



And It Was Beautiful: Celebrating Life in the Midst of the Long Good-Bye

Kara Tippetts

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“I was here. I saw beauty. I embraced it.”

—Kara Tippetts

How do you live out extravagant love in the everyday moments? How do you celebrate grace when your life turns out differently than the one you dreamed?

Kara Tippetts discovered how to find joy in the small moments of life. She learned how to hold tight to hope even while battling intense physical and emotional pain. And she lived out the truth that God can redeem any story.

In her final book, Kara offers gentle reflections on living and dying well. She invites us to cultivate soft hearts even when we face great disappointment. Her ideas for living are hard-won, wrestled with in the crucible of family, illness, and faith. And her constant reminder is that whether we are in the midst of dark days or mundane moments Jesus is always there, life is surprisingly beautiful, and God is forever good.

And It Was Beautiful: Celebrating Life in the Midst of the Long Good-Bye Details

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From Reader Review And It Was Beautiful: Celebrating Life in the Midst of the Long Good-Bye for online ebook

Melissa Lindsey says

This is an excellent collection of blog posts written by Kara Tippets of Mundane Faithfulness collected and published after her death. Readers who came to know Kara through her previous books, but have not read her blog, may appreciate this collection of some of the best of her work. It makes her writing accessible for those who are not blog readers and allows those of us who came to know Kara only as she was dying a chance to know better how she lived in the middle of her long goodbye.

Kara's writing, like her life and death, is beautiful and honest. She stays faithful to her truth and her people. She presents a philosophy of life that can be appreciated both by those who know the end of their life is near and those who do not. As I read through this collection of blog posts, I felt a deep longing to live a better life in the midst of my own mundane, everyday existence. I don't know how long my good-bye is, but I do know that I want my own life to be beautiful to those who happen to be a part of it. Kara's book is a great encouragement to do that, no matter what the source of our challenges might be.

I had the privilege of reading an ARC copy of this book, thanks to Netgalley and David C. Cook. I don't know if the final copy will have this or not, but I did find myself longing for dated posts. I can understand why it may not be included, but I would have found it helpful to know how much time transpired between some of the posts.

Erin says

I think you could say that Kara Tippets has become one of my heroes. This courageous woman faced aggressive metastasized cancer in her late 30s, and although it did claim her life in 2015, she never stopped seeking to glorify God and exhort others through their own times of hard. This book is a collection of Kara's blog posts over the final years of her life, the years she was fighting cancer. It is a beautiful look into the heart of a woman who loved God and her family well even through such awful devastation. I first met Kara in her book *The Hardest Peace*, and I would recommend both that book and this one to all who are struggling with what life has brought them.

"In our many different ways, we're all living in the desperation of life that hasn't turned out like we'd planned," Kara says on page 155. Kara never focused solely on the shattered dreams of her own life. She recognized that there are hard things for each of us in this world, and the way she wrote allows us to connect our pain and difficulty with her words of encouragement. That's what makes these books such precious gifts, because these words meet us in our deep needs and fears. "We are all desperately afraid of what's hard, but once we face it, it's possible we find a new joy we hadn't known before." (Page 131)

Kara speaks emphatically on the importance of love, specifically loving well. "Love matters, always." That simple sentence from page 236 makes a great motto. Our relationships should always be marked by love, even when they are difficult and it has to be tough love. Hopefully most of our relationships are positive, life-giving ones that build each other up. That is important for when hard times arrive, as I agree with Kara's point on page 171: "The investment in love you make today will affect your tomorrows. Suffering will come, I promise. Work at building the foundation so when the storms come, you can stand, together."

My favorite chapter was the one called Five Thoughts on Dying Well. They're five really good thoughts for

those of us who want to live well, too. Kara's perspective on "the long goodbye" of cancer makes you stop and think about your own priorities and goals. What is important? Am I doing those things? Am I living well so that one day, may God be gracious that it be many years from now, I can die well?

None of us are guaranteed more than today. We do take it for granted that we'll have more, and it's not wrong to have hopes, dreams, and goals for the future. But don't let those stand in the way of intentional living today. We have today. What are we going to do with it? "A bucket list? No, I don't need one. I'm so rich. It's relationships that matter. And for me, paying attention to the precious gift of today is the only thing on my list." (Page 113)

Kara bravely faced death and leaves behind a legacy of love for her husband, her four young children, her friends, and those who only know her through her written words. She lived well. May our own lives be marked by such grace and beauty even amidst the hard.

I received my copy of the book in exchange for this honest review. All opinions are my own.

This review originated at <http://reviewsbyerin.livejournal.com>

Teri-K says

Life can be hard. Terribly sad things happen, people suffer and hurt. This happens to Christians just like it happens to everyone else. Unfortunately, parts of the modern Western church have fallen into the idea that if you love God well enough, you won't ever have to hurt, that enough prayer and faith can fix everything. This leaves those who aren't healed or miraculously delivered believing one of two things - either God doesn't really love them as much as He does others, or they're doing something wrong. The truth is we live in a fallen world that contains suffering. People die, they lose their jobs, they're mistreated, robbed... they get terrible diseases that cause pain and eventually kill them. Like Kara Tippets.

This book is a compilation of blog post Tippets made after she got a diagnosis of cancer. Mother of four, pastor's wife, Tippets went through the chemo, surgery, hair loss, nausea, weakness... all that the diagnosis can mean. And then - she died. But she left behind her faith in the form of her life and her writing and her family and friends. She's honest without being brutal. She speaks of the peace and the fear. The love and the loneliness. The refining of suffering which breaks through our illusion of knowledge and strength and reminds us that we are all "like grass", withering and dying away. And the joy one can still find in knowing that there is more to life than what we see and experience here, the grace that is always there for us, if we will only look for it.

If you're suffering this book will alternately encourage and shame you - in a nice way, of course. :) If you're not, then read it for the insight you'll gain and the compassion it will develop for those who are. And remember to look for the grace - always.

I received a free copy of this book in return for an honest review.

Emily Curtiss says

Could not put this one down!

Becky says

I became aware of Kara Tippetts' story and her blog, Mundane Faithfulness, shortly before her death last March. Like most people (I assume, anyway), I don't like thinking about death—especially death we would consider "untimely." I didn't read much of Kara's blog for that reason. But recently I learned about And It Was Beautiful, which is mainly a collection of writings from Kara's blog, and something told me to read it. I'm glad I did.

I picked up And It Was Beautiful with a bit of trepidation, fearing I was facing 250 pages that would make me want to cry. I couldn't have been more wrong. The subtitle, "Celebrating Life in the Midst of the Long Good-Bye," so clearly communicates what Kara did through her writing—she struggled, she cried, she questioned ... but she also found humor in the pain, lived life to the fullest, and trusted in the One who knew the number of her days.

Yes, I did cry as I read the book's final pages, but I closed the book thankful for the gift of being able to see the grace, dignity, and hope that Kara left behind as her legacy.

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from Litfuse Publicity Group. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own.

Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says

And It Was Beautiful is a quick read but wow – there's a lot packed in that small space! Her voice, her writing style, make you feel as though you've been friends for years. Her love for her family, for her friends, for her Jesus is so evident in each poignant vignette, and her journey with cancer – and the gift of grace through it all – will engage all of your emotions. While at first you may think that a book like this would be depressing, it is anything but a downer. Yes, you will ugly-cry. But you will also smile and laugh and be overwhelmingly reminded of the goodness of God and His faithfulness. Kara's testimony is raw at times, witty at others, but always always beautiful.

Read more at [Reading Is My SuperPower](#)

Brent Phillips says

For those who have had cancer touch their lives or the lives of loved ones, the notion that any part of it could be a gift sounds offensive and insensitive. Yet it was this that drew me to And It Was Beautiful and author Kara Tippetts. Kara was diagnosed with breast cancer in the summer of 2012 and passed away in March 2015 at 38, leaving behind a husband and four children. And It Was Beautiful is a posthumous collection of writings from her blog Mundane Faithfulness.

To call the book moving is to fail to do it proper justice. Of course, dealing with the topics of death, grief and the suffering that comes with a debilitating disease is going to be emotional. For Kara however, along with the anger and frustration there is also an incredible opportunity to see grace revealed in the midst of this great pain. It is here that Kara finds the gift of cancer such as how she and her family have found an incredible

love and compassion, from family and friends who have disrupted their own comfortable lives to enter into and join in their suffering. She writes that they have:

“stepped into a house of hurting kids, a tired daddy, and a sick mama, and they’ve offered comfort and hope in our dark season. I’m not brave, but they are.”

Along with the deeply personal and often difficult to read passages where Kara struggles with failing her own expectations of her role as a mother due to her sickness she also raises some through provoking questions such as when she asks “how does one die well?” or “how do you live well when the living you’re living isn’t the living you expected?”. They may seem trite, but from Kara’s voice they are meaningful challenges to our assumptions regarding life and death.

Kara’s writings invite us to glimpse a different perspective on suffering. One that acknowledges the loss and regret, for instance when a friend asks what her heart hungers for she replies with “one word and a bunch of tears: time”, but also that such experiences bring change, growth and refinement. Most of all, it is through suffering, through the depletion of our own strength that we find God waiting for us:

“Some of my most difficult conversations I have had in the midst of my cancer have been with believers that do not see God in a hard plan. So many believe that hard comes and then God makes it better. It is so easy to forget that our salvation came by way of the hard of a cross.”

And It Was Beautiful is an emotional celebration of life that will bless all with the courage to read it.

Rachel Lundy says

For nearly three years Kara Tippetts wrote regularly on her blog, Mundane Faithfulness. Kara was a church planter’s wife and mother of four, and she wrote about her life and journey with cancer. Kara passed away in March 2015, but her words continue to encourage and inspire today.

Through her blog, and through her books, Kara Tippetts has shown the world how to live well and die well. And It Was Beautiful is Kara’s final book, and it is primarily a collection of many of her blog posts. Those who have enjoyed reading Kara’s blog will love owning a copy of her blog in book form!

In this little book, Kara shares beauty and joy in the midst of the very hard grief of dying as a young wife and mother. Kara shares about the grace and peace that can be found in times of suffering. You will be encouraged to live life with joy and love, and you will learn to see beauty in the hard things in life.

Because this book is primarily a compilation of blog posts, the chapters are very short. Many of the chapters are only two pages long, making it easy to read in small segments of time. For those who struggle with being able to read due to fatigue and brain fog, this may be a book that you could read! The chapters are short and sweet, but give warm encouragement and much to think about.

I greatly enjoyed reading And It Was Beautiful. Like all of Kara’s books, I read this one twice! I will keep it on my bookshelf to read again when I’m in need of encouragement from someone who has lived through hard days and found grace and peace in the midst of it all.

I received a copy of this book from the publisher, David C. Cook, through Litfuse Publicity. All opinions are my own.

Jeanie says

Jesus help me see you. That has been Kara Tippets only hope in her fight and loss to cancer. It should be ours as well. It is in this fight that Christianity is more about life lived instead of Christianity as an event.

These short words of Kara's during her battle with cancer many times left me in tears, admiring her heroism and her weakness. She does bare the "I don't have it all together". I think that is why so many can relate to her story. She does not make her story the story but she makes I want Jesus real because ultimately that is all she has and ultimately that is all we have. She is reminding us to pursue life, love and Jesus. We forget. We get distracted. We get busy. We get discouraged. But it is in those times, we strive to know Jesus. To rest in him.

My favorite and the times that broke my heart is her cry for her children. She loved being a mamma. She saw each of her children and knew them. What encouraged them and what discouraged them and she took that job in and saw joy in it. She saw joy in her community of people that we can miss because we think we have all the time in the world. In her life that is broken because of cancer, she is reminding others what really matters. So if you are tired of the events of Christianity and want life, I would encourage you to encounter the life that Kara fought for.

Some of the quotes that encouraged and inspired me are as follows....

Every moment seems so special. The truth is, it is. That is the gift of cancer. The struggle is the fear. The fear of this amazing world of people I love more than anything marching forward without me in it. There is a lot of pride and arrogance in that thinking. A friend and I were talking about the control that comes with thinking life is as it should be with us in it. But the truth is, life is exactly planned. Exactly numbered. My job in this day is live near to Jesus. To seek faithfulness in this day. I want to have a peaceful heart that embraces each gift of joy as it comes.

Someone surrendered to God; not resigned by surrendered. And there is a difference. And that difference was persuasive in the most naturally wooing of ways.

I have lived in the reflection of the Gospel as my husband has loved me in my sin, ugly and unlovely. Acceptance with Jason has nothing to do with performance but everything to do with his understanding of how loved he is by God in his own weakness and sin.

We are all desperately afraid of what's hard, but once we face it, it's possible we find a new joy we hadn't known before.

Each breath is an Amen.

Getting honest with ourselves does not make us unacceptable to God. It does not distance us from God, but draws us to him as nothing else can and opens us anew to the flow of grace. While Jesus calls each of us to a more perfect life, we cannot achieve it on our own. To be alive is to be broken; to be broken is to stand in need of grace. It is only through grace that any of us could dare to hope that we could become more like Christ. Brennan Manning I am needy and that drives me to grace.

Her words communicate a the great love and grace of God thru suffering.

A Special Thank You to David C Cook and Netgalley for the ARC and the opportunity to post an honest review.

Karen says

I read Kara's other two books about 1 1/2 years ago. Finally got my hands on this book. It is again filled with Kara's beautiful thoughts as she faced breast cancer. I was hoping for a letter from Jason to finish her story on Earth and update us on her family. If you want inspiration when going through hard, this is a good book for that.

Amanda Jones says

Several years ago, my sister-in-law shared a blog post on her Facebook page that was written by the mom of one of her Pre-K students. This woman - a pastor's wife, mom of four, and beloved friend to many - had recently been diagnosed with breast cancer and she blogged as a way to update her friends and family on her illness. Something about that first post I read drew me in, and after I'd tucked my kids into bed that evening, I went back in the archives and read the entire blog from the beginning. Over the next couple of hours, Kara Tippetts worked her way into my heart.

Kara blogged regularly throughout her cancer journey, and her readership grew steadily. She wrote honestly about the battle she was fighting, how it affected her not only physically, but spiritually as well. One of Kara's goals was to find God's goodness in the midst of her suffering, and He was faithful to help her find it. Kara wrote beautifully about this in her first book, *The Hardest Peace*. In her last months, she also coauthored *Just Show Up*, a book about living in community and walking through times of suffering with others.

Kara's blog crashed awhile back, and sadly, all of her posts were lost. Thankfully, she had saved them to her computer, but the site was unable to be restored. Her final book, *And It Was Beautiful*, is a compilation of many of those posts, along with other writings, and it is SO good. Even though I'd read most of it as the original blog, and I know how Kara's earthly story would come to an end, I was still completely drawn in. Turning the page to Act Four in the book, and seeing the chapter title, "Letter to My Readers Upon My Death", caused a lump to form in my throat and my heart to sink again. It obviously wasn't a surprise to me, but it still took me back to the day Kara went Home and the tears came again...for her husband, for her kids, for her community. They have all modeled well how to grieve with hope. She was so loved.

As the one year marker of Kara's "[flying] away to the land of no more tears" (p. 246) approaches, reading this book has been a fresh reminder to me of the ways Kara inspired us to look for the grace in every situation. How very blessed I was by her words, and how very much I miss her voice here on earth.

Disclaimer - I received a complimentary copy of this book from Litfuse Publicity in exchange for my honest review.

Bill says

Kara Tippetts had cancer. It overcame her body. She died in early 2015. This book is adapted from her blog, Mundane Faithfulness. (It reads as a warm memoir, not a series of blog entries.) Kara had a lovely way with words. Sweet, not sugary. Kind, not always nice. Realistic, not harsh. Mostly women will read this. It is good for men too. My wife was diagnosed with and healed from leukemia during Kara's last lap around the sun. Instead of bitterness and despair, Kara and my wife clung to hope in God and his faithfulness no matter what. From this book I better understand my wife's experience. It also helps me heal from my role as a caregiver. I recommend this to anyone touched by cancer - which is sadly all of us.

Connie says

"A bucket list? No, I don't need one. I'm so rich. It's relationships that matter. And for me, paying attention to the precious gift of today is the only thing on my list." Kara

This was a difficult book for me to read because I lost my mom last year. Toward the end, she was ready to go, but I wasn't ready to lose her. There would never have been a time in my life when I would have been ready to lose her. Even though I know I'll be with her again, the emptiness is still there. I miss her so.

For the author, the hardest part about dying was that she would not be there for the family she loved so much. She wanted to be there to see her husband as a grandfather and her children as grown-ups.

Throughout it all her faith remained steady and she continued to cherish her family and friends, and they cherished her. She had an incredible support group that she felt blessed to have. She sings their praises throughout the book and I'm sure they all felt cherished by her.

There is a good bit of inspiration for the rest of us to be gleaned from the pages of this book. For me, it was further confirmation of the need to make these moments we have count, and to press forward in a relationship with Jesus that deepens with each day.

Amelia McNeilly says

"It Was Beautiful" is one of the most inspiring books that I have read in a long time. I felt like we were old friends having coffee, and me listening to Kara share her story. The book chronicled Kara's personal journey through cancer and the "long goodbye" Kara experienced with her family. The pages of this book are filled with evidences of Jesus' mercy and grace, and how He creates something beautiful out of hard circumstances.

Over the past year, I have been homebound due to some major health problems and this book was the balm my soul needed during this season. This is one that I will often go back to for much wisdom and encouragement. If you haven't yet, pick up a copy to read — you won't be sorry.

I was given a copy of this book from Litfuse Publicity Group in exchange for an honest review.

Julie Sunne says

"I was here. I saw beauty. I embraced it." Reflection after reflection, in the midst of her hardest battle, Kara Tippetts gently and continually points us to the joy and peace that comes from acknowledging the sovereignty and goodness of God. She repeatedly reminds us that Gods grace is indeed sufficient.

Because "hard is grace too." What a perfect perspective with which to see the beauty of each moment.

My copy of this book has text on nearly every other page highlighted; it's filled with that much wisdom and inspirational! If you are looking for hope in the midst of a hard situation or looking to find beauty in your mundane days, you'll want to pick up a copy of Kara's third book. The Lord has taken her Home, but her life ministers on in the words she left behind.

*This honest review is in exchange for an advanced readers copy of the book from David C. Cook.
