

Maiorano Minutes

2nd Quarter 2024

You Know Your Life Is About to Change When . . .

. . .you get a phone call first thing in the morning from the doctor who wants you to go to the emergency room immediately and there would be a spine specialist, and neurologist, and an oncologist waiting for you. Our first thoughts are, "I think you have the wrong number!" As realization settled in, it changed to, "God, give us wisdom because we don't know what You want us to do!" So let's start from the beginning.

We have shared in our newsletters over the last couple of years that I, Jim, have been suffering from fatigue, and we were praying for wisdom to figure out what was going on, and strength so that I could continue to serve our Lord in this place where He has placed me. For a number of years I was told it is a side effect of covid, it's long haul covid. I was told "Remember, you're not as young as you used to be!" One doctor suggested this treatment, another doctor had his reasons why it was another cause. In February, after many snow shoveling marathons, I saw a leak around our well and immediately started digging it up, by hand. I rented a machine for the next day because I couldn't keep digging. When I was done, Linda asked me how I felt. I said I was broke. After four really bad days of pain, we got an appointment at a spine doctor in Colorado on Tuesday, March 19. They x-rayed me and said I needed an MRI and sent me home with muscle relaxants, decreasing dosage of steroids, and some pain pills.

By March 21, I got an MRI at a hospital in Grants, NM, about 90 miles from us. They said that the results would be sent to the spine doctor in about 2 days. The next morning, first thing, we received a call from the spine doctor wanting me to go to a hospital in Albuquerque immediately and have a full cancer work-up done. We took time to breathe, pray, and seek out what God would have us do.

The next days and weeks, consisted of more tests, talking to people in the medical field, our

family, and finding a reputable oncologist who was in Santa Fe, NM, about 220 miles from us. He had blood tests run and wanted a CT scan. After the tests were run, we sat down to talk to him and were told that I have stage 4 prostate cancer which has metastasized to the bones (spine, hips, pelvis) and possibly lymph nodes. The pain that I experienced in February was most likely the T12 and L1 vertebrae collapsing due to the damage the metastasis caused to my spinal column. Every time the cancer moves, I have days or weeks of excruciating pain.

The oncologist laid out a treatment plan for me that was very unpleasant. His words were, "This hormone therapy is the only way to treat this kind of aggressive cancer. I can give you maybe a couple of years without pain, but you are going to hate the way it makes you feel. You will be on this treatment until it doesn't work anymore and then you may be bedridden, and we will try to make you comfortable for whatever time you have left." Three times he told me that I was going to hate the way it made me feel. In our minds we wondered why we would trade one problem for a host of others. We walked out of his office knowing that this was not a path we wanted to travel, so we began looking at alternative treatments.

Before going on, I need to stop here and honor God in this process. He scheduled my appointments with doctors, test facilities and other necessary treatments in weeks. We have talked to people who have been waiting months and still are in the process of seeking a diagnosis and treatment plan. As I approach 65, I have learned an important lesson from 2 Chronicles 16:12 *"In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa became diseased in his feet. His disease was severe, yet even in his disease he did not seek the Lord, but the physicians."* I know that healing is from the Lord my God. That has caused us to use the information of the medical community to gain knowledge about my condition, so we could do our own research. Our focus needs to be that God is the one who heals. We are seeking His direction in our lives at this moment in time.

Given my options for treatment, we believe that God is calling us to seek alternative treatments that restore, nourish, and build the body that God has so wonderfully created, knowing that healing comes from Him alone. We have found a clinic in Tijuana, Mexico, that has had great success with stage 4 cancer patients. Lord willing, our neighbors and Jimmy and Angel will take care of things here at home in our absence. We plan to leave on May 26 and return home on June 17.

We have been in contact with quite a few people to seek prayer, insight, and other perspectives. Both of our boys, Jimmy and Jeremy, stand behind and support us in the decisions that we are making. Others have been very supportive and have helped us to research and form a list of questions to ask. This is a big decision because alternative treatment is not something that will be paid for by any type of insurance. All expenses will be out of pocket. It is expensive (in our eyes), but it is a pittance compared to the medical bills that would be accrued, even with insurance, if we would travel down the conventional medicine road, which we feel would do more harm than good.

I am not afraid of death! We know that our futures are secure in the hands of Jesus. My desire is to be a faithful witness for my Lord as long as He has me here on this earth. I want to have the strength and stamina to do just that. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead of us. There is hope!

I want to share a quote from a man who died several years ago. He, too, had cancer. He left behind a wife and children. His statement was profound and something that we would all do well to emulate.

"I don't feel like my life is falling apart. It is whatever God declares it to be. My job isn't to react to it, but to act for the Savior through it."

A friend of mine wrote an encouraging note that I want to share in part. God has blessed us by surrounding us with many caring people! Here is a portion of his note.

"God is not done with us yet, but one day He will be. At least for life in this world order. Know that His craftsmanship is perfect. He is fitting you for

what is to come. We have no control over what tool the Master chooses, but James 1 comes to mind as a text indicating what we can think about such things. Joy. Count it joy! It is joyful to know the Father and the Son live with you, Jn 14.23, and next you will live with Them!"

God's Answers to Prayer

- Even though it may not be the answer we wanted, we now know what is going on with my health. It is in the darkest of times that we have the opportunity to shine the brightest. This is the time for our words, actions, and faith to bring glory to the Lord.
- We have been blessed by the Bible studies that we have been doing on Sunday mornings and Monday nights. We have been studying I Samuel and the Psalms on Sunday and just began Part 3 of the Revelation study. It is a thrilling study at this time in history.
- We have been greatly encouraged by friends and family that have rallied around us during this trying time. We know that there are a lot of people praying for us.
- We can see God's hand in the midst of our planning. We made our plane reservations knowing that the prices were a bit high because our departure date was in ten days. We know if God directs, He provides. Linda went to town a little later and someone sent a check for almost the exact amount of the tickets. God is so good!

Please Pray For the Following . . .

- We are preparing to go to the clinic in Mexico in a week. We are praying that Jim will be able to get relief quickly.
- God to empower us with strength and stamina to make the trip and then fight the battle to regain my strength and health.
- God would provide for our financial needs as we travel to the clinic and seek help for my cancer.
- The Revelation classes as well as the Sunday Fellowship.
- Jimmy and Jeremy and their families.
- For Kevin as he continues to minister bringing truth to those at his church, his family, as well as churches that are inviting him to come and speak.

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