



Leaning Into the Heart of the Holy

2016 Lenten Devotions

Saturday

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Jim's Miracle

By Sheila Powell Martin

When Jody challenged us to think about the times when we have experienced God, my thoughts went immediately to a spring afternoon in 1990 at Norfolk General Hospital.

My son, Jim became very ill when he was a sophomore at North Carolina Wesleyan College. He spent months in the hospital and a great deal of that time in the intensive care unit. One Saturday morning one of his many doctors told me that Jim was going to die. Doctors had done all they could for him but his body was full of infection and he carried a very high fever. Later that day as I sat there trying to comprehend what our lives would be like without Jim and I could not come to grips with it. Needless to say, the family was praying, our church family was praying but the only change that we saw that afternoon was Jim, recognizing what was going on and yet, refusing to give up. Then, all of a sudden Jim said "Mom, my joints hurt." I told the staff at the nursing station and they sent in a young doctor that looked like she was about 12 years old. She spent some time talking and examining Jim and then she spent several hours in this chart. She came back and told us that she thought she knew what was wrong with him but she did not have time to find out. She would suggest that she be allowed to start treating him right away with chemotherapy and many other drugs. By late that same night, Jim's frail body began to respond to the treatment. Prayers had been answered, and we gave God all the credit.

Days later we learned that while Jim's condition was improving, the disease that took over his body had killed his kidneys and the damage was "irreversible." He was still in the hospital and received kidney dialysis three times a week. About a month later, he remained in the hospital but I had started to go back to work. However, my precious father would stay with Jim when I could not be there. I arrived at the hospital to relieve my father. He was standing, outside of Jim's room, at the very end of the hall. Dad had his arms in the air, flinging them around in pure joy. I could not imagine what had happened but was sure anxious to find out. Dad told me that Jim's kidneys had kicked in and were working well enough for him to come off of dialysis, for now, and we probably would be able to keep him stable through a special diet, etc. I said what did the doctor say and with a huge smile on

his face he said "Well, the doctor said that he didn't have any explanation but I told him that while he was an excellent doctor, in this case, the Great Physician had taken over." Dad was a little disappointed that the doctor didn't seem to agree with that but at that point, it really didn't matter. He knew that Jim would soon be able to come home.

Jim's kidneys held up long enough for him to finish college, start a career and a marriage. One month before his first wedding anniversary, I was fortunate enough to give him one of my kidneys and for the past 19 years he has lived a full, happy and successful life. While we know that he will probably need another kidney before his life is over, we are grateful for God's love, the many prayers answered, and the strength that he gave us then and now. God is good and we know, without a doubt, that he answers prayers and performs miracles!

Prayer:

Lord, I know how much you love me. It's hard for me to feel it sometimes, but I know your love is always with me. Help me to use your love as a way to persevere in my Lenten intentions. I am weak, but I know with your help, I can use these small sacrifices in my life to draw closer to you. Loving creator, I am not asking to overcome my weakness, but to use it in some way to glorify you. Let me be aware of the many ways you reach out to help me today and let me stand in awe of the power that you use in such loving ways. Amen.

(Adapted from *Praying Lent: An Online Ministry of Creighton University*)

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.