

Jessica Stroia Faith Story shared in worship, November 20, 2016

“Blessed to be a Blessing”



At 20 years old I was starting my junior year of college, trying, like most college students, to figure out if the major I started with in college was indeed the major I wanted to graduate with. My mother is a teacher, I wanted to follow in her humbled footsteps, and so I dove head first into the education program at Kent State University. I had two modest part time jobs, and was keeping a summer romance alive. As October arrived, the chilly weather brought chills to my life because I was faced with an unexpected pregnancy. Shortly after my first trimester ended, I was told I miscarried...I was given the weekend to collect my thoughts and first thing Monday, I was going to have a DNC. This was devastating...I was 20 years old, and by that point, at 12 weeks pregnant, I was finally wrapping my head around what it was going to be like to have a child.

I was given the best parents a kid could ask for. I had the hardest working dad, and the most committed helicopter mom. I have a twin brother, and three older brothers, and my big family were all members of Faith UMC starting in the late 90's. We

were in youth group; we went on the missions in the summer. My parents did their best to answer all the faith questions we challenged them with, but at this point in my young adult life, we all were silent as to why God would bless me with this child, and then so quickly take it away.

As I arrived Monday morning to the hospital, I was astonished with the knowledge that my child was still with me. Call it a miracle, call it a medical mistake, I was still pregnant, and put on bed rest, but at 33 weeks my beautiful baby boy was born. Aiden and I faced the world together, and as my twenties brought forth hard lessons, Aiden and I were figuring them out together.

So here I was, a single mom, living in a small apartment, caring for a little boy, going to school, and working as hard as I could to make ends meet. I couldn't see it then, but God was working through me to give this amazing little boy the best life possible. Although the situation was not ideal, Aiden and I shared some of the best memories through those years, and then I met Matt.

Shortly after Matt and I started dated we found a better apartment for Aiden and myself, and then finally moved in with each other. We married in the summer of 2015, and that's when I realized truly that I was blessed with a more than I could imagine. God showed me that no matter what I face in life, my purpose is to be the best mother I could be. I say 'I could be' because not everyday is a perfect parenting day. That is what I love about this gift I have been blessed with...I get to wake up everyday with a husband and child that I can show as much love as possible to.

This faith story may be long, but the sermon given today made me realize that there are many individuals who feel they are called for different things, and I know that without the blessing of my child at a young age, the life that I have now would never be possible.