

Aug. 2007—A Prayer of Faith

“Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.”

Having just returned from the wedding of our son Cliff and new daughter-in-law Megan, Terri and I are well and rejoicing in the Lord’s goodness to our family. Cliff’s health is an encouragement. Although he was 6’4” and now stands about 5’8”, he looks and moves very well. Early in July, he started riding his bicycle again. While it wore him out, he was pleased.

He still has cancer, but the last CT scan (7/19/2007) showed that the cancer in his liver was still “cloudy” rather than “well defined.” That’s good news. His attitude is great and dedication to the Lord strong. Being with him is fun, and his humor is classic Clifford! Megan is a wonderful, godly lady. In the ceremony, their Pastor called her, “a bookish, motorcycle-riding, history-major musician.” We have a picture of her pretending to drag a 2800 lb rock with her motorcycle. She is beautiful too! They dream about and plan on a teaching ministry in China as the Lord would enable. He will continue to teach at Dublin Christian Academy this coming year, and Megan will finish her last semester at BJU in the fall.

As you might expect, this shower of blessings has contributed to my extended musings about faith and prayer. Yet I’m pretty quiet about it. To say I am still overwhelmed with gratitude is an enormous understatement. I still lack sufficient and accurate words to express my gratefulness to the Lord, as well as to you who faithfully prayed. Nearly 3 years ago, the experts in Tampa and New Hampshire told me personally (out of the presence of Cliff and Terri) that Cliff had only about 8 months to live. He was told to get his support system in place.

Later, in a precious candid moment, during brutal sickness from chemo, I knelt at his bed and gently rubbed his back as we prayed together. I tenderly pressed for his assessment of his relationship with our Lord and his spiritual condition. He told me that he loved the Lord more than ever but was sad that he would not be able to pursue some joys he had anticipated. With a heavy heart, I re-intensified my focus in prayer, asking the Lord to restore him to health—even more specifically, to allow him to marry! Megan was not in his life at the time.

And that’s what I’m been mulling over since the wedding. I wish that I could convey to you that my prayers were a commendable demonstration of faith and then as your Servant Leader confidently pronounce to you dear missionaries: “Go and do likewise.”

Yet the truth of the matter is my prayer was more in line with that of the three young Hebrew men when confronted with impossible odds facing the burning fiery furnace. We find their response in Daniel 3:16-18—

- 1) God is able to deliver us;

- 2) We believe He will,
- 3) Even if that delivery comes through death; we will be faithful.

Some would say that is a lack of faith. It is not. God is Sovereign. It is never our place to “name it and claim it.” I can take no credit—nor should we ever—in somehow thinking that I had enough faith to get God to do what *I want*. What a thrill to read over my prayer journal from those days! My confidence—my only assurance—was that I love and serve a very gracious and powerful Savior who in turn loves my son more than I do! He will accomplish the very best outcome with the values of Eternity in view.

My prayer journal records and claims the prayer of Mark 9:24, “and straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, ‘Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.’” Even that heartfelt cry was bathed in the recognition that it’s not about Terri and me. Actually, it’s not even about Cliff or his health and marriage to Megan. It is about God. It’s about getting to know Him better and love Him more.

Thanks for praying, please keep it up. Thanks for caring.

Bill