



March 27, 2024
A Note from Abby Que

Dear Friends,

On September 28, 2015, the world ended. Well, that's what it felt like for me. My first husband, high school sweetheart, and best friend, Kevin Schranz, had taken his life.

I was in a state of disbelief and numbness for almost a year. This was a person I felt deeply connected to spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally.

Reflecting now with time, experience, knowledge, and internal resources I didn't have at the time, we probably had an unhealthy level of attachment and codependency to each other.

But, at the time, we both would have just said we were in love. One soul, two bodies. I never had to explain my thought processes or emotions to him; he knew me intimately and deeply. He was *full* of life, humor, goofiness, intellect, and passion.

All this to say, his suicide in 2015, about a year after being honorably discharged from the Marine Corps, was shocking, heartbreaking, and soul-crushing in ways I can't describe with mere words. My whole world was over. My person was gone. The person I would often spend my drive home from work thinking about how much I loved. Gone.



24/7 CALL, TEXT, CHAT

When Pastor Todd Anderson, the lead pastor at HUMC at the time, arrived at my house later that day, I begged him to pray for Kevin's soul. While I can't remember getting any specific messages about suicide in my church growing up — or anywhere, really — I somehow held

a vague belief that it was considered an “unforgivable sin.”

I was terrified for his soul even before I could begin to process what happened. I’d never thought much about suicide or its impact on the soul before it impacted me. Even now as I work and volunteer with others who have lost someone to suicide, this is a misconception I hear often. Sadly, this usually comes from a “supportive” other, telling the bereaved their loved one is in Hell.

Pastor Todd’s message was clear, however. He looked me in the eyes and told me gently but firmly, **“No sin was committed here, but we can pray for safe passage of his soul.”**

Through tears, I had asked, “But what if he didn’t believe in God?” Kevin’s once strong Catholic faith fostered through years of parochial school seemed to have been challenged by his second deployment to Afghanistan, leaving him anxious and uneasy when talking about religion.

Without missing a beat, Pastor Todd replied, “That doesn’t change what is.” That doesn’t change God’s love, ability to heal, and His incredible power of forgiveness.

This message and the verse displayed prominently in Warehouse 839, **“Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:39)**, are messages I have held close to my heart ever since.

Nothing, not even death — even a suicide death — can separate us from the love of God.

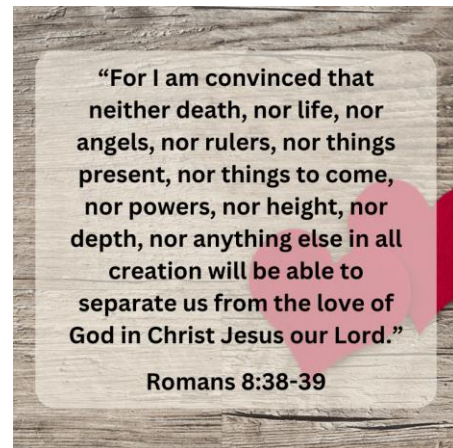
Kevin is with God, his soul healing through the power of Jesus Christ, and is in Heaven.

I have learned to have compassion for those who have died this way and struggle with thoughts of suicide.

And if I can have compassion, surely God is infinitely more compassionate than I am.

These two messages, which I have come to deeply and fully believe, were quite possibly the first seeds of hope planted within me. I say seeds because it took a very long time to have hope again. Those seeds eventually grew, allowing me to know deep within my soul that Kevin is with God. I believe Kevin’s soul was healed through Jesus Christ in Heaven; meanwhile, my soul was healed through Jesus Christ here on Earth.

In 2015, I didn’t have plans to pursue graduate school, change careers to become a mental health therapist, get married again, and have a beautiful child (and a little sibling on the way!), but God had these plans for me.





I believe new life and “resurrection” can happen here on Earth, through the power of the One who forgives our sins, loves us unconditionally, and heals even the most broken among us.

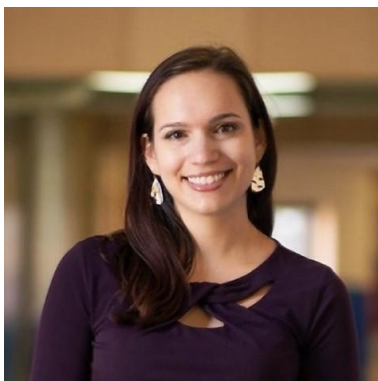
As I reflect on the invitation that God has for us to participate in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, I hope my children grow up truly knowing that *nothing* can separate them from the love, forgiveness, and hope that exists within Jesus Christ throughout their own lives and griefs along the way.

Right now, my son in all his toddlerhood throws tantrums that my husband and I often laugh about later. The wrong shoes, the wrong socks, not being hugged just the right way, you get the idea...

We can usually count on an evening tantrum after we’ve done our bedtime routine and read two books and it’s time to turn out the lights. Sometimes these tantrums involve throwing, hitting, and banging his head.

I *always* make sure to hug him and remind him that I love him. No matter what. This is the message I hope my children receive loudly, clearly, and firmly: they are loved *no matter what*. No amount of bad behavior, sin, despair, mental illness, or hopelessness can separate us from the love of God. Just like no amount of screaming at the top of your lungs because you can’t run in the parking lot will separate these children from the love of their very tired parents.

Abby



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P.S. HUMC is offering a **Youth Suicide Awareness & Prevention learning event for adults** on Wednesday, May 1, 6:30-8pm, led by Micah Morgan, LPC, Nationwide Children’s Hospital Behavioral Health Suicide Prevention Specialist. You can join either in person or on Zoom. Details are [HERE](https://hilliardumc.org/grow/adults/learning-opportunities/#suicide).
(<https://hilliardumc.org/grow/adults/learning-opportunities/#suicide>)



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God Loves You  No Matter What

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