



“MOTHER”

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. (1 Peter 4:12-13)

And with those words, we were in the middle of one of the greatest trials of our lives. H.L., my husband, Debbie and Daryl, our children, and I had gone to Florida from Maryland for the Christmas holidays. H.L.'s uncle and aunt lived in Miami, so we were there for Christmas Day, and when we returned to Sulphur Springs, (Tampa) where my dad pastored, we found Mother and Dad, Bill and Bernice Morris, both in the bed with very high temperatures. Our first thought was that they had the flu, so the doctor was giving them medicine for that. Dad got better, but Mother continued to be very sick with the high temperature.

On Friday, January 1, 1964, mother was taken by ambulance to St. Joseph's Hospital. There they did a lot of tests, and by the end of the day, Dr. Hardee called Dad and me into his office where he told us mother was full of cancer. It had started in her pelvic region, and her lungs were full of the cancer. He told us it was inoperable, and she had at most three or four days to live.

What a shock, but we believed in God and the healing power of Jesus. We told Dr. Hardee that we had preached the healing power of Jesus Christ, and now we were going to watch Him heal Mother. We went back to Dad's house and immediately called my brother, Dick, to come so we could tell him.

The news went across the nation quickly, and we had calls from everywhere telling us people were believing with us for the complete healing of Mother.

On Saturday morning, Dad and I went in to see Mother. Rev. & Mrs. J. T. Pitts went in with us. As we prayed, Mrs. Pitts stepped forward, laid her hands on Mother, and the presence of the Lord came mightily into the room. We left there believing God had met us and the work was done. Dad asked H.L. if he would minister the next morning at the church. That night, H.L. could be heard throughout the neighborhood as he called on God for the “Word”

for that morning. Out of that came “¹²Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: ¹³But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

One of the members of the congregation stood up and prophesied, “Today is a day of victory”! We took that Word from God – the scripture and the prophetic word – and when we got home, we started calling the doctor. He didn’t return our calls all day. Finally, after 11:00 pm, he called and, with a shaking voice, told us they had “temporarily” lost the cancer, but we should not get our hopes up.

We had not shared with Mother or the congregation that the doctor had said “cancer”. In those days, just the word, “cancer” seemed to be a death sentence, and we didn’t want that to be part of the battle as far as they were concerned. We even had dear friends who sat outside of Mother’s room who would caution everyone who went in that they were not to use the word “cancer” in Mother’s presence.

As I would be alone with Mother, she would ask different questions about her condition, and I was able to say “no” to each question she asked. She was concerned about her blood results, and I was able to tell her that her blood was clear. She never did ask if it was cancer.

One of the nurses was a friend of the family who loved mother very much, and every time she saw me as I walked into the hospital, she would come to me and tell me I should be facing reality – mother was dying and she should know so she could get all of her affairs in order. I would smile and assure her that all was well.

Mother started getting better and stronger. All the family was gathered around her bedside praising God for His healing power when Dr. Hardee walked in the door with a sheath of papers in his hand. My Uncle John grabbed him by the waist and asked him to come on in – we were just praising God for Mother’s healing. Dr. Hardee’s papers were shaking like a leaf, but he stood there while we praised God.

By Thursday, Dad went to the doctors and Head Nurse and told them he wanted nothing else done for Mother. He was going to take her out of the hospital on Friday. They told him all the reasons she couldn’t be released, and they didn’t know what they were going to put on her report. Dad responded, “Put down ‘bloody cancer’ if you want. I know she is healed, and I’m taking her home.”

Contrary to Dad’s request, they came in on Friday morning before she left and did a bone marrow test, which did not make any of us happy.

Also, on Thursday evening, the cancer specialist came into the room while Mother was eating dinner. He pushed her tray back, sat down beside her, told her she was filled with cancer and “if my hands have not taken it out, it is still there.”

Our friend, Peggy Wilson, was stationed outside of Mother’s room, and she called us immediately and had us paged at the restaurant where we were eating. Dad, Aunt Velma, Mother’s sister, and I immediately went to the hospital. H.L. was always so gracious and accommodating and took Debbie, Daryl and my 9-year-old brother, Gary, back to the house. We got to the hospital, and Mother’s room was full of darkness and depression. As we prayed, the Spirit of the Lord rose up in me and I moved to the head of the bed. As I prayed, the spirit of darkness and depression left the room.

The next morning Mother came home.

Mother shared with us over the next several weeks that she had quite an experience in the hospital. She was running through the woods, and at the end of the path there was a great light. She was so excited because she knew the Lord, her parents and others were there. The Lord asked Mother if she really wanted to come. Mother told him with all her heart. Then He reminded her of her 9-year-old son yet to be raised. She knew she needed to stay and raise him. Sorrowfully, Mother turned around and started back. Not sorrowful because of Gary, but sorrowful because she couldn’t go on into that beautiful place with the Lord. What a revelation that was to Mother and the rest of us – that she had a choice whether to go or to stay.

The rest of the story is that 33 years later, she decided she wanted to go be with the Lord. As H.L. and I visited Mother and Dad in January 1996, Mother asked me to sit down. She wanted to ask me a very important question.

Her words were, “Jean, I want to go home to be with the Lord. Will you release me and let me go?”

My answer, “Mother, I cannot imagine life without you, but there is no way I would ever keep you from going to be with the Lord.”

On April 4, Mother pulled her feet into the bed. By that time, H.L. and I were pastoring in Charlotte, NC. On Good Friday, the 5th, all the family were at my house for breakfast except for Gary who was in Florida visiting Mother and Dad. I told all the family that H.L. and I would be leaving on Sunday after services to go down and spend time with Mother.

However, that afternoon, suddenly I knew Mother would be going Home on Easter Sunday. I told H.L. and he quickly made arrangements for the Sunday services.

We arrived at Mother’s side about 5:30 on Saturday. I was able to speak with Mother and she was able to mouth, “I love you”. I sat up all Saturday night with her and early on Sunday I told her, “Mother, this is Resurrection Day. This is your day to go to be with the Lord.”

About noon, I again told Mother to run to the Lord. He was waiting for her along with all those who had gone before, and at 12:05, she went to join the heavenly host!

She chose to stay and 32 years later, she chose to go.

Needless to say, H.L. and I had our lives changed in January of 1964. Such a hunger and desire for more of the Lord came into our lives. I believe it was the beginning of much change that has taken place in us and the path on which we have traveled since then.

Pastor Alva Jean Morris Chesser