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Surrendering Your Dreams to God

Guest: Laura Story
From the series: I Give Up (Day 1 of 2)
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Bob: When singer/songwriter Laura Story's husband, Martin, experienced a traumatic brain tumor more than a decade ago—things got very challenging on a practical level.

Laura: It's been a challenge also with our faith—trying to understand how a good, how a God who loves us and has a good plan for our lives—why He would allow such hardship, and why He wouldn't answer our prayers necessarily the way—we've been praying for complete healing for Martin for 13 years now.

And have not seen that yet—we still believe God's capable of it, but we're learning what it looks like to trust His timing, to trust His plan above our own. Just because He's not working the way that we think that He should—it doesn't mean that He's not at work in ways that are best for us and that bring Him the most glory.

Bob: This is *FamilyLife Today*. Our hosts are Dave and Ann Wilson, and I'm Bob Lepine. We'll hear from Laura Story today about how she learned that sometimes blessings come from raindrops. Stay with us.

And welcome to *FamilyLife Today*. Thanks for joining us. This is a little different for us today because we have a live studio audience joining us. [Cheers and clapping]

Dave: Wow.

Ann: That's a good audience.

Dave: It is.

Bob: You haven't done one of these recordings with an audience; right?

Dave: I'm sort of liking this. I think we should do this everyday. [Laughter]

Ann: Would you join us in the studio everyday?

Bob: Here's the reason why we brought a live studio audience in—because we have a very special guest joining us. She is a *Grammy award* winning, singer/songwriter, and the former bass player for Silers Bald. Would you welcome Laura Story?

Dave: There you go! [Cheering and clapping]

Laura: Thank you guys. Thanks so much.

Dave: You didn't know he was going to pull out the bass player, did you?

Laura: No, I did not. That was a long time ago.

Bob: We should also say that you're responsible, pretty much singlehandedly, for launching Chris Tomlin's career; right?

Laura: I don't know if you can say singlehandedly. [Laughter] You're giving me a little more credit than I deserve.

Bob: You wrote a song—what was it? 2000 and ?

Laura: Back when I was in college, so it was 2000 something, and yeah, Chris found my song, *Indescribable*, and recorded it and it was his first radio single.

Bob: So, we've got to keep order. Would you play and lead us in *Indescribable*?

Laura: Sure.

Bob: Okay, let's do that.

Laura (on piano) and audience:

From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea
Creation's revealing Your majesty
From the colors of fall to the fragrance of spring
Every creature unique in the song that it sings
All exclaiming

Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God

Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go
Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light
Yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night
None can fathom

Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God
You are amazing God

Indescribable, uncontainable,

You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
All powerful, untameable,
Awestruck we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God
Indescribable, uncontainable,
You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name.
You are amazing God
Incomparable, unchangeable
You see the depths of my heart and You love me the same
You are amazing God
You are amazing God

[Clapping]

Laura: *Indescribable*, I wrote, I really was just driving down the interstate near Asheville, North Carolina one day and just beautiful sunset and it was this gorgeous landscape I was looking at. And I was reminded of, you know, in the Psalms where David says, “The heavens are declaring the glory of God.” I was really awestruck by the beauty and there were no words to describe the beauty I was experiencing right there. It was a reminder to me of the fact that He truly is indescribable. He’s an indescribable God.

Bob: As I’ve talked to people about you and known you . . .

Laura: Oh, no.

Dave: Uh, oh.

Bob: I’ve just found myself telling people that Laura Story is one of those people who has faced an unusual amount of adversity in her life and reflects joy every time I see her. I want to know how you do that.

Laura: Bob, thank you. Man, that was overwhelming. We’ve known each other for . . .

Bob: A while.

Laura: Quite a while now. The adversity that Bob refers to—so, I’ve been married to my husband, Martin, for 15 years now. Within the first two years of our marriage, Martin was diagnosed with a brain tumor. The plan we had for our life, the plan that we had so graciously

Ann: Planned for God.

Laura: Yes. [Laughter] We had drafted it up—we just needed Him to sign off on it. [Laughter] Very quickly we realized that this was not the plan. This was not what our lives were going to look like. And Martin—you know we have a wonderful life, four fantastic kids, but Martin still lives with a disability. He lives with a vision deficit and a memory deficit. It’s a challenge to us, just in daily living—he faces a lot of challenges.

And it’s been a challenges also with our faith—trying to understand how a good and—a God who loves us and has a good plan for our lives—why He would allow such hardship and why

He wouldn't answer our prayers necessarily the way . . . We've been praying for complete healing for Martin for 13 years now, and have not seen that yet.

We still believe God's capable of it, but we're learning what it looks like to trust His timing, to trust His plan above our own. Just because He's not working the way that we think that He should, it doesn't mean that He's not at work in ways that are best for us and that bring Him the most glory.

Ann: Did you ever go through a time that you struggled with that? With what God was doing? Like God, “What are you doing?”

Laura: You're saying that in the past tense? [Laughter] Oh, man. We're always struggling with that on some level. One of the neat things about the scripture is that they actually give space for that. I love the Psalms because they remind us as believers that we don't have to always have this tidy, put-together faith. You see a guy like David—one of my favorite Psalms is Psalm 13, where he says, “How long, O Lord. Will you forget me forever? How long are you going to hide from me?”

I was so comforted to see not just that David said that, as a man after God's own heart, but that God included it. However that worked, with Him compiling this God-breathed scripture together that He includes a guy who shows doubt, that is honest about feeling forsaken.

What I love about David is that he ends with this volitional decision, “I will trust in your lovingkindness. My heart will rejoice in Your salvation. I will sing to you because you've dealt bountifully with me.”

He's saying, “I've looked back on your track record of faithfulness in my life, and even though I don't understand what you're doing right now, I believe that you're a good God and I'm going to continue to praise You.

Bob: Think about this—that's not just a song that David wrote out of his own personal experience, but it's in the hymnbook of Israel.

Laura: Oh, yes.

Bob: So they say, “Everybody, get out your hymnbook and let's all sing . . . “

Laura: About David's bad day. [Laughter]

Bob: Which is our bad day, which is what all of us have gone through. And the invitation that God gives us to lament is part of God acknowledging, “I know you're frail. I know you're feeble.” And in the process of being honest about what you're going through, you're going to find strength and even joy. You've been able to find joy in your circumstances, even when it's been hard.

Did you think? No, of course you didn't. [Laughter] You couldn't have thought, in the midst of dealing with Martin's adversity . . . I know that songwriters often find their greatest inspiration in

the midst of their deepest pain. But you couldn't realize that there's a Grammy award in the midst of this circumstance right here. [Laughter]

Laura: Well, it's interesting how God's timing, because that's something that I've had to learn: to release my timetable and follow His. One of the things that happened to us within 48 hours of Martin being diagnose with his brain tumor—I was offered a record deal. We had been going along just fine for however long and I had submitted some songs and no one seemed to like them and then all of a sudden this one label called. It was this thing that I'd been praying for and really hoping for, and then all of a sudden, Martin gets this diagnosis.

So, I immediately had to say to them, “Thank you, and I can't believe I'm saying this, but no, I'm not able to do this. I really need to focus on my husband's health right now.” So, they came back probably three months later, and six months later, and then nine months later. Finally about a year later, they came back and I was kind of irritated. I remember saying to them, “We are more broken than we've ever been.”

I'm also the worship leader at my church and we're walking through such a hard time and it was really tough getting up there and singing the—how good is our God—songs when my life was falling apart.

I remember my wonderful record label saying, “Laura, those are the songs we want you to write. We want you to write songs, not about how to worship God and praise Him when everything's going well, but how do you keep worshiping Him and following Him and pledging your life to Him when it's falling apart.” It was kind of an epiphany to me and I thought, “Well, I'll try it.” [Laughter]

Bob: Give that a whirl.

Laura: I'll give it a whirl. And it was amazing just to see that it was a part of my processing what we were walking through was writing songs. The more people that would hear those songs—they'd say, “Yeah, that's where we are.” I started to realize that so many people were living in that . . .

Ann: Pain.

Laura: Yes. In the midst of the trial, rather than on the other side. And maybe even that's where faith happens. That's where praise needs to happen. Not on the other side, when we see this wonderful ending. I grew up thinking of giving wonderful testimony to God as like a christian “saved by the bell” episode. [Laughter] There's this problem and then God intervenes and everything's great now, and at the end we can sing some fun song for the finale.

Dave: In 30 minutes.

Laura: Yes! All of it resolved in 30 minutes! I think that's kind of what I thought about worship. That's what I thought about praise. And that's what I thought about giving testimony to God's goodness. The truth is that—no, it happens in the midst of it. It's in the midst of that trial, and if my faith requires the tidy bow or requires that ending, then I'm not quite sure if that's faith.

Faith is praising Him when we don't see the ending, when we don't understand what He's up to.

Dave: And obviously your song that Bob is referring to reminds all of us—as soon as we hear it, as soon as we hear that chorus, we're like, “Yeah, you're right.”

Bob: So, you guys want to hear the song, *Blessings*, from Laura Story?

[Clapping]

Laura on piano:

We pray for blessings, we pray for peace
Comfort for family, protection while we sleep
We pray for healing, for prosperity
We pray for Your mighty hand to ease our suffering
And all the while, You hear each spoken need
Yet love us way too much to give us lesser things

'Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops
What if Your healing comes through tears
What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near
What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise

We pray for wisdom, Your voice to hear
We cry in anger when we cannot feel You near
We doubt Your goodness, we doubt Your love
As if every promise from Your word is not enough
And all the while, You hear each desperate plea
And long that we'd have faith to believe

'Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops
What if Your healing comes through tears
What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near
What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise

When friends betray us
When darkness seems to win
We know the pain reminds this heart
That this is not
This is not our home

It's not our home

'Cause what if Your blessings come through raindrops
What if Your healing comes through tears
And what if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near

What if my greatest disappointments or the aching of this life
Is the revealing of a greater thirst this world can't satisfy
And what if trials of this life-
The rain, the storms, the hardest nights
Are Your mercies in disguise

[Clapping]

Bob: How often do you find yourself, reminding yourself of that?

Laura: God, He knew what I needed to sing over and over again. There are still nights that I sing that song and I have to ask for grace from the audience, because I just sit there and weep. It's a work that God is still doing in my life, very much so.

[Studio]

Bob: Well, we've been listening to a portion of a conversation we had with singer/songwriter, Laura Story, with our staff listening in on that conversation. There is something about biblical truth expressed in music that I think takes us to a different place and helps us think differently about God's word.

Ann: I think you're exactly right, Bob. It goes down to the very soul. It brings out emotion, healing—it really goes to the very center of our being.

Dave: It's almost like there's a string—a guitar string—between our brain and our heart. [Laughter] I'm sort of kidding, but it's like music connects those. I've often thought as a pastor and preacher that you can preach a message and there's the power of the word, which is powerful. But then when you add music, it seems to go deeper. Being with Laura was such a—I mean, I know that's the name of her song—I was going to say blessing. [Laughter] But, it was. She was so real and authentic, but then when she sang—it's like you got a view into her soul and it connected into our soul.

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