mom, we've really helped her mom really tried our best to help her mom get into she was living in an apartment complex that was second deadly deadly is in Columbus. So we were really able to get her out of that. Get her into a new place, get her a job, very proud of her that she's been at the same job now for three years. Before that she was like two months was the longest she had been at a job. She She's come a long way. And that would have never happened had our family not all come back together. And she's in love with each one of our children. She's she's a part of our family. They all are. And now that Amanda is back, you know, she's this is her Manda. And it's been a huge blessing to be able to use what God did for us to touch another family. Because of all of all of what happened was in vain, and just dumb decisions that meant nothing, then I think it would be harder to recover from the shame and the guilt. But when you're recovering, and you're able to see that your story and your life and how you choose to live, it can impact not just your family, but somebody else and their family and hopefully, their future generations. It'll just keep going. It's a big deal. It means a lot. It's meant a lot to us.



Mike Stone 43:13

Sounds like God is restoring even through that. And I think you know, as you're talking about the story, Mariah and by the way, Amanda, there for a while I was saying your homiletics class come to life. It's been a while but you are preaching there. I, you know I we all grew up in the church. So we know stories about Moses. And we know stories about Abraham. We know stories about all the greats like David who was flawless in his life. All the way up through Paul, you know, none of them had problems, right? No, right? They were all screwed up. And God used them. Many, many years later, we're still reading about them, we're still reading about redemption, and how God used the broken. And I think that's, that's something that I want to say is if you feel broken, if you're you feel like God can't use you, you had mentioned that, that you felt like you're at a point where you could never be used again. Be pick up your Bible. That's what this is about. This is about broken people, because of sin that has entered into our world and affects all of us infects all of us. And and God fix that for us. And I think that's probably the the whole theme of this. Your story is is brokenness, and God's redemption. And that's all of our story. That's all of our story.



Mariah Roehrenbeck 44:52

My favorite scripture verse just, it's in First Timothy. And you know, this is Paul Paul, who was

you know, full have mistakes and errors, you know, like killing people. I didn't I never did that.



Mike Stone 45:06

Amanda's close. But God can still forgive right. All right, that's gonna stick with you whenever I'm around you. I'm sorry. We're in First Timothy.



Mariah Roehrenbeck 45:21

First Timothy one, verses 12 through 16 says, I think Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus, here is a trustworthy same, that deserves full acceptance, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason, I was shown mercy so that in me the worst of sinners, Christ, Jesus might display His unlimited patience as an example, for those who would believe on Him and receive eternal life. Amen. That's powerful. Yeah.



Mike Stone 46:19

Mariah, thank you so much for sharing your story. I know that that was difficult. We're gonna pray that God will use this. I know he will. He's been using it. He's restoring. He's restoring all of us. And that little family that has become an addition to yours, is part of that restoration. And, and I think that God uses things like that, to help us to remember what kind of a god he really is, is not necessarily a 10 commandment, God, he takes him very, very seriously. So seriously, that He sent His only Son to die for us, because that was the only way. But grace and mercy is there. I'm gonna give you the last word before we close here.



Mariah Roehrenbeck 47:11

I just want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to share. It is a difficult story. But it is one that I hope people can see that. You know, we we tumble a lot through life, like Amanda said something earlier, you know, 25 years you have a year and a hyphen and a year. I mean, our hyphen would be like, all the way down to the depths, and then a little bit sometimes it stayed. What I would say is, first of all, stay the course with God. And if you don't have a relationship with God, it's so easy to have one and man does he love you. I mean, the feel the love of God is so much greater than feeling the love of any man, any any human so much so much greater. To know that no matter what I do, God can't love me more any won't love me less, is huge. Especially for people pleaser like myself. And just to encourage those of you that are struggling, that there is hope there really is and if you've never shared your story because you're scared. I'm here and I will never judge you. Find somebody safe and share and let the healing begin. Let the healing begin in your heart to know that God loves you. He sees you for who you are right now. Not for who you can be or who you were, but who you are right now in this moment where you feel broken and hopeless and lost. And he's never left you. He's still with you and He loves you

