

A Walk  
In  
The Valley

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# A Walk In The Valley

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## Introduction:

What you are about to read is a true story. I know it's true, because I am the one who experienced it. Over time, I have revisited the account and occasionally clarified a detail or two. No attempt was made to embellish or exaggerate any of the facts. They speak for themselves. I hope you enjoy.

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## Psalm 23: 4

*“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.”*

On Saturday, July 2, 2005, we noticed that our next door neighbors were moving back into their house. They had rented it out for a few months, until the renter had gotten called to active military duty. Naturally, we offered to help them move back in.

We had just finished unloading the trailer, and I was out of breath.

Everyone was asking “Are you OK?” And I said, “Sure, I’m just out of shape.”

Returning home, the shortness of breath continued and started to worsen. After a few minutes of pacing around, I went into the dining room and put both arms on the back of one of the chairs and leaned forward.

Both arms ached and felt like I had strained a muscle. I began to experience a sensation that felt like my chest was being crushed and by now sweat was pouring off me. My wife was quite agitated and concerned. I told her that something was going on and maybe we should go to the hospital.

Things were pretty chaotic at this point. Our neighbors were there along with my wife and oldest son and everyone was talking at once. My son dialed 911.

My wife was insisting that I go lie down on the couch. By now my strength was almost totally gone. Both arms and legs were starting to tremble and it took all my strength to lift my head and stay conscious. I recall managing to whisper to her "Give me a few seconds." And I was left alone.

Presently, I went to the living room where I sat back on the couch. My son was still on the phone with the 911 dispatch, having been switched between different operators about 4 times. His irritation with the 911 system was pretty apparent.

In just a few minutes, we heard the sirens and a fire truck and an ambulance arrived.

The paramedic came in and asked a few questions and then connected the heart monitoring equipment. He ordered the stretcher brought in and I managed to get on it unassisted.

Loading me into the ambulance, one of the EMT's started an IV. The Paramedic looked at me and said, "From the indications I'm seeing, I think you are having a heart attack involving the anterior part of your heart. I'm not gonna mince words....that's the worst kind. We're heading to the closest hospital."

En route to the hospital, he talked constantly, telling me to stay awake. He gave me a couple of baby aspirin to chew and swallow.

He stood up in the ambulance and grabbed the bag of fluid that fed the IV, and announced, "Your blood pressure's no good. It's 60 over 30. I'm gonna try to raise it." With that, he began to squeeze the bag of fluid and force it through the IV.

A couple of minutes later, he said "Good....you're up to 130 now."

Arriving at the hospital, they rolled me into the ER and promptly started another IV in my other arm and did a chest x-ray.

The ER physician came in and said, “You’re in the middle of a heart attack. From what we can tell at this point, it’s really bad and we want you to know that we’re doing all we can. You need to have a heart catheterization and I recommend you go to Methodist since they do more than anyplace else. Right now we’re checking on the availability of the helicopter to take you there since it’s well over a 20 minute drive.”

Several minutes had elapsed since our arrival, so I was a little surprised to see the Paramedic who had been in the ambulance with me. He came over to me and said, “Something told me to stick around. We’ll get you to Methodist.”

As they loaded me back into the ambulance for the trip to Methodist Hospital, the ER physician offered these words of comfort to my wife,

“We’ve done all we can. It’s in God’s hands now.”

The Paramedic gave me a dose of morphine. He asked if that helped the pain and I told him no, I just didn’t give a darn.

We got to Methodist in just under 11 minutes. En route, the Paramedic said, “They know we’re coming and they’ve notified the heart cath team. We don’t know if they’ll be ready or not, but if they are, you’ll go straight up to the cath lab.”

When we arrived at Methodist, they weren’t quite ready, so we spent a few minutes in the ER. Our pastor showed up and we were able to spend a few minutes in prayer.

As they rolled me into the elevator for the trip to the cath lab, my wife looked at me and said, “I’ll be waiting for you. I can feel God’s presence here with us.” She told me sometime later, that as I was being wheeled into the dimly lit elevator she saw a bright light at the head of the stretcher. The nurses gave her a strange look, as if to say “Yeah, right.”

While I was in the cath lab, my wife encountered one of her customers in the hospital. He said he was lost and wondered what she was doing there. She explained to him the circumstances and let him know he wasn’t lost but that he was there to pray.

In the cath lab, the doctor introduced himself to me as Dr. Daniel. I later learned that he was the primary interventional cardiologist for the Methodist Care Group, and the lead researcher for the Indiana Vascular Institute of the Indiana Heart Center.

A few minutes into the procedure, all pain disappeared, the crushing sensation left and I could suddenly breathe again with no difficulty. Dr. Daniel had inserted a stent into one of my coronary arteries that had 100% blockage.

The next morning, Dr. Lee from the cardiology group came in and in broken English informed me “You very bad heart attack. You very lucky. You get here very fast.”

Four days later, I went home.

For most people, that’s pretty much the end of the story.

But there’s more to this story, a **lot** more.

Before I go into the details, I want to raise a few questions, just to keep things in perspective.

First, why did the Paramedic hold his ambulance and crew?

How is it we were able to make the 20 minute trip to Methodist Hospital in 11 minutes?

How is it that the #1 cardiologist in the State of Indiana was “just” standing by for my arrival?

How is it that one of my wife’s customers was “lost” and just happened to appear and offer up a prayer?

During my follow-up visit to Dr. Daniel, I asked about the mortality rate for the particular blockage I had. His reply? “**Very high**. That’s the worst kind you can have. You **shouldn’t** be standing here today.”

Was all this due to some incredible coincidence? How about good luck (immeasurable good luck, that is)?

The real answer is .....***neither of these.***

For the real answer, we have to return to the scene I described before, in the dining room in my house.

The events that took place in the space of those few short moments were beyond anything that I could ever dream or imagine.

As I leaned forward on that chair, my strength had left me. The room was turning dark and I knew that I was about to collapse right then and there.

But something was nagging me. In the midst of the turmoil and chaos, something was eating at me and I needed a few seconds to try and discover what it was that was troubling me so.

It was as if there was some dense fog swirling in my head and it was keeping me from discovering what was nagging me. Somehow, I sensed it was important.

After whispering to my wife to give me a few seconds, she went into the other room and I was left alone. It was then that it started to become clear.

A voice - an impression really- was telling me “Bind the spirits.”

What?

Bind the spirits.

I couldn't believe it.

What in the world did any of this have to do with spiritual matters?

Yet it persisted.

***Bind the spirits.***

So I began.

I said, “I bind these spirits of infirmity in the name of...”

Before I could finish the sentence, I was interrupted.

I was interrupted by the most horrible, hideous laughter that I had ever heard. It **echoed** through my head. My head jerked backwards. I was stunned, shocked beyond words.

I was paralyzed with fear and a sense of dread as the reality of what was taking place started to sink in.

I was face to face with an evil so dark, so powerful, it defied any measure of description. The laughter was grotesque. Arrogant. It was *gloating* over my condition. And it seemed to delight in my knowing what was taking place.

All the lies, the deception of a lifetime were gone. It was as if a veil had just been torn from my eyes.

I was totally helpless.

I was in the grip of an evil that is beyond human comprehension. It had come for just one purpose - to kill me. And there was nothing I could do.

I was overcome by despair and the worst feeling of hopelessness I had ever known.

My knees buckled. With each blink of my eyes it became harder and harder to open them. Even as consciousness was leaving me and my mind was clouded by confusion, despair and hopelessness, a single, solitary thought emerged.

Call on Jesus.

And then the voices..... Are you crazy? You know that won't do any good. How stupid are you? What's the point? And darkness swept over me, like a giant wave.

With the last of my strength, I forced the words from my mouth. Too weak to even make a sound, all I could do was form the words in a silent whisper - "My Lord Jesus."

**Instantly**, I felt an arm around my shoulders.

Grabbing me. *Lifting* me up.

The cloud of confusion and despair disappeared. It was as though my mind was emptied of any conscious thought or emotion - except for a single voice.

The voice.

It reverberated in my head. The voice. Clearer than anything I had ever heard. The voice. It said, simply, "I'm here."

I had to turn my head and look. And I could see an arm, draped in a white robe. And a hand gripping my shoulder. And then I felt a hand touch my chest, filling me with a sensation of lightness and pure ecstasy.

Strength poured through me. The crushing sensation in my chest, which had been growing stronger by the second, started to subside. Suddenly I was fully awake and alert.

I walked into the living room and sat on the couch. Covered by an incredible sense of calm and peace, I knew everything would be OK.

I was totally overcome by the presence still with me. And for that night, on into the next few days, I couldn't even speak of it. All I could do was respond to questions and occasionally voice my readiness to go home.

It's been a few months now since these events took place.

Even now, I'm brought to tears and am overwhelmed with gratitude and humility when I consider what took place.

The Redeemer, The King of Kings, The Lord of Hosts, The Alpha and Omega, The Name Above All Names, The Ancient of Days, The Living Word, My Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..... rushed to my side.

Now you know.

This incredible series of events had nothing to do with coincidence. It had nothing to do with luck. And it sure had nothing to do with me.

It had everything to do with God and the promises he makes to us.

Psalm 37: 40 says:

“And the LORD shall help them, and deliver them: HE shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in HIM.”

Psalm 91 says:

Verse 11:

“For HE shall give HIS angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.”

Verse 14:

“Because he hath set his love upon ME, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known MY name.”

Verse 15:

“He shall call upon ME, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him.”

Psalm 18:17

“He delivered me from my strong enemy and from those who hated and abhorred me, for they were too strong for me.”

Hebrews 4:12

“For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword.....”

God’s word is alive, just as alive today as when Jesus walked the earth. His promises are just as faithful now as when the Word was first written.

And **Jesus Christ** truly is the same, yesterday, today and forever.

There’s absolutely no doubt in my mind that God’s Holy Spirit was present and leading me that night. As much as I might like to take the credit, I know that I would never have even thought on my own to “bind the spirits” or to call on Jesus. The glory is His and His alone.

It’s pretty obvious that God has a purpose in mind. We don’t really know what that is just yet, but we know it will be revealed in His time.

As I write this, it's been a few months since these events took place.

For the moment, I'm now back at work. I have the great good fortune of working side by side with my beloved wife.

We work in a car dealership, specializing in helping customers through bankruptcy. It is a real ministry for us and God continues to bless us in our work.

The vast majority of our customers are Christians. We know that they are sent to us. They constantly tell us, "Something told us, we need to come see you."

Not all are there to buy cars - some are sent for us to help in other ways. And some are sent to bless us.

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As a postscript to these events, our spiritual life and walk have taken an incredible direction. New people, new places and the unfolding of supernatural events right before our eyes.

But then, that's another story.

You can read the continuing chronicle of this story as it unfolds at our website. If you like, you can contact us through the website,

<http://joestallard.com>

Click on the "Contact" link and send us your comments.

We'd love to hear from you. God Bless.