

# The Resurrected Bride

## *Our Story For His Glory*

By Tim and Shelley Bauer

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(This is actually chapter 3 of our book “The Resurrected Bride” which is not yet complete. Shelley and I have co-authored this one. We thought that this might bless someone who is undergoing some type of suffering at this moment. This book is a compilation of revelations the Lord gave us after Shelley’s stroke on January 19, 2004.)

### Shelley’s Devotional

About two months after her stroke, Shelley began to write in a daily devotional. Contained within the next few pages are her personal struggles with all of the physical and emotional highs and lows. I know what I felt as I read these somewhat scribbled entries. She was learning to write again, as you can tell by the shaky handwriting. They deeply touched me as I felt her heart and innermost feelings during the early part of her recovery. It is a very personal part of this story that I believe will bless anyone who takes the time to read and meditate on the priceless nuggets.

The daily devotional that she used, and will be quoting, is a very popular one by the name of “Streams In The Desert”. It was written by Mrs. Charles E. Cowman and first published in 1925. In the beginning of the book, Mrs. Cowman writes;

*“In the pathway of faith we come to learn that the Lord’s thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways. Both in the physical and spiritual realm, **great pressure means great power!** Although circumstances may bring us into the place of death, that need not spell disaster- for if we trust in the Lord and wait patiently, that simply provides the occasion for His almighty power.”*

She wrote these daily tidbits for others out of her own personal struggles. They sustained her during her years as a missionary in China and Japan, and in particular the six years she nursed her husband while he was dying. It is within these struggles of our lives that the Lord develops His testimony in our hearts to encourage others when they are struggling. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 says, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”*

Shelley will be giving the date of the devotion, along with certain quotes that she highlighted, and then her own thoughts as she reflected on it. We pray that these humble expressions of her heart bless you in whatever experience you now find yourself in as you follow the Lord. Great trust is developed

through great tests. Worthy is the Lamb.

**March 14-** This was my first devotional entry. The Bible verse for that particular day was found in Exodus 20:21 which says, “Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.” In my reading of the devotional for that day it stated, “Do not be afraid to enter the cloud that is settling down on your life. God is in it. The other side is radiant with His glory. When you seem loneliest and most forsaken, God is nigh. He is in the dark cloud.” The devotion went on to tell a short story that I could relate with. This is what it said.

*“As Dr. C stood on a high peak of the Rocky Mountains watching a storm raging below him, an eagle came up through the clouds and soared away toward the sun, and the water upon him glistened in the sunlight like diamonds. Had it not been for the storm he might have remained in the valley. The sorrows of life cause us to rise toward God.”*

On the side of the devotional these are the thoughts that I scribbled down. “It’s so hard to be patient at times Lord. I feel lonely and forsaken but I **must** trust God. (Hebrews 11) I will believe God, not my circumstances. II Corinthians 5:9-10 says, “So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.” I then added a side note which said, “I made the bed in 1 and ½ minutes.” I’m not counting these days. The only thing I’m counting now is the fact that I have more than one bed to make!

**March 15-** This day I read from Isaiah 41:14-15 which said, “Fear not, thou worm of Jacob---I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth.” In the devotional reading they told of the contrast between the worm and the threshing instrument. The worm was delicate, bruised by a stone and crushed beneath an instrument with teeth that can break and not be broken. God can convert the one into another.

When I was at Mary Freebed Rehabilitation Hospital, I was doing my morning devotional on February 14, and God led me to Isaiah 41. He talked about the lowly worm and immediately I could relate. I began to cry and literally felt like the delicate, bruised worm that He talked about. He went on further in the chapter and talked about the strength He would soon give. He can take a man or a nation that feels like a worm, and turn around and give them the strength they need to make a mark in history!

I read, “And so the “worm” may take heart. The mighty God can make us stronger than our circumstances. He can bend them all to our good. In God’s strength, we can make them all pay tribute to our souls.” I went on to read, “Christ is building His kingdom with earth’s broken things. Men want only the strong, the successful, the victorious, the unbroken, in building their kingdoms, but God is the God of the unsuccessful, of those who have failed.”

I truly believe that the church in general feels this way toward some. They seem to have forgotten the “forgotten.” But James 2:1-5 says, “My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?”

I wrote in my journal for that day, “Lord, I feel like the worm. I know in your time, that you will

*make me strong. You are the God of the unsuccessful and you will make me successful again!!*" We're reminded in 1 Corinthians 1:27-29, *"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things-- and the things that are not-- to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him."* I knew that only God would get the credit for my remarkable recovery!

**March 16-** The devotion was about a woman who apparently was accustomed to having her own way in life. Many of us are like that woman. We selfishly do our own thing, until God humbles us and puts us on our backs like He did me. She was in a terrible accident, which crippled her for life, and became an embittered person. We can become bitter or better when trials come into our lives.

Because of her accident, she was visited by a missionary. He told her a parable of the canyon. *"At first,"* he said, *"there were no canyons, but only the broad open prairie."* He went on to tell her of the discussion that the Master and the prairie had. The prairie wanted to know why there were only grasses that grew there. The Master wanted to know why the prairie hadn't grown flowers. *"Master I have no seeds, said the prairie."* So the Master spoke to the birds and they carried seeds of every kind to the prairie and soon the prairie bloomed with crocuses and roses, buffalo beans, yellow crowfoot and the wild sunflowers.

Then the Master came for a visit and was pleased to see all the beautiful flowers that had grown in the prairie. But he missed the flowers that he loved the best of all and asked the prairie where the dematis, the columbine, sweet violets and the wild flowers were. Again he spoke to the birds and they carried seeds and scattered them into the prairie. But when the Master came and visited the prairie, he couldn't find the flowers that he loved the best. The prairie cried and said, *"Oh Master, I cannot keep the flowers, for the winds sweep fiercely, and the sun beats upon my breast, and they wither up and fly away."*

Then the Master spoke to the lightening. With one swift blow, it brought heavy torrents of wind and rain. Soon the river poured its waters through the cleft and carried down deep black mold. Once more the birds carried seeds and strewed them in the canyon. After a long time, the rough rocks were covered with mosses and trailing vines and soon all the crevices were hung with clematis and columbine. Great elms, balsams and cedar trees, clustered the prairie. Everywhere the violets, wildflowers and maidenhair grew and bloomed until the canyon became the favorite place for rest, peace and joy for the Master.

Then the missionary said to the woman, *"The fruit- I'll read 'flowers'- of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness- and some of these grow only in the canyon."* She asked him which flowers were canyon flowers. He answered her with, *"Gentleness, meekness, longsuffering; but though the others, love, joy and peace, bloom in the open, yet never with so rich a bloom and so sweet a perfume as in the canyon."*

Like the woman in the story, I wondered if there were any flowers in my canyon. I wrote in my journal, *"Lord, may the fruits of the Spirit grow in me through my **canyon** experience."* Someday those flowers will bloom and they'll leave an aroma that will be pleasing to the Master.

**March 17-** My journal reading for the day was Matthew 2:13 which says, *"Be thou there till I bring thee word."* It talked about the importance of waiting on God. I read that patience and trust in the dullness of the routine of life would be the best preparation for the task that God would someday call me to. This is what I wrote in my journal for that day. *"I know that you'll send me soon Lord. Although it may appear otherwise, you'll send me in your time!"*

Later on that day, we went to a regional high school basketball game that my oldest son was playing in. It was against a rival team and we hoped to see them win. In the last minute of the game, my son

stole the ball and passed it to one of his teammates who scored and was fouled. He missed the free-throw, got the rebound and then put up a shot. When he missed it, the other team grabbed the rebound and drove the length of the court for a lay-up with hardly any time remaining. We threw up a long shot which missed and lost the game by one point!

As both teams exited the court, one of the fans from the other team, yelled something out to my son. He tried to keep going, but another fan got in his face and said something else. My son charged the opposing team's bleachers. I was horrified. Usually, my kids were better losers than that. Later on, I found out that somebody had yelled something derogatory about me to my son. He was defending me, along with several other players on the team. The school didn't say a word to him or the other players. They knew that it was a miracle that I was even able to make it to the game.

As I went to bed that night, I grabbed my journal and this is what I wrote. *"We lost by only one point. How many lose by only 'one point' for eternity? (Matthew 7-21:23)"* Further down the column, I have scribbled down something that God had impressed upon me as soon as I was conscious in the hospital. I had a strong sense of family and that my kids were wonderful. I've always had that, but this was unusually different. I knew that God was going to use them. This is what I wrote. *"My son stood up for me. Isn't that great? God will use him someday, I know it. I have **good** kids."*

**March 18-** My reading for that day was Mark 15:3 which said, *"He answered nothing."* It wasn't talking about how God was silent when answering prayer. It's talking about how the Savior didn't utter a word or try to vindicate himself when he was being maligned by His enemies. He stood in the "Power of Stillness."

I went on to read, *"There is a silence that lets God work for us, and holds our peace, the stillness that ceases from its contriving and its self-vindication, and its expedients of wisdom and forethought, and lets God provide and answer the cruel blow, in His own unfailing faithful love."* Little did I know at the time, but months later, I would have to put this verse into practice. I wrote in my journal, *"Lord, help me to hold my peace. There will be enemies I know, that will utter lies. Help me to believe what you have told me. You said, 'You will be healed 125%.'"*

When I was in Mary Freebed, we met several people that were Christians and were in there for therapy. One young man that was almost killed in a car accident, wanted to pray for me. He prayed that God would heal me 125%. At the time it seemed almost laughable. I took his prayer as a word from the Lord, and I have believed it ever since. God is good!

**March 19-** It was a quiet day. I wrote in my journal, *"Lord, I'm doing so much better. I trust you to make me better."* (As I write this, sitting here almost three years later, I can testify to the world that He has healed me!)

**March 20-** My reading for the day was in 2 Corinthians 6:10 which read, *"As sorrowful, yet rejoicing."* Just because we're Christians doesn't mean we're exempt from suffering. There's a gospel out there today, that doesn't want to preach suffering. Romans 8:16-18 says, *"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."* The Bible makes itself very clear when it says that if we share in His sufferings, we'll also share in His glory.

The reading stated that the *"noblest psalms were the outcome of the profoundest agony of soul."* As I read that, I could relate with David when he wrote in Psalms 6:3-6, *"My soul is in anguish. How long, O LORD, how long? Turn, O LORD, and deliver me; save me because of your unfailing love. No one*

*remembers you when he is dead. Who praises you from the grave? I am worn out from groaning; all night long I flood my bed with weeping and drench my couch with tears.*” That also was the Psalm that I read to my brother who died of cancer 23 years earlier. My brother was a new believer and had great difficulty praising God during his illness. He did, however, have a sense of humor that carried him through some of the darkest hours.

I wrote in my journal, *“I can relate with what the writer has written. I’m so glad that I praised God during my darkest hour! I know what it’s like to be still and trust God.”* I literally had to be still and trust God. I couldn’t walk very well and slept the majority of the day. God has a way of getting your attention!

**March 21-** I wrote, *“Thanks be to God. He will do it in His own timing!”* I had an expectancy that God was going to use this for His glory. I continued to wait.

**March 22-** My reading for the day took me into Acts 7:30-34 which said, *“After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely, he heard the Lord’s voice: ‘I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.’ Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look. “Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take off your sandals; the place where you are standing is holy ground I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.”*

That seemed like a long time in preparation for a great mission for Moses. Just because there is a delay doesn’t mean that God isn’t working behind the scenes, getting everything ready. Many times in history you see a great wait for a great work. Jesus was 30 years old when His ministry began. Luke 2:52 says, *“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”* While He was waiting, He was growing.

As I read my journal that day, I couldn’t help but meditate on these words, *“God is never in a hurry but spends years with those He expects to greatly use. He never thinks the days of preparation are too long or dull. The hardest ingredient in suffering is often time.”* This is what I wrote. *“Lord, help me to remember that you’re still working when it seems slow. I want to be ready when it’s time. Help me to learn while I can. I feel like a caterpillar, but I know someday I will fly. You are faithful.”* I felt like the “lowly worm” that God talked about in Isaiah 41.

The caterpillar, with its limited mobility, has to go through the metamorphosis process to become a butterfly that lives about two weeks. If the caterpillar is helped through the process, especially in the struggle of the cocoon, the butterfly dies. I had limited mobility, and went through a metamorphosis type of experience. If it had been any other way, the testimony contained in this book wouldn’t have been written. God knows exactly what He’s doing.

**March 23-** It wasn’t an easy day for me this particular day. I could tell by my handwriting and the comments I made in my journal. The reading didn’t seem to apply to my struggle, and if it did, I didn’t seem to notice. I wrote, *“We must continue to persevere, even though you’re tired. Sometimes you wonder if the trial you are in will produce a butterfly. It’s literally day by day.”* Further down the column I added a side note. It must have really been on my mind at the time. I wrote *“I will drive!”*

**March 24-** My Bible reading for the day started in Genesis 32:9-11. *“Then Jacob prayed, “O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two groups. Save me, I pray, from the*

*hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children.”*

The point that was being made was where Jacob prayed and said, *“O Lord who said to me.”* In my journal, something caught my eye as I was reading. It said, *“Our Christian life hinges on one thing, and that is taking God at His word, believing that He really means exactly what He says, and accepting the very words in which He reveals His goodness and grace.”*

In my journal writing for the day, I reminded God what He had told me in the hospital. *“God, you said you’d heal me 125%. I’m looking at the end result!”* Now, almost three years later, I’m close to 100%. I believe the other 25% will happen when Tim and I go around and speak of the wonderful power of Jesus! We will go.

**March 25-** My Bible reading for that day was from Hebrews 11:6. *“And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”* My journal started out with the sentence, *“The faith for desperate days.”* It went on to give an account and list some of the problems that great men of God faced.

Remember the promise that God gave to Abraham and Sarah, a couple as good as dead? He would make their descendents as numerous as the stars in heaven, or the grains of sand on the seashore. Think of poor Noah. Out of obedience, he was building an ark for those who believed that God was going to flood the earth. He was building a place of protection. Think of how God parted the Red Sea and made a way of escape for the Israelites when they left Egypt. Go over the history of Nehemiah, Daniel, Hosea and Habakkuk. The Bible is filled with desperate days.

My journal had a part of a song that went along with the reading for this particular day that I highlighted. It said, *“When obstacles and trials seem like prison walls to be, I do the little I can do, and leave the rest to Thee. And when there seems no chance, no change, from grief can set me free; hope finds its strength in helplessness and calmly waits for Thee.”*

I wrote, *“It’s true. Like prison walls to be, I do the little I can do, and leave the rest to Thee. Oh, I try to solve it myself but I must leave it to God.”* Desperation is better than despair.

**March 26-** Again, my Bible reading brought me to Genesis and I read about the promises God had given to Abraham. I decided to go to a conference that I attend every year. I work with teen mothers and their infants and the conference is always a wealth of information.

My colleague picked me up at home. Thankfully, I brought my cane. My balance wasn’t very good, especially in a crowd of people. Tim wasn’t sure about my going because of the great fatigue I would have to endure, but I went. This large hotel holds this early childhood conference every year. Thousands of people come to it. At the main desk we asked for a wheelchair. They had very few, and the deposit was \$50.00. They had an escort that had to wheel you around the entire time, and after you were done, the hotel would give you back \$25.00. I couldn’t believe what handicapped people had to endure.

One of the sessions that we chose, was down the road from the hotel. We decided to walk. As we began, it started to rain. I steadily grew more tired as I walked. Finally, I looked at my friend and began to cry. I just couldn’t do it. People pushed themselves through the crowded sidewalk, and didn’t seem to notice or care. Immediately, I remembered the years before at the conference. I was capable, independent, and full of energy and life. Now, I was this handicapped, dependent, and tired person, just trying to hold on to my sanity. I realized for the first time, that I had to grieve for the person that I once was. It hit me that I was different! My speech was different, my walking was different, my thoughts were different, and my circumstances were different. Everything was now different.

I finished out the conference that day, only to find that I was totally exhausted. I did read my journal

that day and was impressed with a statement that I read. This is what I wrote. *“It was so hard to go to a conference with thousands of women, only to be limited. I now feel how someone else feels with limitations. It’s very humbling. But what the writer of this day’s devotion said is true. “All you can apprehend in the vision of faith is your own.”* I wrote down that *“I will speak to thousands of women, because God has something to tell them.”*

As I sat with over a thousand women at the conference, I knew that God would use me to share with them what they really needed to hear, that God loved them.

**March 27-** I was still exhausted from the day before, and I was starting to deal with some depression. I never really struggled with it before. My oldest daughter dealt with depression six years before. She described it as feeling like a wet and heavy blanket has been thrown over top of you. As a mother I could give medicine when she was sick, and take her to the hospital when she was injured, but I didn’t know how to handle depression. A band-aid wouldn’t work anymore. I felt responsible and helpless. The only thing I could do was pray.

Romans 8:18 was my Bible reading for the day. I love that verse. It says, *“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”* My journal shared a true story that was truly touching. It talked about a man that was blinded by an accident, who was very wealthy and influential. He met a girl and fell in love with her. Without ever seeing her, only touching her delicate face, he decided he would marry her. Shortly before their wedding, he visited with some doctors that gave him hope that he would see again. After submitting to some treatments by experts, the final test would come on his wedding day.

With his eyes still bandaged with gauze, he arrived at the church with his father and doctor. All the guests arrived and the ceremony was about to begin. The bride entered the sanctuary on the arm of her father. She was so moved, she could hardly speak. Would her lover finally see her face that so many others had admired? As she and her father approached the altar, she noticed that there was somebody else besides her groom and his father. The groom’s father stood there with his son to help balance him and the doctor that had been seeing him for his eyes stood there and unwrapped the last bandage. Did he see anything? Yes! They looked into each others eyes for the first time. “At last,” she said. “At last!” he echoed. What great joy they must have felt. As Christians, we’ll experience the same type of feeling when we shall see Him face-to-face.

This is what I wrote in my journal for that day. *“Someday, I will look in the eyes of Jesus. Until then, I’ll keep on believing His promise.”* I went on to say, *“Today was a **very hard day**. Tim took me outside for a walk.”* I couldn’t go upon what I saw, or how I felt. I needed to believe Romans 8:18.

**March 28-** My Bible reading for the day was found in Joshua. In chapter three, it talked about when the priests, who carried the ark of the Lord, put the soles of their feet in the Jordan River and the waters stopped. God did not divide the waters until they obeyed. I’m sure that the people that were there with the priests were thinking to themselves, and hoping, that the priests wouldn’t get carried off with the ark and the current of the river. Often times, God wants us to step out in faith and carry His message to the unsaved world, but the current, or obstacles, keep us from obeying His word. In Mark 16:15 He said to them, *“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”* That’s for us too.

My journal writing had nothing to do with what I read, but it was about my oldest daughter Melissa. She had dated a boy for five years, and we thought that perhaps she would marry him someday. This is what I wrote. *“Today, Melissa told me that her boyfriend broke up with her. Melissa, like me, has to, by faith, keep going. God has someone special for her. Keep on Melissa!”*

Today, almost three years later, Melissa is happily married to a fine Christian man. She is due with

her first baby in the spring! God is so good.

**March 29-** My Bible reading for the day was found in Matthew 6:29. It read, *“Consider the lilies how they grow.”* I was still concerned about Melissa and the reading in my journal brought me comfort. I’d like to write it to you in its entirety. *“I need oil,” said an ancient monk; so he planted an olive sapling. “Lord,” he prayed, “it needs rain that its tender roots may drink and swell. Send gentle showers.” And the Lord sent gentle showers. “Lord,” prayed the monk, “my tree needs sun. Send sun, I pray Thee.” And the sun shone, gilding the dripping clouds. “Now frost, my Lord, to brace its tissues,” cried the monk. And behold, the little tree stood sparkling with frost, but at evening it died.*

*Then the monk sought the cell of a brother monk, and told his strange experience. “I too, planted a little tree,” he said. “See, it thrives well! But I entrust my tree to its God. He who made it knows better what it needs than a man like me. I laid no condition. I fixed not ways or storms or sunshine, wind, rain or frost. Thou hast made it and Thou dost know.”*

After reading that, I knew in my heart, that God knew exactly what Melissa needed. This is what I wrote. *“Lord, please give Melissa what she needs. I’m like the monk and the tree. You love her more than I do.”* Further down the page I wrote next to a P.S. and a star, *“I got to drive with Tim today. It was not scary at all.”*

**March 30-** My Bible read in Isaiah 50:11, *“But now, all you who light fires and provide yourselves with flaming torches, go, walk in the light of your fires and of the torches you have set ablaze. This is what you shall receive from my hand: You will lie down in torment.”* What a warning for people who walk in darkness, and yet try to help themselves out into the light!

It’s very tempting when you’re experiencing difficult, dark days, to try and get yourself out. We seek the advice of family, friends and our church family who can give us worldly advice. Job’s friends certainly didn’t give him Godly council. That should be a warning to us all. We need to be careful when we’re asked for our advice. Perhaps, God has that person in a dark time, to get his or her attention and prove to them that He alone is their deliverance.

In one paragraph I have marked that we shouldn’t try to get out of a dark place, except in God’s time and in God’s way. The time of darkness is meant to teach you a necessary lesson. I knew that this time of my life was indeed a dark place in which God was teaching me a tremendous lesson that I would need later. Premature deliverance, like in birth, could cause difficulties and even change the course that God had planned for me.

I wrote in my journal, *“Thank you God for what you are doing in my life, my daughter’s life, the church, in Tyler’s life etc. I **will** trust you and **will not** get out of the dark place until I’m told to. Help me!”*

**March 31-** Matthew 14:24 says, *“The wind was contrary.”* What an applicable Bible reading for the day. I read a paragraph in my journal that I could say Amen to. It read, *“Jesus Christ is no security against the storms, but He is perfect security in storms. He has never promised you an easy passage, only a safe landing.”*

In my journal I wrote, *“I love the last paragraph.”* Down toward the bottom of the page I wrote, *“Today has been a good day.”*

**April 1-** My Bible reading took me to Job 13:15 which says, *“Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him; I will surely defend my ways to his face.”* It also took me to 2 Timothy 1:12, *“For I know whom I have believed.”* I’ve always loved poetry. In this journal reading, I would like to share a portion of a poem that I read with you. It said, *“I will not doubt, though all my ships at sea come drifting home with*

*broken masts and sails, I will believe the Hand which never fails. From seeming evil worketh good for me, and though I weep because those sails are tattered, still will I cry, while by best hopes lie shattered; I trust in Thee."*

My body was tattered and my best hopes were shattered. I couldn't play with my new daughter from China that we adopted. In fact, we were just getting reacquainted. Our plans for the future were on hold. All I could do was quietly wait and trust. In my journal I wrote, *"It's so hard but you have to do it. It's hard to trust God when you have really tough times. 2 Timothy 1:12 is good; 'For I know whom I have believed.'"*

**April 2-** My Bible reading for the day was Exodus 16:10. *"They looked. And behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud."* The reading encouraged us to look for the silver lining in the clouds instead of the dismal gray in the middle. It told us never to yield to discouragement no matter how it seems, and warned us that a discouraged soul is helpless and prey for the devil.

Have you ever noticed that Satan loves to attack you when you're helpless and vulnerable? I literally felt an evil presence in the hospital after I had my stroke. It was the second day after surgery and I wasn't even fully conscious. I felt evil and the presence of God at the same time. Satan was trying to take my life. Praise God that He was there with me all the time! God got the victory. Satan tries to get our focus off God and to instead look at our circumstances. In my journal I wrote, *"We must look upward."*

**April 3-** In my Bible I read from Isaiah 24:15. *"Glorify ye the Lord in the fires."* In my journal I read, *"Mark the little word 'in'!" We are to honor Him in the trial- in that which is an affliction indeed and though there have been cases where God did not let His saints feel the fire, yet, ordinarily, fire hurts.*

*But just here we are to glorify Him by our perfect faith in His goodness and love that has permitted all this to come upon us.*

*And more than that, we are to believe that out of this is coming something more for His praise than could have come but for this fiery trial.*

*We can only go through some fires with large faith; little faith will fail. We must have the victory in the furnace."*

In my journal I wrote, *"Lord I feel stronger and better every day. I'm thankful you don't keep us in the fire forever."* God uses the fire in our lives, to burn off the dross and make us more like Him.

**April 4-** Today's word was found in 2 Kings 6:17. *"Elisha prayed, and said, Lord I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see."*

I wrote, *"Lord, may I never get discouraged enough to quit. I feel like it sometimes. I know you have something good right around the corner."* Don't go by what you see, or how you feel. Stand on God's word. He doesn't lie!

**April 5-** My Bible reading for the day was 2 Kings 4:4. *"Thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons."* God often times has us shut the door to the outside world, so that we can be alone with Him. In my case, I had a stroke and was a shut-in for months. Sometimes, people lose their job and have to depend on God for their provision. Some lose loved ones and have to trust God that all things work together for good.

Many times religious people like to believe that nothing "bad" will ever happen to them. They like to be the Lord of their own lives and like to calculate almost everything that will happen. They often judge those of us who have trials as though God is dealing with us for some sin, or that Satan is being allowed to mess with us. In some cases that is true, but one should never underestimate that the

struggles in our lives are God's way of conforming us to the likeness of His son. 1 Peter 4:12-13 is a good verse that I have tried to memorize. It says, "*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*"

In my journal I wrote, "*It's true about most religious people. They can almost calculate what God will do. It's being flat on your back and shut alone with Him that will change everything.*" As the devotion said, "*In the sorest trials, God often makes the sweetest discoveries of Himself.*"

**April 6-** In my Bible I read for that day from Habakkuk 2:1. "*I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the town, and will watch to see what he will say to me.*" I was reminded that there was no waiting on God for help, and there was no help from God, without watchful expectation. As the devotion stated concerning the receiving of strength and defense from the Lord, "*He whose expectation does not lead him to be on the alert for its coming will get but little.*"

I wrote, "*God, I will wait for your promise of 125%. I claim that!*" Not only was I going to be 125%, but God was going to visit our little town as well. Come quickly Lord Jesus.

**April 7-** I read in Isaiah 30:7, "*Their strength is to sit still.*" Sitting still was not my nature. In fact, sitting at all made me feel guilty. I was a busy mother of five children. I had no time to sit. There were always things to do and places to go. The devotion stated that quiet tension isn't trust. Some of the worst people to live with are passive aggressive. They're quietly wreaking havoc behind the scenes. They manipulate with their quietness. Quiet tension is simply suppressed anxiety.

I thought of myself when I read in my journal, "*A time of great emergency had risen in my life, when every part of my being seemed to throb with anxiety, and when the necessity for immediate and vigorous action seemed overpowering; and yet circumstances were such that I could do nothing, and the person who could, would not stir.*"

I wrote in my journal, "*I'm thankful that now, I'm really knowing God in a different way. I really do have inward stillness. I can't do what I once did. Sometimes I want to scream but I must trust God instead.*"

**April 8-** Today my Bible reading led me to 2 Corinthians 12:10. "*That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.*" I read in my journal, that the literal translation of the verse meant "without strength." When I am without strength, than am I dynamite.

Further down the page, it told about a well-known blind preacher that was from Scotland. His name was George Matheson. He said, "*My God, I have never thanked Thee for my thorn. I have thanked Thee a thousand times for my roses, but not once for my thorn. I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross; but I have never thought of my cross as itself a present glory.*

*Teach me the glory of my cross; teach me the value of my thorn. Show me that I have climbed to Thee by the path of pain. Show me that my tears have made a rainbow.*"

As I read this that particular day, I remember crying. This is what I wrote, "*God, I have often asked, 'God why me?' Not in a bad sense, but why did you choose Mary to have you? Why me? You could have chosen someone else. You chose me! May I thank God for my thorns as well as my roses.*"

**April 9-** I read in my Bible Genesis 42:36 which says, "*Their father Jacob said to them, 'You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me!'*" I also read Romans 8:28. "*And we know that in all things God*

*works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”* The journal reading today was about how God brings power into your life. Many people want power. The question is how is power produced? When God wants to bring power into your life, He brings more pressure.

This is what I wrote, *“We all want power but we don’t want the pressure. Tim has said that God uses the pressure and heat of a heavenly iron. A wrinkle is removed when heat is applied. The heat is applied by the Holy Spirit’s refining fire. A spot is washed out, or cleansed. This cleansing happens by the washing of water with the word. God wants to come for a spotless Bride.”*

**April 10-** I read in Job 10:2 where it says, *“I will say to God: Do not condemn me, but tell me what charges you have against me.”* Sometimes, God allows certain trials in our lives to develop our faith. Some have told me that I have a gift of faith. I believe that this gift has been developed under severe pressure and testing. God isn’t finished. Some pray for great faith. They’re really praying for hardships and great trials. You don’t know if you have great faith, until it’s tested. God trains His soldiers through great testing. Often times, He takes us through valleys, up mountains, through the desert, storms and waters, but He never leaves us alone. He’ll never leave us nor forsake us. He’s giving us more grace.

In my journal it read, *“Hope itself is like a star, not to be seen in the sunshine of prosperity, and only to be discovered in the night of adversity. Afflictions are often the black folds in which God doth set the jewels, of His children’s graces, to make them shine better.”*

This is what I wrote in my journal; *“Lord, at times it would be easy to throw in the towel but we must depend on your grace to carry us through the storm. We **must** trust you.”*

**April 11-** In my journal I read, *“Our Lord is constantly taking us into the dark, that He may tell us things. Into the dark of the shadowed home, where bereavement has drawn the blinds; into the dark of the lonely desolate life, where some infirmity closes us in from the light and stir of life; into the dark of some crushing sorrow and disappointment.”* My Bible reading brought me to Matthew 10:27. It says, *“What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs.”*

Today, as I’m writing this book, that verse gives me hope. Everything that God has told us in the dark days since I had my stroke is to be spoken of and proclaimed for all to hear. He is faithful.

In my journal I wrote, *“Great men of God have suffered a lot. Why do we judge suffering? Why do we think if we suffer, we have extraordinary sins?”*

The devotional stated; *“We are not meant to always linger in the dark, or stay in the closet; presently we shall be summoned to take our place in the rush and storm of life; and when that moment comes, we are to speak and proclaim what we have learned.”*

**April 12-** My Bible reading for the day was Luke 4:1-2. *“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.”* Jesus was full of the Holy Ghost, and yet was tempted. I have found that Satan really loves to tempt you when you’re weak, and often times when you’re closest to God.

In my journal I read, *“Extraordinary afflictions are not always the punishment of extraordinary sins, but sometimes the trial of extraordinary graces. God hath many sharp-cutting instruments, and rough files for the polishing of His jewels, and those He especially loves, and means to make the most resplendent, He hath oftenest His tools upon.”*

After reading that particular paragraph, this is what I wrote in my journal, *“I liked what I put in parenthesis. It sums up what I’m going through.”*

**April 13-** In my Bible I read in Ezekiel 3:22 which says, *“The hand of the LORD was upon me there, and he said to me, “Get up and go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you.”* Anyone who is ever used of God has had a special waiting time. Paul was sent out to the desert for a few years. Noah had to wait over 100 years. Abraham and Sarah had to wait for a son. Moses had to wander in the desert for forty years. The Bible tells us of many people who had to wait. It’s hard to wait, especially when you’ve waited for a long time and you know you’ve heard a word from the Lord.

In my journal I wrote, *“Today I must rest in more ways than one. I wonder if now is the, “Great and mighty work for you to do.” If I can trust Him with my life, than I can trust Him with my finances. Sometimes it’s hard to rest.”*

Tim and I received a word from the Lord over 21 years ago. He told us that He had a “great and mighty work” for us to do. I don’t tell you that to toot my own horn. We’ve stood on that word for over 20 years, and often question God as to when it will happen.

As I read what I had written almost three years ago, I’m reminded that God has taken care of us all the time. Today is my birthday (December 14, 2006). We have \$200.00 to our name, bills are piling up, and Christmas is 2 weeks away. I’m reminded of what I wrote in my journal, *“If I can trust Him with my life, than I can trust Him with my finances.”* God is good.

**April 15-** I read in my Bible from Psalm 119:42. It says, *“I trust in thy word.”* As I read my devotion for the day, I was reminded, and still am, that true faith is not dependent on feelings, outward appearances, or impressions. True faith is resting on God’s promises. *“Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1).*

I read how trials are food of faith. Why is it that we shrink back from trials? The Bible is filled with people who had to endure various trials and hardships. We often read of the saints before us that endured hardships. I’m reminded of George Mueller who ran an orphanage in England and who was responsible for hundreds of orphans. He was doing the work of the Lord. He often would sit down to eat without any food on the table to feed them. Because he knew the God that would provide, he could trust that God would feed them. He prayed and the dinner was never more than 30 minutes late. Concerning the trials of his faith, Mueller was quoted in my journal saying, *“I will wait and see what good God will do to me by it, assured He will do it.”*

When you’re familiar with God and His ways, you can wait patiently and be assured He will do it. I wrote in my journal, *“Right now, I will wait and see what good God will do to me by it. I am not mistrusting God at all. I would like to see what God will do.”*

Almost three years later, I am walking, talking, writing, and waiting. I’m waiting for the promise that God will visit my town and His people. I wait by faith.

**April 16-** I read in my Bible today Hebrews 11:8. *“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.”* I read, *“Whither he went, he knew not; it was enough for him to know that he went with God. He leant not so much upon the promises as upon the Promiser. He looked not on the difficulties of his lot, but on the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God, who had designed to appoint his course, and would certainly vindicate Himself.”*

At the time, I didn’t know where God was taking us. I still don’t fully know yet, although I’m that much closer and have a better idea. This journey hasn’t been easy. As I sit here this morning writing, I’m reminded of the things I wrote and the feelings that I had, and it makes me weep. Financially, we’re worse off and yet our bills have been paid. Spiritually, we’ve learned so much about God and His provision for our lives. He has blessed us and shown us His ways. He has given us new friends and

a Christian family that loves us.

I read, “*God knows no fear and He expects you to fear nothing while He is with you.*” Here is the poem that touched me that day;

*“The day had gone; alone and weak I groped my way within a bleak and sunless land. The path that led into the light I could not find! In that dark night God took my hand. He led me that I might not stray, and brought me by a new, safe way I had not known. By waters still, through pastures green, I followed Him. The path was clean of briar and stone. The heavy darkness lost its strength, my waiting eyes beheld at length the streaking dawn. On, safely on, through sunrise glow I walked, my hand in His, and lo, the night had gone.”*

I wrote in my journal, “*The last two verses say, ‘the night had gone.’ ‘I think it disappears in time. Tim got laid off today. We’ll see what God will do.’*” Further down my journal I have starred and this is what I wrote, “*I can whistle now.*”

**April 17-** My Bible reading for the day was found in Job 12:9. “*The hand of the Lord hath wrought this.*” I read in my journal about the most magnificent diamond found in history. It was presented to the King of England. The King had it sent to Amsterdam to be cut by an expert lapidary. He took the diamond and began striking it with his instrument. For weeks the blow had been studied. Drawings and models had been made of the diamond. Its quality, lines and defects were all studied. The man who had been studying this gem was one of the most skillful lapidaries in the world. Some would say that this blow that the lapidary struck the diamond with caused it to ruin the precious stone. But in fact, the opposite was true. When the diamond was cut in half, two magnificent stones appeared. The lapidary with his skilled eye saw the hidden uncut stone as it came from the mine and saw what it would become!

That’s how it is with us too. We’re the most priceless jewel and the Lord is the most skilled lapidary in the universe. I often struggled with the fact that after my stroke I wasn’t the person that I once was. I couldn’t make the decisions that I previously did, I was much slower around the house, and found myself not as graceful walking as I was before. My house wasn’t as clean as it used to be, and I just wasn’t as independent as I had been. I had become a “cracked pot.”

At one of my therapy sessions, I ran across a story that made me weep when I read it. This was exactly how I felt. This fits in perfectly with the verse I read in Job. It’s entitled “Cracked Pots”.

*“A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream of the master’s house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.*

*For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his master’s house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.*

*After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. “I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you.” “Why?” asked the bearer. “What are you ashamed of?” “I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because of this crack in my side which causes water to leak out all the way back to your master’s house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all the work, and you don’t get the full value from your efforts,” the pot said.*

*The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure. The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and took advantage of it. I planted seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."*

Every time I read this story, I cry. I can relate with the "cracked pot" even now. Sure, I'm better at many things now than I was right after my stroke, but as of late I often wonder, "where would we be now if I hadn't had a stroke, and if Tim hadn't lost his job?" I find myself apologizing to my children about not having enough money to get them certain things, like Christmas presents or gifts for my first grandchild. They assure me that it's all right, but they see the struggle. They too, like Tim and I, are waiting for God's deliverance.

Like the water bearer, Jesus is taking all of my tears and watering His flowers. He will present them to the Heavenly father in one huge bouquet. We believe that the souls that will be touched because of our faithfulness to His call will be like a heavenly bouquet of flowers presented to Him. The sweet aroma that it will leave in the nostrils of Almighty God will be pleasing!

In my journal I wrote, *"God, I'll trust you when I wonder at times. You never make a mistake."*

I could continue writing, letting you know how God spoke to me in those early days after my stroke, but I want to share His faithfulness with you. It's been nearly five years now (we continued to wait for God's timing to make this writing public). As I read back on how God used the stroke in my life to bring me closer to him, many emotions flood my mind. I remember the struggles that I faced filled with feelings of despair. There were **many** days of stillness that went by.

Recovery for most is very slow. Unfortunately, some will never fully recover. Others are faced with death. What a wonderful assurance I had that no matter what the outcome might be, God had me in the palm of His hand and was taking care of me. That assurance was given to me when I put my faith and trust in Him 27 years ago. It's been both a delightful and difficult journey. Like the apostle Paul said in Philippians 14:12, *"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."*

Like Paul, I learned that when I am weak, then I am strong. In 2 Corinthians 12: 9-10 Paul states, *"But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."*

I also learned that when it is the darkest, then God is the brightest. In Psalms 119:105 He promises to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Tim and I have seen His light illuminate the path of His choosing for us often. When in doubt, look for His light. He will faithfully guide you to a place that has been specifically prepared for you.

The most important lesson I learned in the school of suffering, however, was the importance of being still. Psalms 46:10 says, *"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will*

*be exalted in the earth.*” There were many, many days of forced stillness. Even now, because of physical limitations, there are some, but God is in the stillness.

We’re reminded of God’s stillness in the Psalms when we see Selah (Pause) in the middle of the chapters. I wonder what the writer was thinking. What about the stillness right before a terrible storm, or the time period before finding out test results you’ve been waiting for? Can anything touch our hearts like the power of stillness? There truly is “the peace that passes all understanding.” God will often use the still times to get our attention. He wants us to focus our minds on Him rather than our situation. That is a discipline that must be learned over time.

Somebody gave this poem to me when I was sick. It reminds us that God speaks to us in our stillness.

*I Needed the Quiet*

*(by Alice Mortenson)*

*I needed the quiet, so he took me aside  
Into the shadows where we could confide.  
Away from the bustle where all the day long  
I hurried and worried, when active and strong.  
I needed the quiet, though at first I rebelled,  
But gently, so gently, my cross He upheld.  
He whispered so sweetly of spiritual things  
Though weakened in body, my spirit took wings.  
To heights never dreamed of when active and gay  
He loved me so greatly, He drew me away.  
I needed the quiet. No prison my bed,  
But a beautiful valley of blessing instead.  
A place to grow richer, in Jesus to hide  
I needed the quiet, so he drew me aside.*

My sickness was a blessing. God has used it in so many ways, not only in my life, but in the lives of others. Whatever you’re faced with my friend, God is faithful. There is a place in the deepest part of our soul, a place where if we’re still and quiet before God, we will hear His reassuring voice say, “Peace, be still.”