

Chapter 6

Be Not Dismayed

In early September we returned home from our journey to South Carolina. Erinn had placed her life in God's hands and we were hopeful that she would somehow get her miracle and have a full recovery. She began to experience more frequent periods of pain. Dr. Forman increased her morphine to an extremely high level in the hope of alleviating some of her discomfort. She had built up a tremendous resistance to this medication overtime. She had been on it for so long.

One evening Erinn, Berta and I sat in the living room watching television, when Erinn suddenly began to cry. Erinn never cried. She never complained. Her legs were aching badly. Bone pain, a common symptom of an elevated leukemic cell count, occurs when pressure builds up inside the bone marrow. Berta and I tried to comfort her, but to no avail. I called Dr. Forman in anticipation that he would increase Erinn's pain medication but he told me she was already at the maximum dosage. There was nothing we could do except to massage her legs and shoulders in an attempt to comfort her.

It's a horrible, helpless feeling to see your child in pain, knowing there's nothing you can do to help. It's not supposed to be that way. Ever since she was a little girl, I had always been able to insulate Erinn from the bad things in life; to console her when she fell down and scraped her knee; to give her a shoulder to cry on when her feelings were hurt; to reassure her that daddy

would protect her when she was afraid. I was always able to wipe away her tears and put a smile back on her face. Now, for the first time in my life, I realized there was nothing I could do to help her.

I jumped up from the couch, bolted down the stairs into the basement and let God have it. I really unloaded on Him.

I screamed at Him.

I pleaded with Him for my daughter's life.

"Why God? Why?" I shouted. "Take me," I pleaded, "take me. I deserve it. She's only a baby. Take me."

I was hurting badly. I was a broken man.

I even cursed God.

I cursed God!

But, you know, God understands. He knows our hearts and He feels our pain, because He experienced all the pain and all the hurt we'll ever experience and more when He walked on this earth as the man, Jesus Christ, and He took that to the cross with Him.

*He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows,
and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men
hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him
not.*

*Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our
sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted. (Isaiah. 53:3-6)*

*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was
crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that*

brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

I sat alone in that basement for a couple of hours or more, praying, crying out to God. Finally, I headed back upstairs, where I found Erinn asleep in Berta's arms. They looked so peaceful. I hated to wake them but Erinn needed to get upstairs. She was receiving intravenous antibiotics each evening while she slept and the intravenous set-up was next to her bed.

I tucked Berta and Erinn into bed, started Erinn's IV and slipped quietly back down to the living room where I sat for quite some time, praying, gazing out the window at the faint glimmer of the September moon.

I must have sat there praying for two hours or more before going up to bed. I continued to pray as I fell off to sleep. I was keenly aware that I was still praying in my spirit as I slept. It's a difficult thing to explain, but it felt similar to times when I've gone to bed with a lot on my mind and my mind continues to race as I sleep. It was comparable to that but I was praying in my spirit.

I must have prayed all night. It was definitely the most intense time of prayer I have ever experienced. As I was waking up, just before I was fully conscious, in sort of a limbo state, something came to me. I wasn't thinking out loud and it wasn't what you would call an audible voice. It came from deep down

inside. I can't explain it but I believe it to be what the Bible refers to as "a still, small voice."

And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

(1 Kings 19:11-12)

Some of you reading this may have experienced this in your own lives. I believe that this should be the norm for believers; that if we truly seek Him, it should be commonplace to hear the voice of the Father.

Call to me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.

Jeremiah 33:3)

The voice whispered, "Be not dismayed."

When I was fully awake, I got up, found Berta down in the kitchen, and told her what had happened to me. We were still fairly new Christians and neither of us knew too much scripture yet, so we wrote it off as "interesting" and went on with our day.

That evening, as was our custom, we attended a Wednesday night Bible study at our church. It was important to us to be there every week. We needed to be in God's word as much as possible.

At the end of the service, my pastor said, "In closing, I'd like you to open your Bibles to Isaiah 41:10." I opened my Bible as Pastor Sam began to read,

*"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed;
for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will
help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand
of my righteousness." (Isaiah 41:10 -KJV)*

There it was, "Be not dismayed."

I nearly fell out of my seat. Berta and I looked at one another and began to cry. God had answered a prayer earlier that morning and confirmed His word some twelve hours later through my pastor.

That's God!

...but God has surely listened and heard my voice in prayer.

(Psalm 66:19)

In my carnal mind, I thought God was telling me that Erinn would be healed. That's what I wanted to believe. That's what I had to believe. It wasn't until much later that I grew to a place where I could fully understand the true meaning of this passage.

Be not dismayed.

No matter what happens.

No matter what you think.

No matter what you see.

No matter what you feel.

God is there for you.

God is in control.

He knows the final outcome.

He's with you through it all.

Even when it makes no sense.

Especially when it makes no sense.

Trust in Him and in the end; nothing else will matter.

*All things work for the good, in them who love God,
who are called according to his purpose*

God speaks to us in many ways. The way he speaks to us most often is through His word. I am so thankful for that day when God, my Father, the Creator, by whom and for whom all things were made, reached out to me as I cried out to him in my pain.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (James 5:16)