

So, I'll be honest when I say that I don't really remember Felix's baptism all that much. I was there, 100%, but the moment doesn't super stick out in my brain for me. The moment that does? The first time we took him Up North with us and introduced him to the Great Lakes. He was only like five months old, and we went Up North during one of the most brutally hot weeks I can ever remember experiencing in all my years of traveling to northern Michigan. He spent most of the week in nothing but his diaper, his little baby rolls on full display as he sat in his light blue Bumbo chair, totally annoyed that he was so warm.

One of the days we were there, we finally trekked over to the beach, the only beach we have ever gone to in all of our years of going Up North. It feels like it's ours, usually always fairly empty, always peaceful, our own little, quiet piece of heaven where countless numbers of memories were made amongst the sand and the waves. I remember everything about Felix in that moment, his chubby cheeks, the blue and orange striped pants he had on, the ridiculous plaid Newsie cap Kristin and Jon put on him constantly as a baby that was downright adorable. And most of all, I remember the moment that my sister dipped her baby boy's toes in the water of Lake Huron for the first time. We have pictures of those toes, one little drop of water dangling off of them, and in that moment, it was like

something settled into place. These waters that had molded and shaped the core of my family, that had provided the soundtrack to countless summers, had now touched his frail skin and it felt like its own weird moment of baptism. I mean Felix has always been ours, from the second Kristin told us she was pregnant, that little boy was adored, but in that moment, on the shores of our corner of our beloved lake, he really became *ours*.

I think we all have those moments we can think back on...because let's face it, for most of us, we don't remember our baptisms. We've probably been told the stories, but were too young to remember it ourselves. But we all have our moments, the moments when it dawned bright and beautiful in our minds that we were God's. That we were wrapped in the loving arms of God's family and nothing was going to let us go, ever. Most of those moments probably didn't even happen in a church if we're being honest, they simply happened in our *lives* and we are permanently changed because of them.

For the women who came to the tomb in the earliest hours of that first resurrection dawn, this was probably their moment. I mean, sure they'd known Jesus, walked through his ministry with him, but imagine, imagine, being the first ones to get the message that somehow, some way their Lord and Savior, their friend, had defeated death, broken open the walls of a

tomb, and was running loose in the world. Imagine being the first ones to see Jesus in the glory of his resurrection and to be told they don't need to be afraid, to be told they get to be the first ones to share the good news, to be told that this resurrection isn't just for him, but for *all* of God's children. Talk about a moment that makes you realize you are God's. Talk about a moment that takes your breath away and makes you realize you are forever wrapped in the arms of your God who loves you so much that God did this incredible thing through Jesus.

In the midst of a world gone a little bit mad, may this morning bring you that same reminder, may it be another one of those moments, because honestly, it's a miracle that we can sit here together, even when the world's going crazy, and see the sun coming up, feel the cool waters of baptism on our foreheads, and be reminded that God always wins. That God always wins and that we belong to God. I mean take that in...here this morning as we welcome the dawn and the promise of the resurrection, when we remember that God is powerful enough to do unbelievable things, that that same God is the one who made us, claimed us, and flat out adores us. I mean the fact that the God of the resurrection is also the same God that loves lil ole me and lil ole you, is just downright remarkable.

Ya know, in that moment when Felix was so little, we had no idea what the world was going to bring him; all the bumps and bruises and tubes in his ears, the sometimes trouble sleeping, and the having to walk through not only his grandma but also his dad being sick, the sometimes frustration with his baby brother, and ya know the myriad of way too ridiculously hilarious things that that kid does to make me laugh. In that moment, we had no idea how crazy his little world would get, all we knew was that that moment mattered, our little family gathered on the shorelines, loving him so hard. In that moment, everything else fell away and it was just us and an overwhelmingly crazy sense of peace and happiness.

I know the world feels like a lot right now, more than a lot, but...for these few moments, in the quiet light of the dawn, may we find that same sense of peace and happiness. May we pause and just breathe it in, who we are, God's, completely and totally. We don't know what the future is going to hold and what may come our way, but for now? For this very moment, let that fall away and let the only thing that matters be this...Christ is risen...resurrection wins...and you, my dear beloved sibling, are God's.

**AMEN!!!**