

Dealing With Child Loss and Grief- Part 2
With Rebecca Mutz

Audra Haney: You are listening to the Newborn Promise Podcast. A production of Graham Blanchard, Inc. This is part two of our interview with Rebecca Mutz on dealing with child loss and grief. You can get today's show notes, transcript and more information about your "Newborn Promise Project" at GrahamBlanchard.com.

Welcome back to the Newborn Promise Podcast. I am Audra Haney and last week we shared a deeply moving interview with Rebecca Mutz on how to deal with child loss and grief. Rebecca shared an immense amount of wisdom and practical advice for those walking out the days and months after losing a child. If you're in the middle of grief, please make time to listen to that. It is so powerful, and Rebecca does an amazing job offering helpful insight.

For those who really connected with Rebecca's heart in the first episode, we wanted to dive a little deeper in to Molly's story today. To share a more detailed version of Rebecca's testimony, and the days leading up to the hard decision of taking Molly off of life support and ultimately watching her baby go to Heaven.

Rebecca and her mother Barbara Rainey have also written a stirring book called "A Symphony in the Dark," if you want to read more about Molly after this episode. But for now, here is a glimpse in to Molly's story.

So, Rebecca, tell us about your first pregnancy. It was from 2008 in to 2009. What was it like being pregnant for the first time?

Rebecca Mutz: I think my very first pregnancy was just so new, so joy-filled, so fun. I didn't have any, like, obviously your first pregnancy you don't have a clue what you're doing or a clue what's going on, it's just, everything is so new and so exciting. To me, at least, it was. I just loved being pregnant. It was just a real sweet time.

Audra Haney: And during your pregnancy, you had normal ultrasounds, you decided to wait and let the gender be a surprise, and you had a very healthy and successful delivery. What was it like meeting your baby for the very first time?

Rebecca Mutz: You know, so, she was born and they put here, like, when they're born, they like put them right on your chest. Or, at least at this hospital they do. So they had put her right on my chest, and I remember meeting her for the first time and she wasn't crying, but my instinct was to shh her,

like shh shh shh, like all moms do with babies. They just want to cuddle and shush, and oh, it's okay, mommy's here. Like, I remember saying that to her and just being like "Oh my gosh, it's a girl."

I was just so shocked it was a girl, I couldn't believe it, I really thought we were having a boy because I had all these people tell me "You look like you're carrying a boy, you look like you're having a boy." So I was just convinced we were having a boy, but to find out she was a girl was just so exciting. So fun. And so, I just was like, wow, I was just, I think I was just in shock like, "You're a girl! Wow! It's so exciting." And then just meeting her and they're like rubbing her down on my chest and doing all that fun stuff, and then they took her away from me and put her on the little cart that's in your room, and they're getting her vitals and getting her APGAR score and that kind of stuff.

So, it was very like ... If I were to compare it to all my other deliveries, it felt very much the same, because she was born, they put her on my chest and then they took her to the cart to do all the weighing and measuring.

Audra Haney: And then, Rebecca, things took a quick turn in a really scary way. Can you tell us what happened next with Molly?

Rebecca Mutz: What changed is a couple minutes in to them trying to get her APGAR score and just checking her out, they kept saying "She needs to cry." You know, "She's not crying, she needs to cry." And I, because I was a first time mom, was literally not afraid at that moment. I wasn't afraid until much later on. I was like "Oh, okay." Some babies don't cry, I guess, right away. They even said, the nurses even said, she looked stunned from birth, and she'll cry here in a minute. And she did cry, it was a very weak cry, but she did kind of cry for a minute or two.

And then they said to us "You know what? We're just going to take her down to the nursery and we just need to check her out a little bit more." And I was kind of like "Okay, fine." And clearly having no ... I just was so innocent, I would say, in my mothering journey of course, that I just had no idea that what they were doing was probably a big red flag that this was not good. I don't think I like, got to see her for probably another hour and a half or so.

Audra Haney: And when did you realize that things were worse than you initially thought they were?

Rebecca Mutz: When we were in the NICU because they brought her to the NICU and when they told us that Flight For Life needed to take her to Children's, that's when I got worried. Because I thought, okay, I don't think they just call Flight For Life for anything. This must mean something. I, that's

when I got a little worried. And then when they put her in that big, they had this really big stretcher that they brought in the room and it had this, like, I mean, life support machine in there, that they put her in and it was just so big and so scary and there were so many buttons and wires and tubes and so much stuff that was like "What is happening?"

And I think that's when I started to get worried.

Audra Haney: And then you were a brand new mom that's found yourself in the middle of this circumstance. What kind of thoughts and emotions were racing through your mind at the time?

Rebecca Mutz: I think my emotions were just, I wanted to be with her. I wanted to go with her to Children's, like, I wanted to ride on the ambulance. Because she was born at 5:30 in the morning and then I think Flight For Life took her to Children's around like, 11, 11 or 12 maybe. And then I didn't see her again until that evening, probably around like, 5 or 6. So we were separated from about noon until like, 6 PM. You know, you just don't want to be away from your baby, but I couldn't go because I'd had an epidural. And so I could not move my legs for like, several hours and then they didn't want to discharge me from the hospital because I had just given birth, but we told them "Sorry, we're not staying. We've just got to leave."

And so were just in a ... Not in a panic, but in a ... We were very driven, to get to where she was so that we could just be with her and hear what the doctors were saying and just be there. So, all I wanted to do was take care of her and I just remember like, staring at her the whole time and wishing she had a blanket and wanting to cover her up and wanting to pick her up but I couldn't because she was intubated, so she had a tube down her throat, and all those different stuff.

So, the doctor told us that they thought there might be something going on with her brain and that they needed to do an MRI.

Audra Haney: And Rebecca, Molly had an MRI the very next day. What did the doctors tell you when those results came back?

Rebecca Mutz: After she had her MRI on Saturday, they said, you know, "We need to speak with you." And my parents were there, so they took us all in to this room and before we got in to this room, my husband who had come and found me, because I was sitting in this like, lactation room, pumping, because I'm making milk now. Jake pops in and he's like "You need to finish pumping. The doctors want to see us." And so, and he said "And I don't think it's going to be good." And he said, "Well, it just doesn't take that many people to share good news." And he was right.

So, the doctors basically told us that she had an aneurysm in her brain and it was in the very center of her brain and it was about the size of a grape. So, not even that big. So, if you were to look at Molly, like, a picture of her. She looked absolutely normal. She had a normal-sized head, she had a normal body, her heart was normal, everything looked normal, except the inside. If you had gone inside her brain and looked, you would see that she had brain damage on both halves of her brain and the aneurysm steals from the brain, and that's why she had brain damage.

So, it had been going on the entire pregnancy and we just didn't know about it. So, for her, if we had done surgery and if we could keep her, she would have had upwards of 20 brain surgeries by the time she was 5 and she would not be able to see, she would not be able to walk and she just would be ... She would be trapped in her body, essentially. So, for her, the next steps would be either we do the surgery or not, and the surgery required like, putting these small coils in the veins that fed the aneurysm, which would slow down the damage that was occurring by the day or whatever, so it would basically buy us more time with her, but it would not reverse brain damage. And apparently there is reversible and irreversible brain damage and her brain damage was irreversible. So there was nothing we could do to get back some of that brain that had been lost throughout the pregnancy.

So, I asked the doctor, you know, if this were your child, what would you do? And he looked at me and he said "I would make her comfortable and enjoy her as long as I could." I still remember the swirls on the carpet, like, the pattern of the carpet squares and just looking at them. Like, that's all I looked at, the whole time, was just these circular patterns in the carpet, while they were talking to us. And it just felt surreal, because I thought, how are we sitting here? Two days ago, I was pregnant. Like, this baby was still in my body, and now she's fighting for her life down the hallway and they're telling us that she's going to die.

Audra Haney: And then, Rebecca, what did your family focus on? You were just given two just tragic options. What did you focus on right after you were given that prognosis?

Rebecca Mutz: My parents were there, and they, my dad, just the faithful pillar, just the pillar of faith that he is, brought his Bible with him, and you know, they gave us our prognosis and then I think the doctors left and said "We'll give you some time to talk about it and decide what you want to do." Sitting in that room, my dad pulled out his Bible, and I don't remember what he read to us but I just remember him reading some scripture to us and then all of us praying together and it was so ... I just think it was so good to be reminded to come back to our knees and ask the Lord to help us make that decision, or to know what to do and how to do it.

Audra Haney: How did you and Jake even begin to process how you would make that decision? What was Jake's initial reaction?

Rebecca Mutz: So, as far as our marriage goes, we ... Of course, Jake wanted to fix, and he wanted to make sure we had covered all the ground that we could. And so he had her medical records sent to Children's Hospital in Salt Lake City. I think he had her medical records sent to like, two other Children's Hospitals. Basically, he was trying desperately to find someone else that maybe had more knowledge about this than the doctors that we were seeing, and he just wanted to make sure that we had exhausted all of our options for her condition. He had this mentality that he needed to save her, or he needed to make it better and what kind of a dad doesn't fix something for their child?

So, he struggled with it from a dad's point of view, just like, I've got to fix it, I've got to save my daughter, you know, which this is so heart-breaking to think about. Because you just can't always fix everything for their kids, and every doctor kept coming back with the same thing, the same prognosis, the same "You should just enjoy her." They all said the same thing. So, which was also affirming but yet, just so sad, to hear the same thing over and over again. He exhausted all of our resources, which was just courtesy, because I think if he hadn't done that because he would have some major regrets and he would even say to you now that he would've done that all over again.

Audra Haney: And Rebecca, you had a totally different initial response. Tell me what you were feeling and what you felt was right for Molly.

Rebecca Mutz: Yeah, we really struggled, because I was, I think God had given me peace earlier than Jake. Because I was at peace with enjoying her as long as we had her and then taking her off life support. I was at peace with that decision, because I felt like, to put her through surgery would be really, really dangerous and really, you know, when we talked about doing surgery with that doctor, he would give us no guarantees that she would even make it through surgery. And I just felt like, what if she were to die during surgery, and I'm not there with her, to be there with her in those last moments?

And so I just did not want her dying on some operating table with a doctor who didn't know her. And not that he wouldn't do everything possible to save her, but he was not me. He's not her mom and I wanted to be with her, selfishly, I wanted to be with her for every single moment of her life. And so, I think that was mostly ... Those were most of the reasons behind all of it. And really, just her physical state, she just, she was, you could just tell she was ... She was just in pain.

I mean, she was declining and she was on medicine and had a tube down her throat. And any time you moved her, you could tell it hurt her

but she couldn't cry, because the tube down her throat. So it was just ... It was just so heart-breaking to watch her be in this state of pain and not be able to just fix it. I just wanted to fix it. And then ultimately I just wanted her to be healed. I just wanted her to be better, whether she's healed here or she's healed in Heaven. I just wanted her to not be in pain anymore.

As a mom, you just don't want your kid to be in pain. It's obviously the Lord that gives you this knowledge and He paves the way for you to make incredibly difficult decisions, but I think I just knew that she was going to be whole in Heaven and if God wanted to heal her, he would do it, because God is so much bigger than any illness, any disease, any complication, anything. God can do whatever He wants in the moment He wants to do it. So, I knew that if He wanted to heal her, he could do it. I was not at all wondering like, could he do this? Can God heal her? No, absolutely, He can do it. Does He want to? Was it God's will for her to be healed, or was it God's will for her to go to Heaven? I knew it then.

Audra Haney: And Rebecca, what steps did you and Jacob make to finally be able to come to a decision, both were just so hard and tragic, but how did you guys make that final decision?

Rebecca Mutz: We ended up sitting down, it may have been like, later on Monday. But we ended up sitting down, I was holding her in this chair and Jake was sitting next to me, and our parents were sitting on the window seat of this hospital room. And we told them "We want you guys to be here to listen, but we don't want your input." And so we sat there with our parents, who just basically were listening and we asked them not to input their two cents on what we should do. And I think we had my brother, Samuel, in the room and we had him walk us through some of the different questions and what do you guys think and kind of helping us process through what we wanted to do and he's a counselor. He was at the time in counseling school, so he was really good at asking us these good questions and really helping us think through how we felt about these different things.

And ultimately, it was our decision. It wasn't our parents' decision, it wasn't my brother's decision, but we needed somebody to walk us through that decision process and think through all the possibilities and what that would mean, to help us arrive at an answer. And so, through that, we were able to come to the conclusion that we needed, we wanted to just enjoy her and we wanted to just take her off life support.

Audra Haney: That is such a hard and selfless decision to have to make and in the wake of that how were you and Jacob able to really soak up the little bit of remaining time that you had with Molly?

Rebecca Mutz:

You know, we ... Our last few days with her, we really wanted to do as much as we could in those ... I mean, it was really like, three days that we had that we were like "All right, let's get a plan." So, once we knew kind of the direction that we were heading with her, we decided to do a baby dedication, so we did that one day. And that was the day that most of our family was still here. Because what ended up happening is our family, most of our family flew out to meet her and be here, but then when they knew we were not going to pursue surgery, I think most of them left, and decided they would come back when her service was. Because they just couldn't, I mean, with jobs and everything, they just couldn't stay for the whole time, not knowing how long it was going to take or anything like that.

So, we just decided, let's fill up our time, and let's just enjoy her as much as possible. So, we dedicated her on Monday, I think, and had our whole family there, which was just so sweet. We got to sing some worship songs, we got to read scripture over her, we got to pray over her, it was just really cool. So, we did that and another day we did a bath, so we got to give her a bath and we did her footprints, and then on Thursday, which is the day we took her off life support, we had our photographer come in who had done my maternity pictures.

She ended up finding out about Molly's condition, and there is a organization, it's a non-profit, it's called Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep and it's a group of photographers nation-wide who donate their time to families who are going to lose their child, have just lost their child, or know that it's coming. And they will come and they will photograph their child however you want them to, and they will edit the images and give them to you for free.

We tried to fill up each day with memorable moments that we could really just enjoy her.

Audra Haney:

And Rebecca, do you mind just describing those last few moments that you and Jacob had with Molly before she went to Heaven?

Rebecca Mutz:

So, it was ... I think it was real fast. I think her body fought longer than her spirit. I think she went real fast, but she just, she had been fading all day and frankly, you could tell her color was going away. She was not as pink, she was more blue. So we knew, even the nurses were telling us "She's telling us that she's ready to go." Which was so affirming as a parent to know, okay, we've made the right decision. It felt so holy, truly. I just felt that we were at the door to Heaven. It just felt so holy. You know, she's ready to go and God is ready to take her.

So, as a mom, I think it was obviously just incredibly heartbreaking to see your child not breathing anymore and not looking at you but I just knew that she was safe in the arms of Jesus and I just ... I can only

imagine that this strong angel came and took her. Wrapped her up in his arms and just took her to Heaven and we won't know until we get to Heaven, until we can see Jesus face to face, but I know that God was there in that moment and that He cared for her so carefully and so gently and I know that she just went and went to him.

I mean, they pulled the plug and she wasn't in any pain because they had medicine for her and all that, but they took her tubes out and we were able to sit with her and hold her like you hold a newborn, not like, with all these tubes. We were able to sit with her on the couch and just look at her and kiss her face and the tape was gone and the tubes were gone and in some ways, it was so nice to get to hold her, but in other ways it was just so heartbreaking, because she was gone.

Her color was gone and her eyes were closed and we knew that they weren't going to open again, not for us, and so it was just so difficult to watch her go meet with Jesus but then at the same time it was, I think it felt so good for my heart to know that she wasn't hurting anymore. And that she wasn't in any pain and she was whole, she was healed, I mean, God was healing her in that moment. He just wasn't with us. He was healing her in His arms and so as a mom, it was a mix of emotions. It was a mix of happy and sad and grief overcoming me but just knowing we had made the right decision and it was so sweet to get to do it with Jake and then our parents came back in the room and they got see her and hold her again and we all got to cry together. So it was really very memorable and I will never forget those moments, of saying goodbye to her on this side. Knowing that she was no longer in pain.

Audra Haney:

So, Rebecca, what truth did you really just cling to in the midst of this unimaginable tragedy?

Rebecca Mutz:

I don't know how people go through something like this and don't have the hope of Heaven. And so, I think that was really what I clung to, was knowing that we will see her again. We will, absolutely will, and that God had something for us that was going to be bigger than this moment. And He has. We've been able to share her story with so many people and we've been able to like, give her book away to tons of grieving families. And I know that her story has brought hope to countless people, and that is so meaningful, knowing that God is using her story, using her life, even still.

And so that is what I clung to in that moment. I knew that God was with us. He was not going to leave us. And He was still good, even though this was horrible and sad and difficult, God was still good. And that was something that my parents really reminded me of, during all that, that whole week, was that either God is sovereign, or He's not. And you have to decide if He's sovereign or not, and of course I decided yes, He is sovereign, and Jake and I decided this together. Like, yes, we know God

is good and He's sovereign and he has a plan for Molly's life and death and he has a plan for our lives after her death. So, that is what I helped ... Clung to, so desperately, in those moments after she died and then those weeks and months. It was just knowing that God's got a plan and I'm just waiting to see what it is.

I can say, now, obviously, looking back, I mean, hindsight is always 20/20. You're able to see so clearly with hindsight that it was just so His will for her to go to Heaven, it was, that was part of our story, that was what God had for us. That was His plan for us, was to walk through grace and to walk through the death of a child and I think He did that because he knew that we would be able to use our story to help others and so I don't know. I'm just so thankful that God seen fit to continue to use her story and it has been almost nine years later, that He is still using her story and I just can't believe it every time someone asks me about her or hasn't heard her story, I just feel so honored that I get to share it again.

Audra Haney:

Thank you again so much for joining us and listening to Molly's precious and eternally significant testimony today. Again, if you missed part one, we share more about the days and months that followed for the Mutts family and a snapshot of how far God has brought them and how far He has taken Molly's story. Please go back and make time to listen to that, her story really isn't complete without both parts. And if you know a friend struggling with grief over a child, you can share these episodes, find today's show notes and transcript at GrahamBlanchard.com.

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So, Rebecca, tell us about your first pregnancy. Was ... From 2008 in to 2009, what was it like being pregnant for the first time?

Speaker 2: I think my very first pregnancy was just so new, so joy-filled, so fun. I didn't have any, like, obviously your first pregnancy you don't have a clue what you're doing or a clue what's going on, it's just, everything is so new and so exciting. To me, at least, it was. I just loved being pregnant. It was just a real sweet time.

Audra Haney: And during your pregnancy, you had normal ultrasounds, you decided to wait and let the gender be a surprise, and you had a very healthy and successful delivery. What was it like meeting your baby for the very first time?

Speaker 2: You know, so, she was born and they put here, like, when they're born, they like put them right on your chest. Or, at least at this hospital they do. So they had put her right on my chest, and I remember meeting her for the first time and she wasn't crying, but my instinct was to shh her, like shh shh shh, like all moms do with babies. They just want to cuddle and shush, and oh, it's okay, mommy's here. Like, I remember saying that to her and just being like "Oh my gosh, it's a girl."

I was just so shocked it was a girl, I couldn't believe it, I really thought we were having a boy because I had all these people tell me "You look like you're carrying a boy, you look like you're having a boy." So I was just convinced we were having a boy, but to find out she was a girl was just so exciting. So fun. And so, I just was like, wow, I was just, I think I was just in shock like, "You're a girl! Wow! It's so exciting." And then just meeting her and they're like rubbing her down on my chest and doing all that fun stuff, and then they took her away from me and put her on the little cart that's in your room, and they're getting her vitals and getting her APGAR score and that kind of stuff.

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Audra Haney: And then, Rebecca, things took a quick turn in a really scary way. Can you tell us what happened next with Molly?

Speaker 2: What changed is a couple minutes in to them trying to get her APGAR score and just checking her out, they kept saying "She needs to cry." You know, "She's not crying, she needs to cry." And I, because I was a first time mom, was literally not afraid at that moment. I wasn't afraid until much later on. I was like "Oh, okay." Some babies don't cry, I guess, right away. They even said, the nurses even said, she looked stunned from birth, and she'll cry here in a minute. And she did cry, it was a very weak cry, but she did kind of cry for a minute or two.

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Audra Haney: And when did you realize that things were worse than you initially thought they were?

Speaker 2: When we were in the NICU because they brought her to the NICU and when they told us that Flight For Life needed to take her to Children's, that's when I got worried. Because I thought, okay, I don't think they just call Flight For Life for anything. This must mean something. I, that's when I got a little worried. And then when they put her in that big, they had this really big stretcher that they brought in the room and it had this, like, I mean, life support machine in there, that they put her in and it was just so big and so scary and there were so many buttons and wires and tubes and so much stuff that was like "What is happening?"

And I think that's when I started to get worried.

Audra Haney: And then you were a brand new mom that's found yourself in the middle of this circumstance. What kind of thoughts and emotions were racing through your mind at the time?

Speaker 2: I think my emotions were just, I wanted to be with her. I wanted to go with her to Children's, like, I wanted to ride on the ambulance. Because she was born at 5:30 in the morning and then I think Flight For Life took her to Children's around like, 11, 11 or 12 maybe. And then I didn't see her again until that evening, probably around like, 5 or 6. So we were separated from about noon until like, 6 PM. You know, you just don't want to be away from your baby, but I couldn't go because I'd had an epidural. And so I could not move my legs for like, several hours and then they didn't want to discharge me from the hospital because I had just given birth, but we told them "Sorry, we're not staying. We've just got to leave."

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you would see that she had brain damage on both halves of her brain and the aneurysm steals from the brain, and that's why she had brain damage.

So, it had been going on the entire pregnancy and we just didn't know about it. So, for her, if we had done surgery and if we could keep her, she would have had upwards of 20 brain surgeries by the time she was 5 and she would not be able to see, she would not be able to walk and she just would be ... She would be trapped in her body, essentially. So, for her, the next steps would be either we do the surgery or not, and the surgery required like, putting these small coils in the veins that fed the aneurysm, which would slow down the damage that was occurring by the day or whatever, so it would basically buy us more time with her, but it would not reverse brain damage. And apparently there is reversible and irreversible brain damage and her brain damage was irreversible. So there was nothing we could do to get back some of that brain that had been lost throughout the pregnancy.

So, I asked the doctor, you know, if this were your child, what would you do? And he looked at me and he said "I would make her comfortable and enjoy her as long as I could." I still remember the swirls on the carpet, like, the pattern of the carpet squares and just looking at them. Like, that's all I looked at, the whole time, was just these circular patterns in the carpet, while they were talking to us. And it just felt surreal, because I thought, how are we sitting here? Two days ago, I was pregnant. Like, this baby was still in my body, and now she's fighting for her life down the hallway and they're telling us that she's going to die.

Audra Haney: And then, Rebecca, what did your family focus on? You were just given two just tragic options. What did you focus on right after you were given that prognosis?

Speaker 2: My parents were there, and they, my dad, just the faithful pillar, just the pillar of faith that he is, brought his Bible with him, and you know, they gave us our prognosis and then I think the doctors left and said "We'll give you some time to talk about it and decide what you want to do." Sitting in that room, my dad pulled out his Bible, and I don't remember what he read to us but I just remember him reading some scripture to us and then all of us praying together and it was so ... I just think it was so good to be reminded to come back to our knees and ask the Lord to help us make that decision, or to know what to do and how to do it.

Audra Haney: How did you and Jake even begin to process how you would make that decision? What was Jake's initial reaction?

Speaker 2: So, as far as our marriage goes, we ... Of course, Jake wanted to fix, and he wanted to make sure we had covered all the ground that we could. And so he had her medical records sent to Children's Hospital in Salt

Lake City. I think he had her medical records sent to like, two other Children's Hospitals. Basically, he was trying desperately to find someone else that maybe had more knowledge about this than the doctors that we were seeing, and he just wanted to make sure that we had exhausted all of our options for her condition. He had this mentality that he needed to save her, or he needed to make it better and what kind of a dad doesn't fix something for their child?

So, he struggled with it from a dad's point of view, just like, I've got to fix it, I've got to save my daughter, you know, which this is so heart-breaking to think about. Because you just can't always fix everything for their kids, and every doctor kept coming back with the same thing, the same prognosis, the same "You should just enjoy her." They all said the same thing. So, which was also affirming but yet, just so sad, to hear the same thing over and over again. He exhausted all of our resources, which was just courtesy, because I think if he hadn't done that because he would have some major regrets and he would even say to you now that he would've done that all over again.

Audra Haney: And Rebecca, you had a totally different initial response. Tell me what you were feeling and what you felt was right for Molly.

Speaker 2: Yeah, we really struggled, because I was, I think God had given me peace earlier than Jake. Because I was at peace with enjoying her as long as we had her and then taking her off life support. I was at peace with that decision, because I felt like, to put her through surgery would be really, really dangerous and really, you know, when we talked about doing surgery with that doctor, he would give us no guarantees that she would even make it through surgery. And I just felt like, what if she were to die during surgery, and I'm not there with her, to be there with her in those last moments?

And so I just did not want her dying on some operating table with a doctor who didn't know her. And not that he wouldn't do everything possible to save her, but he was not me. He's not her mom and I wanted to be with her, selfishly, I wanted to be with her for every single moment of her life. And so, I think that was mostly ... Those were most of the reasons behind all of it. And really, just her physical state, she just, she was, you could just tell she was ... She was just in pain.

I mean, she was declining and she was on medicine and had a tube down her throat. And any time you moved her, you could tell it hurt her but she couldn't cry, because the tube down her throat. So it was just ... It was just so heart-breaking to watch her be in this state of pain and not be able to just fix it. I just wanted to fix it. And then ultimately I just wanted her to be healed. I just wanted her to be better, whether she's healed here or she's healed in Heaven. I just wanted her to not be in pain anymore.

As a mom, you just don't want your kid to be in pain. It's obviously the Lord that gives you this knowledge and He paves the way for you to make incredibly difficult decisions, but I think I just knew that she was going to be whole in Heaven and if God wanted to heal her, he would do it, because God is so much bigger than any illness, any disease, any complication, anything. God can do whatever He wants in the moment He wants to do it. So, I knew that if He wanted to heal her, he could do it. I was not at all wondering like, could he do this? Can God heal her? No, absolutely, He can do it. Does He want to? Was it God's will for her to be healed, or was it God's will for her to go to Heaven? I knew it then.

Audra Haney: And Rebecca, what steps did you and Jacob make to finally be able to come to a decision, both were just so hard and tragic, but how did you guys make that final decision?

Speaker 2: We ended up sitting down, it may have been like, later on Monday. But we ended up sitting down, I was holding her in this chair and Jake was sitting next to me, and our parents were sitting on the window seat of this hospital room. And we told them "We want you guys to be here to listen, but we don't want your input." And so we sat there with our parents, who just basically were listening and we asked them not to input their two cents on what we should do. And I think we had my brother, Samuel, in the room and we had him walk us through some of the different questions and what do you guys think and kind of helping us process through what we wanted to do and he's a counselor. He was at the time in counseling school, so he was really good at asking us these good questions and really helping us think through how we felt about these different things.

And ultimately, it was our decision. It wasn't our parents' decision, it wasn't my brother's decision, but we needed somebody to walk us through that decision process and think through all the possibilities and what that would mean, to help us arrive at an answer. And so, through that, we were able to come to the conclusion that we needed, we wanted to just enjoy her and we wanted to just take her off life support.

Audra Haney: That is such a hard and selfless decision to have to make and in the wake of that how were you and Jacob able to really soak up the little bit of remaining time that you had with Molly?

Speaker 2: You know, we ... Our last few days with her, we really wanted to do as much as we could in those ... I mean, it was really like, three days that we had that we were like "All right, let's get a plan." So, once we knew kind of the direction that we were heading with her, we decided to do a baby dedication, so we did that one day. And that was the day that most of our family was still here. Because what ended up happening is our family, most of our family flew out to meet her and be here, but then when they knew we were not going to pursue surgery, I think most

of them left, and decided they would come back when her service was. Because they just couldn't, I mean, with jobs and everything, they just couldn't stay for the whole time, not knowing how long it was going to take or anything like that.

So, we just decided, let's fill up our time, and let's just enjoy her as much as possible. So, we dedicated her on Monday, I think, and had our whole family there, which was just so sweet. We got to sing some worship songs, we got to read scripture over her, we got to pray over her, it was just really cool. So, we did that and another day we did a bath, so we got to give her a bath and we did her footprints, and then on Thursday, which is the day we took her off life support, we had our photographer come in who had done my maternity pictures.

She ended up finding out about Molly's condition, and there is a organization, it's a non-profit, it's called Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep and it's a group of photographers nation-wide who donate their time to families who are going to lose their child, have just lost their child, or know that it's coming. And they will come and they will photograph their child however you want them to, and they will edit the images and give them to you for free.

We tried to fill up each day with memorable moments that we could really just enjoy her.

Audra Haney:

And Rebecca, do you mind just describing those last few moments that you and Jacob had with Molly before she went to Heaven?

Speaker 2:

So, it was ... I think it was real fast. I think her body fought longer than her spirit. I think she went real fast, but she just, she had been fading all day and frankly, you could tell her color was going away. She was not as pink, she was more blue. So we knew, even the nurses were telling us "She's telling us that she's ready to go." Which was so affirming as a parent to know, okay, we've made the right decision. It felt so holy, truly. I just felt that we were at the door to Heaven. It just felt so holy. You know, she's ready to go and God is ready to take her.

So, as a mom, I think it was obviously just incredibly heartbreaking to see your child not breathing anymore and not looking at you but I just knew that she was safe in the arms of Jesus and I just ... I can only imagine that this strong angel came and took her. Wrapped her up in his arms and just took her to Heaven and we won't know until we get to Heaven, until we can see Jesus face to face, but I know that God was there in that moment and that He cared for her so carefully and so gently and I know that she just went and went to him.

I mean, they pulled the plug and she wasn't in any pain because they had medicine for her and all that, but they took her tubes out and we were able to sit with her and hold her like you hold a newborn, not like, with all these tubes. We were able to sit with her on the couch and just look at her and kiss her face and the tape was gone and the tubes were gone and in some ways, it was so nice to get to hold her, but in other ways it was just so heartbreaking, because she was gone.

Her color was gone and her eyes were closed and we knew that they weren't going to open again, not for us, and so it was just so difficult to watch her go meet with Jesus but then at the same time it was, I think it felt so good for my heart to know that she wasn't hurting anymore. And that she wasn't in any pain and she was whole, she was healed, I mean, God was healing her in that moment. He just wasn't with us. He was healing her in His arms and so as a mom, it was a mix of emotions. It was a mix of happy and sad and grief overcoming me but just knowing we had made the right decision and it was so sweet to get to do it with Jake and then our parents came back in the room and they got see her and hold her again and we all got to cry together. So it was really very memorable and I will never forget those moments, of saying goodbye to her on this side. Knowing that she was no longer in pain.

Audra Haney:

So, Rebecca, what truth did you really just cling to in the midst of this unimaginable tragedy?

Speaker 2:

I don't know how people go through something like this and don't have the hope of Heaven. And so, I think that was really what I clung to, was knowing that we will see her again. We will, absolutely will, and that God had something for us that was going to be bigger than this moment. And He has. We've been able to share her story with so many people and we've been able to like, give her book away to tons of grieving families. And I know that her story has brought hope to countless people, and that is so meaningful, knowing that God is using her story, using her life, even still.

And so that is what I clung to in that moment. I knew that God was with us. He was not going to leave us. And He was still good, even though this was horrible and sad and difficult, God was still good. And that was something that my parents really reminded me of, during all that, that whole week, was that either God is sovereign, or He's not. And you have to decide if He's sovereign or not, and of course I decided yes, He is sovereign, and Jake and I decided this together. Like, yes, we know God is good and He's sovereign and he has a plan for Molly's life and death and he has a plan for our lives after her death. So, that is what I helped ... Clung to, so desperately, in those moments after she died and then those weeks and months. It was just knowing that God's got a plan and I'm just waiting to see what it is.

I can say, now, obviously, looking back, I mean, hindsight is always 20/20. You're able to see so clearly with hindsight that it was just so His will for her to go to Heaven, it was, that was part of our story, that was what God had for us. That was His plan for us, was to walk through grace and to walk through the death of a child and I think He did that because he knew that we would be able to use our story to help others and so I don't know. I'm just so thankful that God seen fit to continue to use her story and it has been almost nine years later, that He is still using her story and I just can't believe it every time someone asks me about her or hasn't heard her story, I just feel so honored that I get to share it again.

Audra Haney:

Thank you again so much for joining us and listening to Molly's precious and eternally significant testimony today. Again, if you missed part one, we share more about the days and months that followed for the Mutts family and a snapshot of how far God has brought them and how far He has taken Molly's story. Please go back and make time to listen to that, her story really isn't complete without both parts. And if you know a friend struggling with grief over a child, you can share these episodes, find today's show notes and transcript at GrahamBlanchard.com.