

How God Gave a Sick Woman a Healing Ministry

In 1973, I was working as the head nurse of an orthopedic unit at Chicago General Hospital. It had been 10 years since I had left my Christian home in Ontario, Canada, to enroll in Bible school after finishing nurses training.

My purpose had been to become a missionary nurse. But after studying for more than a year, I decided to drop the word *missionary* from my goal.

Feeling that I had disappointed my family, I did not return to Canada. Instead, I put my faith on hold and pursued my nursing career in Chicago. Nursing became my life, and I enjoyed my work immensely.

Little did I know that my life was about to drastically change.

That year, in a car accident, I sustained a severe neck injury that left me in terrible pain. Doctors performed neck surgery, but a few months later I was faced with the prospect of another surgical procedure to fuse more of my neck.

I was terrified. At the same time, I felt that I deserved to be in this predicament, because I had forsaken my family and the Lord.

That's when a good Christian friend challenged me to ask God to show Himself to me and to prove that He still loved me. I was desperate, so I took the challenge and prayed.

Amazingly, when the doctors checked me the next day, my symptoms were gone. The surgery, they said, was no longer necessary!

I left the hospital with no explanation for what had just

happened. I knew nothing about miracles or divine healing at the time.

All I knew was that there was a God, and He still loved me.

Touched by the Spirit

As soon as possible, I went to visit my family in Canada. I asked my father for forgiveness for rebelling against him. What a wonderful family reunion we had!

I was surprised when Dad asked me to return home, but somehow I knew it was the right thing to do. I resigned my position in Chicago and took up residence in Canada once again.

I was home for only a few weeks when I began to experience a series of colds, flues, headaches and serious lung infections. Then, suddenly, I was overcome by weakness and symptoms that the doctors couldn't diagnose at first.

After much testing, it was determined that I had a serious immune deficiency. For some reason my immune system had been weakened and was unable to fight infection of any kind. According to the doctors, I had only three or four months to live.

What followed was not death, however, but 20 years of fighting for survival through miracles and much prayer. I was bedridden for most of two decades.

By the end of 1993, the physical challenges were so constant and so severe that I decided to give up. I was suffering with terrible headaches, muscle pain, difficulty breathing and one infection after another.

I wanted to be with Jesus. I simply did not have any more energy to fight. That's when everything changed.

In January 1994 some friends took me to a meeting at Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship (TACF). The church was just

experiencing the beginning of what would become a worldwide movement called “the renewal.”

That night God powerfully touched me. I ended up on the floor, where I had an amazing encounter with the Holy Spirit. I experienced the incredible love of Jesus and the embrace of my heavenly Father.

When I tried to get up, I discovered that I was completely overwhelmed by God’s love, and I could not walk or talk. I was filled with joy and laughter—a state that people referred to as being “drunk in the Holy Spirit.”

I had never been drunk before, and I had certainly never heard of being drunk in the Holy Spirit. All I knew was that I was overwhelmed by the love and joy of God. My friends had to carry me out of the meeting.

It took me a few days to realize that the pain I’d had for so long was gone and that I was sleeping through the night—something I had not been able to do in years.

I continued to go back to the renewal meetings at TACF. I was filled with such excitement and expectation that I could hardly wait to see how the Holy Spirit was going to move each night.

Suddenly life was exciting! I was alive! In fact I was more alive than I had ever been before.

Two weeks after my first visit to TACF, I was asked to share what had happened to me with the congregation. As I did, many people were touched by the Holy Spirit. What a surprise it was to discover that my experience could be “passed on” to others!

Soon I was sharing my testimony of the power of God quite often. In the spring of 1994, several friends asked me to join them in traveling around the world to tell my story and minister renewal to others.

That is when life really became an adventure! For the next few years, I often felt as if I were dreaming. In the summer of 1994 I got to share my testimony in the United States. That fall, I accompanied my friends to Europe and told my story there.

By 1996 I had begun to travel and minister on my own—something I continue to do to this day.

I love my life! After being sick and bedridden for 20 years, traveling and sharing about God's love and power is a wonderful, overwhelming experience.

I know that God can heal because I have personally experienced His healing power. I know that Jesus has come to give abundant life (see John 10:10) because He has made my life full beyond measure.

How wonderful it is to share in God's ministry of touching people with His love and to see His joy and healing transform lives! Truly we are living in a day of miracles. I am so glad to be alive "for such a time as this" (Esth. 4:14, NKJV).

Believing the Truth

Have I had to face difficulties and challenges over these years of traveling? Oh, yes! In 2001, just as I was getting ready to preach in a church in the Netherlands, I suddenly experienced terrible back pain and spasms. I returned home to Canada and endured nearly eight months of excruciating pain in my lower back, along with numbness down my leg.

I canceled my itinerary. The only explanation the doctors could give was that my lower back may have been damaged in that long-ago car accident. For some reason, the injury was just now manifesting more than 25 years later.

Pain medication and routine treatment failed to relieve the symptoms or improve my mobility, so I scheduled a meeting with

a neurosurgeon to discuss surgery. I was terrified of the idea of being paralyzed and ending up in a wheelchair.

Questions began to invade my thoughts: Where was the God who had touched me so powerfully in the past? Why was He not hearing my prayers and taking away my pain?

I did not entertain these thoughts for long, however. Instead, I made a deliberate decision to believe the truth: My relationship with Jesus was not dependent upon what He would or would not do for me physically. The joy in my life was deep; it wasn't contingent upon how I felt from moment to moment.

I decided that I would not let what was happening in my body rob me of my joy or keep me from loving Jesus. In the past I probably would have continued questioning. I would have felt abandoned and unloved. I would have allowed fear to overwhelm me.

This time I purposed in my heart that I would trust God, no matter what.

I began to read Eugene H. Peterson's contemporary Bible translation, *The Message*, for hours every day. As my mind began to be washed with the Word, I found that I was able to focus on Jesus and not on my circumstances.

I listened to worship music and worshiped the Lord. I reflected on His love, His Holy Spirit and all that He had already done for me.

My friends, who had continued to travel and minister, prayed for me the whole time they were away. When they returned home, they prayed with me in person and anointed me with oil.

The pain left! I was able to move and to walk. Within weeks I began to travel again, sharing the story of all that the Lord has done—and continues to do—in my life.

Since 1994 I have had to deal with other, less incapacitating health issues. In the process, I have come to realize that I have a responsibility to take care of my body because I need this body to take me wherever God sends me. Doing what it takes to stay as physically healthy as possible is an important part of my lifestyle now. I never thought that I would live to see so much of the world, so much of the beauty of creation. I never dreamed that I would have so many opportunities to share the love of Jesus and watch Him touch so many lives.

Years ago, the doctors told me my life was ending. Today, the adventures of living seem to be ever increasing!

A Hunger for More

What I experienced in the early days of renewal at TACF has not left me. I continue to be overwhelmed by this marvelous Jesus who gives me hope and life and is fulfilling the desires of my heart.

The Holy Spirit has stirred a hunger within me for more of Him, more of His power and more of His glory. I am more desperate now than ever for the Spirit to move through me and do even greater things, not only in my life, but also through me in the lives of others.

I have an intense longing to heal the sick, raise the dead, and share Jesus with more and more people. I want God's awesome love to touch everyone I meet.

I love waking up in the morning in whatever country I am in and asking the Holy Spirit, "What are we going to do today?" I feel His love burning in me like a fire. My desire each day is to do what pleases Him.

Then, before I fall asleep at night, I love to reflect on all the experiences and activities of the day. One evening, after

a powerful time of ministry, I heard the Lord say very clearly in the depths of my spirit: "Well done. I am proud of you."

It is for this that I live—to please the Holy Spirit. This is what makes me happy! This is what makes me feel alive!

It has been more than 12 years now since I was powerfully touched by the Holy Spirit at TACF—since I first felt His inebriating love fill my life. I still get totally overcome by the Spirit, and all I can do is laugh.

"In [His] presence is fullness of joy" (Ps. 16:11) is the experience of my life. "The joy of the Lord is [my] strength" (Neh. 8:10).

Some people say that I am "drunk in the Holy Spirit." That's OK with me. The Holy Spirit's active presence in my life fills me with boldness, courage and a desire to always please Him. His love flowing through me continues to bring freshness to my life.

I am alive today because of the love and power of a great, mighty and merciful God. I want nothing more than to bring Him glory—for such a time as this.

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