

*Many have gone through difficult challenges – I’m certainly not alone. For those who have interest, I have been encouraged to share my story of what God is doing and saying to me in this health journey.*

Early in this season, I remember saying to a friend that I did not volunteer for this journey but I am choosing to press into God more deeply through it. The first few weeks in September were warm so I spent many hours on our back deck in the dark with a cup of coffee enjoying my precious Jesus and the still beauty of the night with some fog over the creek, the silhouettes of Norway spruce, the mountains, the crescent moon and stars. These were times of wrestling and surrender. Jacob wrestled with God—and lost.

I read some of the ancient saints and mystics. Nebuchadnezzar discovered that God is the architect of the wall described in Daniel 4. Hebrews 11 is powerful. This helped describe what I was experiencing.

The healing of the lepers in Luke 17:11-19 became a key passage to me.

***Jesus works in the margins and borders*** vs 11.

Jesus is with us in those places where you may not be certain where you are. Things are complicated at the borders. At the border between Galilee and Samaria the racial and national issues did not really matter to Jesus; he was not bound by the cultural practices of the day. He welcomed all. He showed mercy on those whom others had rejected.

Jewish and Samaritan lepers shared common misery at the border—a place of uncertainty. So when they saw Jesus approach, they remained at a distance but cried out to Jesus ‘Master, have mercy on us’. In desperation, sometimes we just call out, “Help me, Jesus!”

***He hears our cries for mercy*** vs 13.

It is divine mercy/compassion that we seek—God’s undeserved favor. This is a desperate cry and Jesus answers.

***Jesus sent them to the priests*** vs 14.

“As they went they were healed”

The priests were the medical authorities of the day—they alone could certify that healing had occurred. The lepers had to obey the command of Jesus first—then they were healed. But only one of them came back to give glory to God. And Jesus asked where the rest were, why didn’t they realize what God really wanted to do in the healing?

Ten were cleansed. One was made whole. Salvation is for the whole person.

***“Rise and go your way, Your faith has made you well.”*** vs 19.

Their goal was the physical healing; God’s purpose was that they would be healed in every way, and so the nine, while they were physically cleansed, missed much of what God wanted to do. The Samaritan’s response was to kneel at Jesus’ feet in worship and gratefulness.

To the one who returned, Jesus said “Rise and go your way. Your faith has made you well.” The words of Jesus to “rise and go” were quickened to me by the Spirit. The leper was told to get up and go about his life. He likely had friends and family to go back to. My prayer included a request for physical healing – did Jesus command to “Arise and go” also include the resumption of typical life and activity? I asked God if this was my wishful thinking—or was him? I did not want to be presumptuous. I received clarity in my spirit to walk this out in faith.

We are in a spiritual battle. We are called to stand strong. Our victory will come. The battle is a sign that God is at work. We speak words of faith in the name of Jesus who has given all authority to his church. Mt 28:18. The spiritual warfare we are currently engaged in is a sign that God is preparing the foundation to move in our midst. We persevere and do not give up.

Some other learnings:

- God will not be defeated. His Kingdom cannot be shaken. Heb 12:28-29.
- Jesus is our rescuer. Mt 14:27-33.
- God takes us through the valley; we don't stay there.
- God turns his face toward us and gives us peace. We receive His blessing.
- Since God is for us, why be afraid? Romans 8:31-39. I am surrendering to a faithful God and believing in faith for His healing of the lymphoma of my brain.
- We are all going to bow before God someday. Sooner is better than later.
- I have been repeatedly saying to God, "Whatever you want me to do, I want to do it."

I recognize this as time of change in my life. I am choosing to spend more time with Jesus. He is increasingly precious as I rest in Him. This is a priceless journey of surrender with growing faith. I'm learning to repent more quickly of my sins such as pride and self focus; my identity is that of a follower of Jesus Christ who is on the way to transformation. The apostle Paul in his New Testament letters identified many ways we fall short—but Jesus' forgiveness and the power of the gospel is greater still.

An unexpected but recurring part of my times with Jesus has been interceding for God to move in a spiritual awakening. Isaiah 60:1-2. My strongest stirring has not been for my health situation. My most intense intercession has not been about me. I'm receiving a clear sense that I (we) are to keep pressing into God for a powerful, widespread move of his Spirit—Revival/Awakening. Open the heavens, Lord. Isaiah 64:1-4

I am on a priceless journey of surrender. 1. It is priceless because it costs everything. 2. It is priceless because it is worth everything. Still learning what it means...

On awakening one morning, I became aware there were more than Sharon and I in the room. It was a good, comforting presence. Perhaps an hour later in my study I realized it was angels with us!

Early one Sun morning -- some intense spiritual warfare in the living room. I stayed protected by (within) the Blood of the Lamb that was slain. (sometimes I heard what sounded like warring angels—any demonic forces were outside the house). I prayed the protection of the blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus is LORD! LORD of LORDS. We spoke light into the darkness near the end of Oct.

Sharon wrote/recorded these prophetic prayers during the intercession:

- At the light of the gospel—people will see, hear, walk.
- People will choose to jump into the flow of God's work.
- We pray that the name of Jesus will be lifted up with miracles of healing, protection, and wisdom.

- Resist the devil. Refuse to believe lies. I prayed victory over any/every scheme of the flesh to thwart God's work.
- Jesus triumphed at the cross, rose from the grave, and defeated death. Sharon and I spoke victory and light over the darkness.
- We pray for an unstoppable move of the SPIRIT!
- God draw us to worship! Like the 10<sup>th</sup> leper.
- May God's glory be seen! Seeing glimpses of a coming Spiritual Awakening

Toward dawn of the same night..... Praying into Ps 91:1-2 and Ps 91:14-16

We prayed for the power of God to be manifest in the YC building and then flow out to many. Down the hills and valleys to touch many. My boyhood farm and Penn-York Camp in Ulysses, PA; my current home and Yorks Corners church are all located very close to a unique geographic phenomenon called the Triple Divide. Water flowing north follows the Genesee River into the St Lawrence Seaway. Western flow goes to the Allegheny, Ohio, and Mississippi Rivers. Streams flowing east and south feed the Susquehanna which flows into the Chesapeake Bay.

Wellsville area pastors have been praying together weekly for God to move powerfully in our region since Fall 1989—33 years. Why has it taken so long? Have I fallen short? We pray for insight and wisdom. Come in the power of your Spirit!

Arise and Shine! Isaiah 60:1. The glory of the Lord has risen.

God asked, "What are you praying for?" My response: A Spiritual Awakening of widespread repentance and transformation that impacts multitudes. (the number was large—God wants us to ask big)

In the early morning of Oct 31, I sensed God affirming that he is pleased with Sharon & I. Without intentionally on my part, from mid Sept. to late Oct my strongest intercessory burden was for an awakening in our region. Now God is calling me to also pray for physical healing in a more intentional way. Ask, seek, knock. This is the confidence that we have in him... 1John 5:14-15.

An interesting confluence of dates... My commitment to follow Jesus happened at revival meetings in the Yorks Corners building on Oct 31, 1963. I accepted Christ with my father, Alvin Miller.

It has been fifty years since the last substantial move of God that Sharon and I have experienced! (Jesus movement and charismatic movement). It's time for God to move again! Also Sharon and I are now in our 50<sup>th</sup> marriage jubilee year.

On Fri, Nov 4 about 5 a.m. I experienced a deep, precious time on living room sofa interceding for God to move. Then, for the first time ever I had the assurance that God heard and it would happen (I believe this means that God will do it. It does not depend on my feeble efforts. But I am to keep praying until God breaks through). What peace, joy, rest! I continued in prayer and then sleep. Then a beautiful 2 hours in my study recliner with coffee praying while the sun lit up the hillside.

I have continuing assurance that God will do it. It is not up to me or anyone else. I am weak with little strength. God's power is like a tidal wave. Prayed for purity, full surrender, God's protection over all he does.

So what is God doing and saying to me?

- First, I continue to believe his word to me, “Arise and go, your faith has made you well.” My healing comes from Jesus.
- God strengthens us with power. Eph 3:14-21. His sovereign power is in us. Since Christ indwells us, what comes out of us? What am I expecting of God? Immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine!
- Pray for deceptions of the enemy to be exposed. Deep repentance.
- The wholeness of our salvation—shalom. Healing for body, mind, emotions, spirit.
- Continue to pray for a Spiritual Awakening of repentance and transformation that touches many. I am committed to this cause.
- Being called to continue in deep surrender as best I know how. Death to self is a conundrum.
- To be a patient hospital patient (hard). God is in control. God continues to deal with my pride and self focus.
- We are called to a spiritual battle—there is no victory without a battle. Stand strong.

Sharon reminded me of Elijah and Joash in 2Kings 13:18-- Joash was to strike the ground many times with the arrows Elijah gave him to ensure the enemies’ destruction; the king stopped with 3 times. I am committed to receiving the fullness of God’s provision. I prayed 100’s of times to receive the fulness of God’s salvation. God wants me to ask. I am so grateful for God’s continued mercy. I choose to walk in faith.

My faith is not in my faith, it is in Jesus. He is the healer. Faith is an integral part of the journey. There is a divine synergy that connects Jesus and faith. The biblical model is to pray in faith.

The journey (and this testimony) are still in process.

### ***How might people pray for us?***

1. That all of God’s good purposes be fulfilled on this priceless journey of mercy and faith.
2. Pray for completion of Gene’s healing. I am praying for the fulfillment of God’s word to me, “Arise and go, your faith has made you well.” Physical healing is a key component of this wholeness.
3. Pray for strength and grace for my wonderful wife Sharon through this journey—she is amazing. We are so thankful for many good years of marriage.

Gene Miller      Dec 6, 2022