

Never forget: Greater Things Will You Do



by Donna Authers

He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)

Do you remember the first time you realized that God actually heals today? That thrilling moment when you could identify with the paralytic or the woman who touched the tip of Jesus' garment? That miraculous event which challenged the validity of the theory: "That was then; this is now"?

Through the power of the Holy Spirit and at the pleasure of God, Jesus still heals today exactly as he said he would: "Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (John 14:12-13, NIV)

Yes, Jesus continues to heal today through his imperfect disciples like you and me. We may not see an immediate cure (Waiting for the Full Ear of Corn, *Sharing*, July/August

2012) but in my experience he always heals, bringing peace and hope to a frightened soul. When we lay hands on someone and pray, something always happens in a way that is unique to the individual asking for prayer. It is important to remember our stories and even more important to tell them, especially the ones that changed the course of our lives way back when, lest we become complacent with the gifts God has given us. This is one of my stories.

It was 1995, and after more than three years of MRI's, injections, pills and literally crawling into physical therapy sessions which brought little relief, my husband Roger agreed to have back surgery. Three years? Why so long? Well, you see, Roger has an aversion to hospitals, needles, blood, even taking out splinters. He cringed when I told him I had ordered contact lenses! But on this occasion his back and leg pain finally outweighed his fear.

Two days before surgery, we were invited to our friend Susan's house for dinner. Early in the evening Roger spoke of his apprehension, and our host responded, "You need to meet Nigel; he was supposed to be here tonight; but he's praying with somebody." She added with a hint of skepticism, "Apparently, when he prays people are healed!" Of course, the Nigel she was talking about is OSL Board Member Fr. Nigel Mumford. Before seven o'clock the next morning, the phone rang. In response to a sleepy "hello," a voice said, "Good morning, this is Nigel Mumford; sorry to call so early, but I received an urgent message from Susan last night to call you. Do you know anything about this?"

"Oh, dear! We had no idea she asked you to call us; but since you did, we'd love to meet you. My husband is having surgery tomorrow, and at dinner last night Susan said that you needed to pray for him. Perhaps you

can tell us more?" "I'm on my way to work and have no time today or tonight, but if you like, I can come over right now."

"Have you had breakfast? Roger's from England as well and he taught me how to make a proper pot of tea." "Brilliant! I'm on my way." And with that we hung up.

"Quick, Roger, get up!"

"What in the world is going on?"

"I have no idea, but Nigel's on his way and will be here any minute."

Wonderful things happened that morning while talking over a cup of tea and toast with marmalade from Marks & Spencer. While Roger and I had always known it was God who brought us together and Christ was the glue in our marriage, we had no experience with miraculous cures except what we had seen on television. You know what I mean: the kind of program where a preacher smacked someone on the head and seemingly pushed him into the arms of a catcher after yelling, "Heal!" Surely they were paid well for the charade. At least that's how it appeared to us skeptics. *But this was different.*

After getting acquainted, Nigel shared the story about his sister Julie's miraculous cure in England and how he discovered that he had received the gift of healing upon his return to the United States. Canon Jim Glennon's prayer for Julie was brief and gentle with only the lightest of touch when he laid hands on her. It was a beautiful picture and calm came over us when Nigel asked Roger if he would like prayer. Since this was new for both of us, the answer was a tentative, but surprisingly expectant "yes".

We were instructed by Nigel to continue in prayer after he left for work and to pray with thanksgiving for the healing that was taking place. But by lunchtime the back pain remained and I called Nigel at work to see if Roger

needed a "prayer top-up." When Nigel agreed to a second prayer, I packed a lunch for him and drove straight to his picture framing shop. Nigel flipped the "Open" sign on his shop door to "Closed", and we went into another room for prayer. It was then he declared that, while Roger might still need the surgery, God would make sure that he would experience a miraculous recovery. Little did we know that we would experience a series of miracles.

The first happened as we drove to the hospital. Roger showed no fear and for some reason he blurted out of the blue, "Maybe I'm supposed to have this surgery to meet the man in the next bed." He had no idea where that thought came from; but later all was revealed.

During the pre-op procedures which required a blood test, the first miracle was confirmed: Roger's fear was gone. He was completely at peace and watched as the needle went into his arm and blood was drawn. Later he complimented the nurse who installed the IV, and as I watched him being wheeled into the operating room, peace prevailed with shouts of "Love you; see you later!" as if he were going to work. It was then that I knew in my heart that Roger and the doctor would be standing on holy ground with the Great Physician directing the surgery.

Later I learned the anesthesiologist warned Roger that, because of the way his neck was formed, he would have a very sore throat due to the tube they would insert and remove while he was asleep. However when Roger awoke in the recovery room, there was no throat soreness. In fact, he felt as if he had been napping. No grogginess, no

pain! He looked at the clock on the wall and asked a nurse, "Is that the right time?" Nigel's prophesy came true: rapid healing, at least of his sore throat.

After Roger was moved to his hospital room, I arrived and he greeted me by kicking his legs in excitement. I gasped and urged him not to move. He said, "It's okay. I'm healed and I've already been up and to the bathroom on my own." I was speechless and my heart filled with joy and gratitude. Even so, the doctor said he would be in the hospital for a couple of days.

In the same room was another surgery patient – a young man, John, whose parents were visiting him. Their son's operation was much earlier that morning, and he was still asleep. John's mother

explained that he would be in the hospital for five days; clearly, his surgery was much more invasive than Roger's. He had been in a train wreck and they had to take bone from his hip to repair his neck which had been damaged in the accident.

After his parents and I left for the evening, John began to stir. Hearing this, Roger introduced himself and they began to talk through the curtain that separated their beds. In the course of their conversation, Roger told John about Nigel's gift of healing, something he would never have done before; and at that moment the phone rang. It was Nigel calling from the lobby asking for permission for an after-hours visit. I love God's timing! After saying a prayer of thanksgiving for how well things went – no sore throat and all – Roger introduced Nigel to the man in the next bed. John told Nigel what had happened to him and accepted Nigel's offer to pray for

"God would make sure that he would experience a miraculous recovery. Little did we know that we would experience a series of miracles."

his healing, too. Are you ready for what happened?

At nine o'clock the next morning Roger called to ask me to come directly to the hospital after my Bible study class. Both he and John, the man in the next bed, were being released that very morning. This was a miracle! I wept for joy and couldn't wait to see them. When I went to Bible study the opening hymn began with "We are standing on Holy Ground," and I sang through my tears.

Roger began taking walks within the first week he was home and we thanked God with each step. As we walked we were finally able

to verbalize the fears God had suppressed prior to surgery. If anything had gone wrong there was a possibility that he might never walk again, which meant he could never play the organ again, or at least never use the pedals. But God gave us peace and new opportunities not only to witness to His healing power but for Roger to use his gift of music to bring glory to God.

As for John, he and Roger kept in touch by phone for weeks to track each other's recovery. To round out his story we discovered he had left a message at his church for someone to bring him communion the following Sunday, but the message was lost. If you recall, he was to have been in the hospital five days. But on the fifth day, he had already been home for four. It was Sunday and his healing was so rapid that he was able to walk to church, the very day he should have been discharged! We have lost touch with John, but we will never forget "the man in the next bed."

Often the Bible tells how lives were changed by an encounter with Jesus

and his healing touch, and our story is no different. It's been 17 years since Jesus entered our married life in a personal way and we have witnessed God's healing many times in our family and in the lives of so many of the special friends we have made over the years.

We have all been called to spread the good news about how much God loves us and we have found there is no better way to tell people than through the "God stories" of our lives. More

than ever I am convinced this is the easiest way to evangelize. So many of us shy away from that "e" word, but after hearing one

of my stories, a woman exclaimed, "I wish I had your faith." What an open door! That's all evangelizing is – sharing our faith – and if a story prompts a comment like that, what else can we do but explain how to have faith.

Faith is a gift. If a person has previously made the choice not to believe, they can equally make the choice to believe by simply reaching out and accepting the free gift of faith. Once they start behaving as if they believe, God will handle any doubts they may have, especially through a nurturing friend – perhaps one like you by their side. This is why we must share these experiences. Don't underestimate the ripple effect of your faith stories. Stories of healing, whether of body, mind or spirit, will help people understand the truth that God is alive and well and wants us to be well – to be at peace wherever we are, in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. Living a life of gratitude and praise "in all things" will draw others to us. And when they ask how you have been able to cope with the many surprises you have had

in life, don't be shy about telling your stories.

Be bold in sharing not only what you believe but why you believe the way you do. Then be prepared to listen to their story, even if it reveals their unbelief. Pray for God to open their eyes so that they might receive the ultimate healing: the healing of their relationship with God through Christ. Never forget your stories and remember that, through the Holy Spirit, God will help you do even greater things than you ever thought possible, and all to His glory.

He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)



Donna Authers is an OSL member with a passion for applying her natural caregiving skills to help bring hope and healing to hurting people.

After retiring from a successful business career in 1992, she has been active in Stephen Ministry and Community Bible Study. Since the publication of her book, "A Sacred Walk: Dispelling the fear of Death and Caring for the Dying" and its companion "Discussion Guide," she is a frequent guest speaker at churches and conferences throughout North America and will be a workshop leader at the 2013 OSL NA Conference in Fort Worth, Texas in June. Donna lives with her husband Roger in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia. To contact Donna and learn more about her work, visit her website at www.asacredwalk.com