

Veteran Preacher 'Back in Battlefield' After Dramatic Cancer Healing

Nurses began calling 75-year-old Roy Harthern 'Miracle Man' after doctors declared the Florida minister cancer-free

It was the day after Christmas 2001 and Orlando, Fla., minister Roy Harthern was enjoying a visit with family members when his physician and close friend, Don Colbert, called with urgent news. "Roy," he said, "go to the emergency room immediately. I just received a copy of your latest lab report, and your kidneys have shut down completely."

Hospital tests confirmed that Harthern's kidneys had indeed deteriorated even though the 75-year-old felt fine. He was admitted to intensive care, where a doctor delivered the stunning news—cancer.

"Not only was it inoperable," Harthern told Charisma, "but they said it had already attacked my lymph nodes and was spreading rapidly throughout my body. Outside of a miracle from God, I would die."

The news was especially devastating to Harthern, who has been a preacher for 55 years and was pastor for 11 years at one of Orlando's largest churches, Calvary Assembly of God. "I had preached on healing all my life," he said, adding that he had witnessed hundreds of people healed through his ministry and those of others, including his son-in-law Benny Hinn's.

"I had always believed that God was obligated to heal us just as much as He was obligated to save us, that healing was

provided in the atonement," Harthern said. Now that he was dying of cancer, he questioned his firmly held beliefs. "Had I been preaching the truth or a lie?"

After being admitted to the hospital, Harthern underwent dialysis for his failing kidneys. Then, a month later, in January 2002, Roy and Pauline heard the news they had been waiting for.

"The doctor walked into my room one morning and said, 'Pastor, I don't know what's happened. I have no explanation scientifically or medically, but you have two brand-new kidneys that are functioning normally,'" Harthern said. "'There's not a trace of cancer in your body.'"

Harthern wept unashamedly. "They were tears of gratitude and praise to the Lord," he said. His other doctors confirmed the report, stopping short of calling it a miracle even though the nurses began to call him "Miracle Man."

Because his doctors were hesitant to accept the genuineness of the healing, they asked Harthern to undergo chemotherapy as a precaution. After praying about it and consulting with Colbert, Harthern consented. He had six treatments, and combined with his stay in intensive care was in the hospital for 50 days.

During that time, Harthern became convinced he had to accept and believe God's promise in Isaiah 53:5, that by His stripes we are healed. At times it wasn't easy.

"It didn't help when I looked in the mirror," he said. "I lost 45 pounds and all my hair. I was so haggard and thin that I

didn't even recognize myself!"

To make matters worse, his wife, Pauline, says the medical staff cautioned her "to stop having so much hope."

"They would tell me as I left for the night, not to expect to see him alive the next morning," she said, "but I refused to accept it."

After being released, Harthern spent almost a year in bed until he completely recovered his strength. Today, he is well and says he feels stronger than before. He has even started preaching again, sharing his testimony in local churches. He has also received requests to minister in England and Australia.

"I praise God that I'm back in the battlefield—preaching for the Lord Jesus Christ," he said. "I wouldn't want anyone to go through what I have gone through. But I wouldn't exchange the revelation and the visitation of the Holy Spirit that God gave me during those 12 months."

Harthern says God promised to restore his health, ministry and finances. "He said that He would do something that no man can do ... that He would accelerate my ministry during the remaining years of my life. I can hardly wait.

Nancy Justice