

The Days My Life Stood Still



August 6, 1955 ~ March 4, 2023

This is My Story
by Randy Raymond

It was July, 2008. I sat in stunned silence as I heard my heart doctor describe three doors.

I had just had a heart catheterization. The doctor looked at me and said, “Door number one, open heart surgery Monday. Door number two, open heart surgery at the end of the week. Door number three, at the end of this month we put you in the ground.” That day my life stood still.

On Monday, I had open heart surgery, double bypass. After the procedure, the doctor said that I had the cleanest, healthiest and smallest lungs he had ever seen in an adult man. They released me to go home at the end of the week.

Some who are reading this know all about these heart procedures. Perhaps someone who is reading this is facing just such a procedure. As you read on, I will show you how I was able to face this crisis with confidence.

But before I do, I need to tell you about another day that my life stood still.

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On a Sunday morning in August in 2020, I woke up gasping for air. I could barely breathe, and I had no idea what was happening. My family rushed me to the hospital, and there a lung doctor removed nearly 2 liters of fluid from my right lung. The doctor immediately sent a sample for testing, but he told me that it did not look good. The test results came back confirming stage 4 lung cancer. And my life stood still.

I started infusions as standard treatment for lung cancer. The fluid was also submitted for genetic testing and over the Labor Day weekend my cancer doctor called me at 6:30 p.m. to tell me the news.

She said, “This is the best news ever! You have a genetic mutation (EGFR positive) that means there is a targeted therapy that has excellent results. There is a pill you can take daily, no more IV infusions.” The doctors prescribed the chemo pill that targeted this form of cancer. My wife, Teresa, and I were overjoyed. We knew that my condition was serious, but the doctor had given us hope.

My cancer treatments began immediately and gave me two more years of normal living. But late in 2022, the cancer became resistant to the drug and flared up again; first in my other lung, and then in my brain. That’s quite a change from fourteen years before when I had the healthiest lungs the doctor had ever seen!

But even in this crisis – which is now a day to day reality – I have confident hope. Why?

Let me tell you about the very first day that my life stood still. It was a day of confident hope – what the Bible refers to as “the blessed hope.” I had begun to notice a distinct change in one of my childhood friends. He had come into contact with a group of real Christians, and he invited me to meet with them. This group was led by a godly man and his wife in my hometown of Upper Sandusky, Ohio. I noticed that they were happy teenagers, my age. They had something I didn’t have. On the evening of November 19, 1969, they took several of us young men to hear a student evangelist speak at Calvary

Baptist Church in nearby Findlay, Ohio. The man preached a message from these words of Jesus in Matthew 7:13-14,

“Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in. Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

As the young man preached, I began to realize what the other teenagers in my group had that I did not have. I knew that I was a sinner and I learned that the Lord was the One I needed. I needed Him as my Savior. When I got home that night, I knelt down beside my bed and prayed. I confessed to the Lord that I was a sinner and asked Him to come into my heart. At the time, I barely understood what was happening, but the Lord saved my soul! The Holy Spirit filled my heart never to leave and my life changed forever. That night, the Lord gave me eternal life. That was the turning point in my life.

Now before I tell you the rest of my story, stop to ask: Why is this important to you? The Bible explains that every one of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). This means that every one of us needs the Savior, Jesus Christ, whom God sent. Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages (or just payment) for our sin is death.

But here is the joyous hope: *“God commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!”* (Romans 5:8).

Every one of us is a hopeless sinner, unable to turn his or her life around. But Christ went to the cross to bear our sins and die the death we deserved. He rose again the third day to show us that all who would repent of sin and trust in Him would be saved (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

Through Christ’s amazing work, you too can have confident hope through the finished work of Jesus Christ. My new hope in Christ began that night in 1969. Do you have this confident hope?

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At Cleveland Clinic, here in Ohio, they prescribed radiation for the spots of brain cancer. So, I began to receive radiation treatments. They also tried a new kind of chemo, but my body wasn’t able to tolerate it well. The cancer had now spread to multiple areas of my body. In late January of 2023, I decided to enter hospice care and discontinue all treatments. I have confident hope and the joy of the Lord is my strength.

My friend, if you faced what I am facing, how would you respond? What hope do you have? I’m writing this to offer you “the blessed hope” of Jesus Christ. As it is written in Titus 2:11-14

“For the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar

people, zealous of good works.”

Whatever it is that you are facing, why not take these Scripture verses to heart? Jesus Christ gave Himself for you to redeem you from all your sins and give you eternal life. Only He could do that. Why not bow before Him right now? Pray, confess to Him that you are a sinner and ask Him to save you. He will! And then you can face whatever the future holds with quiet, confident hope.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

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