

By God's Mercy
A Testimony of Divine Healing
by Mrs. Beverly J. Halstead

“Oh, I must hurry up and get these dishes done, the floor swept, and the garbage taken out so I can get to the afternoon service,” I told myself. Racing against the clock, I finished up the kitchen work. Grabbing my Bible, I ran down our street and turned left to go to the tabernacle. Camp Meeting was in session at Hobe Sound, Florida and I hated to miss out on anything. I forfeited the song service to get my chores done, but calculated that I could still take in the afternoon message if I hurried.

As I approached the parking lot, I saw an elderly white-haired lady much closer to the door than I was. Besides this lady, there was not anyone else around, which I thought strange. “Oh well,” I said, “at least I’m not the only late comer.”

I skipped up the steps and swung the glass door open only to find the dear elderly lady on the floor of the vestibule. My nursing instinct kicked in as I knelt beside her to assess the situation. “Are you alright?” I asked. She erupted in giggles and said, “Oh, yes, I just can’t get up!” Again I asked her if she had pain any place. “Oh no, I just can’t get up,” she said as she giggled some more. Looking around for a cause of the fall, it was evident that she had missed the last step up before entering the vestibule.

Glancing around to see if there might be someone to assist me, I saw no one. “Strange,” I thought, “a big camp meeting in session like this and not one single person in the vestibule! Oh well, I will just use body mechanics and help this lady get up.” Once the mission was accomplished, the little lady straightened herself up and went into the auditorium to take in the message and I followed. I’m sorry I did not ask her what her name was since this incident was pivotal in discovering a very serious problem that I did not know I had. Many times I would have liked to have thanked the little lady for allowing me to help her stand up.

That evening I felt a pressing pain in my upper leg. “Oh,” I thought, “I must have used more muscles than I thought while helping that lady up off the floor.” The next day the pressing pain was there to nag me. I told myself, “I will just rub some analgesic ointment on it and it will go away.”

By the fourth day the pain was no better, and after a week, a big suspicion that something was amiss clouded my mind. My family doctor told me to go see a surgeon immediately. The surgeon scheduled for a biopsy of the lump that was at the site of pain.

After a brief hospital stay, I sat in the doctor's office. He came in the room with a 'You could have knocked me over' expression on his face. And by the time he was done talking you could have knocked me over. In disbelief I heard him say, "I can't believe it. I first thought you had lymphoma, but the biopsy came back to be melanoma. I have never seen melanoma come back like this after 23 years. I suggest that you go to a center somewhere where they specialize in melanoma." With those words the doctor left the room and I asked God, "What? What? What did I hear?"

Somehow I stumbled to my car, drove home, and collapsed in a chair. Oh, how I wished that my husband was home from work, but then, how could I tell him? Looking at the clock, I realized that my children would soon all come piling in.

Ellen would be coming from high school, Andrew from college, and Joanna from work. I had to remain strong for them. God had always been my healer through a previous melanoma of 23 years ago, and later through breast cancer eight years ago. I told God that I would not ask Him why. As His child, I knew that His ways are sovereign. Feeling pretty weak, I prayed, "Lord Jesus, you just hold my hand and guide me in the next step to take."

Even in this bad diagnosis I could see the providential hand of God. Why was I late going to that afternoon service? Why was there a lone lady ahead of me who fell on the floor? Why was there not a man or someone in the vestibule to assist me in lifting the lady? Looking back, I could see that God had orchestrated the whole event in order for me to discover this life-threatening tumor growing in my upper leg.

"Yes!" I thought, "God has a plan in all of this!" I knew that He was numbering my days, but best of all, He was with me. The Holy Spirit breathed peace into my heart and gave me rest. As God gave me assurance of His presence, the big monster was no longer at my door.

What should I do next? I began researching cancer treatment centers. I found out that Mayo Clinic was 4 hours north of us in Jacksonville, Florida. My friend Ann had been going there for 9 years and was cancer free. She encouraged me to call them.

To my surprise, when I called they gave me an appointment right away. Gathering my doctors' records, we planned to leave immediately. It was hard saying good-bye to the children. It was a very somber drive for my husband Glenn and I. Glenn had already seen my through two cancers including a year and a half of chemotherapy and five years of anti-cancer pills. God gave Glenn a sterling character and unshakeable faith through it all.

At Mayo Clinic things moved very quickly. The oncologist had already scheduled me for a CAT Scan and an appointment with a surgeon. As soon as the CAT Scan was over, the results were immediately sent to both doctors, and we shuffled back and forth to their offices. Surgery was imminent.

We went home to get things in order since the surgeon had to be away for a week. Joanna had taken charge of the house and was keeping the house-hold together. Everyone seemed stunned, and I was so sorry to see the smiles gone from the children's faces. Our dear church people at Wesley Chapel did everything they could to help us. They brought us meals and even provided motel money for Glenn's stay in Jacksonville. The folks at Hobe Sound Bible Church extended their help and prayers also. I began to receive messages from around the country of people that were praying for me. It is so wonderful to belong to God's family!

The last week of March we returned to Mayo Clinic for surgery. The plastic surgeon removed a large tumor and found that nine lymph nodes had cancer in them. As a result, eighteen joining lymph nodes had to be removed and reconstruction surgery performed at the same time. Muscles and tissue had to be repositioned to cover major arteries.

Waking from surgery I felt like my leg was missing or had become a huge log. The next day the nurse tried to get me to move my leg and I thought, "No way am I ever going to move this leg again". But nurses don't take no for an answer, so with all the stitches, drain tubes, and swelling, this leg that seemed so foreign to me now moved inch by inch.

The next day the nurses helped me to stand, and I was surprised that I could stand. "Well, I thought, this leg does work a little, but I can't lift it up." Each step required that I lift it with my hands and set it down.

After four days I was discharged and driven home by Glenn while lying on the floor of our van. Our children welcomed us home and cared for me so lovingly. The dear church people continued to carry in meal after meal until I thought I was tiring them out! I could see the worry and strain on my husband's face, and he seemed so tired.

Three weeks later found us back at Mayo Clinic for Post-Op check-up with the doctors. The oncologist gave us the news. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Halstead, but there is a very low survival rate with Stage two melanoma," he said. Next he showed us a chart with a sharp descending line from six months to two years in survival percentage. A very thin line at the bottom of the chart showed a 5 year survival rate with zero years after that. His presentation agreed with private research that I had done. There is no chemotherapy for melanoma. Once it enters the lymph nodes, it spreads quickly to the major organs; the liver, lungs, and the brain. We told the doctor that we know we are all going to die sometime and that we have a hope of Heaven because of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Driving home, we did not know God's will for us as mile after mile passed in silent prayer. I told the Lord that I had been anointed as the Bible instructs us to do while the elders of the church prayed for me according to James 5:14. I searched my heart for any sins and thanked God that I could not find any.

Next, I travelled back through memory lane and found two misunderstandings in which I was afraid that the other parties did not understand my actions. I called and wrote to these friends only to find out that they did not hold any bad feelings or judgments toward me. Perhaps it was the enemy of my soul that nagged me about it, but I was glad I had asked for forgiveness anyway. The Scripture says in James 5:16, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." I had the comfort of the Holy Spirit that there was nothing between my soul and the Savior.

As the days of recovery went by, my whole attention turned toward Heaven. I thought that maybe it was my turn to go into the presence of Jesus, and what a thrilling thought that was. It seemed that some days I was in another land as I looked into the faces of our children and wondered how they would get along without me. "Yes, Lord, I am willing to go to Heaven to be with you, but I am asking that you to heal me", I prayed.

Some verses of Scripture carried me through those first few months. Isaiah 41:10 became my fortress, "Fear thou not: for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

I began to search the Scriptures for the healings of Jesus. I was arrested by the thought that Jesus had healed everyone that came to him. What a powerhouse the little word Faith is with God. It is complete dependence on God. It is adherence to the Person who wants only our best.

As I studied the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment, I was brought to tears with the title Jesus gave her, which was, Daughter. Faith sprang up as I told the Lord, "I am your daughter too!"

This woman's fear followed her for twelve years. Desperation drove her to make it through that crowd. Jesus knows that our biggest enemy from obtaining help from God is fear. He turned to the woman and said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." (St. Mark 5:34) Jesus said in the previous chapter when his disciples were in a storm, "Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?" (St. Mark 4:40)

Knowing that time is of no element with God, I told God that He could do the same for me. Throughout the day I told God, "Lord, I am your daughter too!"

The surgery site healed, but my left leg was left limited in movement. It had to be picked up to go up steps and to get in and out of the car. My ministry was severely hindered. Child Evangelism had been my joyful life's' ministry. Sadly, I thought, "Is that all over?" I felt so useless and disappointed. I wondered, "Who will continue the ministry to the children each Sunday?" My leg was just too crippled and weak to do it, much less go knocking on doors to invite the children to church.

About two months after the surgery, I was alone at home and decided that I could drive to the Post Office for stamps. I assisted my leg going down the front step and made my way along the stone steps. Looking up into the blue sky bedecked with fluffy white clouds, I lifted my head and talked to God. I just said the words, "Lord, you could if you would." I repeated it again, "Lord, you could if you would". I had no doubt at all in God's ability and power to heal.

As I continued walking to our car, I reached out my hand to grab the door handle. As I did, a voice spoke to me that said, "I will both heal thee and restore thee." Instinctively, I turned my head around to see who was speaking, only to find that there was nobody there. "Is that you, Lord?" I asked. "Well," I thought, "Who else?" I began to cry and to say "Thank-you Lord, Thank-you Jesus for healing me and for Your Mercy". I felt so small, and then relief washed over me as I realized, **ITS OVER WITH! PRAISE THE LORD, I AM HEALED AND MY LEG IS GOING TO GET BACK ITS FULL USE!**

I praised God and cried all the way to the Post Office and back. I couldn't wait to tell my family and our dear church people who had been fasting and praying for me. God, in His Mercy, had healed me. God in His love had responded to me, His Daughter, nothing else, nothing more.

Dr. R. sat in her office as she listened to me recount the miracle that God had done for me. She thanked me for sharing with her since she has so many sad cases in her practice. She urged me to continue testing since she was quite positive that the melanoma would show up. Each time I go into her office she tells me that I am amazing, and I tell her that I had nothing to do with it; I did not do a thing. God did it all. I tell her that God is amazing because He, in His Mercy, healed me.

All glory, honor, and praise go to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit