**Nathan – 'Gift of God'**

Our son, Nathan, died only 17 minutes after he was born. A few days afterwards, I wrote the following piece. Nathan would be nineteen years old now and I share this simply that it might bless others. The origin of the name 'Nathan' is a Hebrew name meaning' 'gift of God'. May the God of all comfort be your strength and shield.

“To see Nathan being born was fantastic. As doctors talked about doing a caesarean, Nathan simply decided it was time for him to come out. He was tiny; he weighed less than 2 pounds yet looked like a perfect little boy. Then to find out that there was a problem with Nathan’s heart and he was not going to survive, took us from the highest heights to the deepest depths. In the end Nathan lived for 17 minutes.

God gave us a very special gift albeit for a short time and it remains an enormous privilege that we could see him and hold him before he died. Although, it was, of course, incredibly hard to receive him and then give him back.

On Tuesday, I sat with Nathan’s open coffin, which was no bigger than a shoebox. What struck me as I looked at our tiny son was that this was not Nathan. This was simply Nathan’s body, which he did not need anymore. We know without a shadow of doubt that Nathan is no pain or distress. He is much better off where he is than he would have been with us. In our world of conflict and suffering, Nathan has peace and joy.

As believers in Jesus, we know that we have not lost our son, because we know exactly where he is. We also know that the One who welcomed our little boy into heaven is the same One who is holding us in our grief. Marion and I echo these words I came across this week: ‘I know the immovable comes down. I know the invisible appears to me. I know that He who is far outside of all creation, takes me within Himself and hides me in His arms.’

We don’t understand the whys, but we do know that God makes nothing in vain and loves all he has made. We also know that we don’t need to understand, because our knowledge and experience tells us that God is a God of grace and goodness and we can trust Him completely.

The Bible says, “I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Our comfort is that our heavenly Father knows what it is like to lose a son. He understands. His Son rose again and he is our hope and our future. We will never forget Nathan; his life has changed our lives forever. Maybe one day we will understand more of why this has happened, maybe we won’t, but we can look forward to one day seeing Nathan and holding him again.”

A close up of white flowers

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Phil Grasham

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