

“God is good all the time.”

By Rei Seki

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**Look up to the Lord and receive the light!
(Psalm 34:5)**

It has been almost a year since I was diagnosed with cancer and the time of my life at the end of November last year. It has been a very long year. At the same time, it has been a year of many blessings. And it has also been a year of gratitude that I have never experienced before. I could not walk this year without prayers interceded for by God. To everyone who has prayed for me, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks. Thank you so much.



I was hospitalized for sudden and severe pain, diagnosed with stage 4 pulmonary adenocarcinoma, which was primary cancer, and metastases in my left leg and right hip area, and was given two to three years to live with radiation and chemotherapy. But now I am surprisingly alive and well, even to my own surprise. Every morning I say to myself, “Oh, I’m feeling great today. I have been able to live.” I wake up thinking that. This is God’s grace. And it is God’s power working through your prayers. I thank you from the bottom of my heart! Hallelujah!

During my 3 weeks in the hospital from the end of November, I had a titanium augmentation surgery in my left leg and surgery to remove a tumor in my left lung, and then I started radiation treatment. After the treatment, I headed to Los Angeles to attend the Equipper Conference. This is a conference to help and support young Japanese people who were saved abroad, became Christians, and Returning to Japan again. My husband was the main speaker for that year. I was about to give up because of my illness, but my eldest daughter said “I’m going to take my mom with me for sure!” Along with the powerful words of God and the help of my children, “I tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God” (John 11:40), the truth of His Word got me on a plane to LA just two weeks after my surgery. Our church, Honolulu Christian Church had been praying a lot for that. At that conference, under the theme of “Freedom by the Spirit,” I was able to return home immersed in power and joy as I was free from the pronouncement of the time of life, offering God the life I am living now again, and in the praise that I offered with a large group of God-loving young people. I decided to go to this EC conference with the consent of four doctors. Before this summer, I bumped into

one of these four doctors on the street and asked me “did you really go to LA?” It was only then that I realized that just before I was discharged from the hospital, I realized that it was because I had been given a life-expectancy sentence that he had suggested I go to LA, and I broke out in a cold sweat when I thought about how worried were the people at Honolulu Church, my family, and the staff at the EC Conference. And yet, I thanked them for the love that sent me out in Prayer. God tried to give me an extra dose of His grace even through these extraordinary events. I feel God’s special love for me through this event. And the four doctors, without causing me a ray of anxiety told me “go to LA!” I am now very grateful for the words of the doctors.

After returning from the EC Conference, the tumor on the right side of my leg, this time on the opposite side of the leg where I had surgery, began to hurt and I was back in a wheelchair. It was very painful, but it was a heartwarming blessing for me to sit in that wheelchair, which was left to me by a lady who had gone to heaven eight years ago and was a mother of prayer at the Honolulu Church.

But the sickness inside my body that I could not see and touch with my eye and the recurring pains that robbed me of the light of life, struck me. Then I went through a period of mild depression during January and February. The side effects of the medication prevented me from eating, praying, or reading the Bible, and I was weak in mind and body. I couldn’t express my thoughts to God in words and I couldn’t even follow the words of the Bible with my eyes



because I couldn’t concentrate ... every day ... I’m not sure if I’ll ever be the same again ... Such anxiety and fear occupied my mind. It was the Lord’s Prayer, which I had memorized in church school as a child, that made me pray at that time. “Our Father who art in heaven.” That prayer, seemed to be the prayer that Jesus was preparing for me at this moment in time, and I thanked Him from the bottom of my heart. “Oh! I had this prayer!” I still remember the joy of being able to pray in the dark at that time. It was like Jesus held me in his arms. He said to me, “If I go up into heaven, you are there if I set up a bed in hell, you are there.” (Psalm 139:8) I’m not going back to my old life because I can’t but because I just decided that I am going to live this new life. God is good all the time. the Lord is truly good.

At the end of February, our church had a baptismal ceremony for a young man attending the University of Hawaii. Our church’s baptismal service is held early Sunday morning at Ala Moana Beach. I really wanted to go to this baptism, which

I came to celebrate every time. But I couldn't even get up in the morning at the Time. The night before my baptism, I went to sleep with an indescribably dark feeling. "God, am I not going to be able to do anything more with the church or anything else?" I was having these thoughts. It must have been around 2 a.m. when a loud voice rang through my body. "Go!!!" It was the voice of God. I jumped up. God let me hear His voice and let me know His thoughts, even though I couldn't pray or read the Bible. I closed my eyes once more, relying on that voice. I woke up. It was five o'clock in the morning. I can get up. Then I said to my husband next to me, "Shinji, I can go! Take me to the baptism." That morning, in the pale pink and light blue of the morning sun and the still cold waters of Ala Moana, that young man was baptized, born again, and we were witnesses to his baptism. The morning I heard this voice, my body began to change as well.

Then March arrived and my husband and I were going to Japan. We used the tickets we had held back before I became ill to attend the graduation ceremony at Tokyo Bible Institute in Higashimurayama, Tokyo. Depending on my condition, I was going to cancel it even on the day of the graduation ceremony, but that "Go!!!" from God encouraged me. My husband and I boarded the plane as planned. When we arrived in Japan, my outfit was all given to me by the family of God at church. I had a woolen hat, a long coat, gloves, a scarf, long socks, and a knee brace, plus an airplane cushion and a hot armer.



Surrounded by everyone's love and prayers, I landed in Japan, dressed warmly and tearfully. I felt so protected. I was so happy to feel that I was protected. This trip to Japan has been a healing experience for me. From that morning when I arrived in Japan, I ate more than usual without realizing it, even though I couldn't eat due to the side effects of the medication. My husband saw this and was surprised first of all. The doctor told him that when you are discharged from the hospital, you can eat whatever you want, wherever you go, whatever you do! I was told that I was going to be able to spend my time that way. I also had many

blessings of reunion. We fellowshiped with my family in Okayama, with my parents, family, with the teacher and his wife from my mother's church, and with my childhood sisters. We also visited my husband's family and the church that he was a part of. We also met up with my son, Yuya, who just celebrated his 25th birthday in Japan when he entered the basic course at Tokyo Bible College. At that time, he treated us both to a meal because of the help we gave him. It was a moment that reminded me of leaving the nest.

On this trip, I met nine friends from my junior college days who I hadn't seen in over 25 years. We ate a lot, laughed a lot, and talked about nostalgic memories of our last days as teenagers in the dormitories. We had conversations like this. "Gan (cancer) is just a muddy sounding word. I wish it was something like "Pon" instead of cancer!" I laughed from the bottom of my heart. Well, I felt lighter when I thought of it as a "pon." This encounter with so many people in God's presence revitalized my sinking and a weak heart. I also went to Hakone, where I soaked in the hot springs. I had eczema on my upper body from a side effect, but on the second day, this eczema was all gone. The water is alkaline and is listed as being beneficial for skin conditions, but how could it be completely gone in 2 days? I was amazed and worshipped the God who healed me.

At the end of the trip, a friend who affectionately calls me Rei-chan invited us to join him, saying that Psalm 23 had been given to him in prayer, "This is a feast in the presence of our enemies." He seated us at a sumptuous meal, saying, "This is a feast before your enemies." He said, "In the presence of my enemies, you prepare a meal for me and pour oil on my head. My cup is overflowing." (Psalm 23:5) The three of us, and indeed the Lord Jesus, were at the table with us. The place was like a fountain, and by the grace of God, who brings the soul to life, we left the feast crying and laughing as we ate that meal. "Go!" The voice of God I heard in the dark night pushed me out of my narrow place and made me stand in a wide place, letting me experience watching, touching, and Feeling.



When I returned to Hawaii, I was practicing the praise we would sing on Good Friday at church. That praise was the praise that was boiling in my heart the morning of my surgery. "Look up to the Lord and get strength, for He is my strength and my shield. The Lord is my strength and my shield. Look up to the Lord and get light; he can do all things. The Lord can do all things. Give me the

strength to cross every mountain that approaches me. Pressing on! Pressing on to the victory!" I couldn't help but offer the Lord the praise of these lyrics, so I jumped into the circle of my fellow worshippers and sang Hallelujah! This year has been a special year for me, as I've been flying a lot. Some of those trips were already set in stone, but with the addition of the trips I was invited to take, I feel like I got better with each trip I took. My eldest son went to Japan, my daughter got a job at a cake shop, and my second son, Hikaru, got his driver's license, so I was reassured that my husband and I were

now old enough to go off without worrying about dropping off and picking up my second daughter, Maaya, from school.

I also experienced emotional healing when we went to Kumamoto in May for a wedding. That's when I saw the scars from the surgery on my back in the mirror. I was alone in a large bathhouse when I went into an onsen (hot spring), which is supposed to be good for post-operative recovery. When I saw the scars of my lung surgery, about 20 centimeters long, in the mirror, I cried alone because it was so lovely. I also had two thick pipes put in my side, and when I saw that, I couldn't stop crying because it reminded me of the time I was in the hospital. I thought I did a great job at that time. My husband and the kids did a great job enduring it. How worried we were about our church and our Japanese family. And even more than that, I received so many prayers of love. Jesus was there for me through all that time I couldn't stop thanking him.

I'm sure Jesus's body also had the marks of the spear he was stabbed with on the cross. As I thought about that, the words of Isaiah came to mind. "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities. His chastisement brought us peace, and by his wounds we were healed." (Isaiah 53:5) The scars on my back were meant to keep me alive. But Jesus's wounds are wounds to save me, to lay down my life. Jesus was so lowly that He turned away from people, and in that way, the wounds of my sins were not worth the cost of my Life. The scars on my back were meant to keep me alive. And in the midst of all that, he was nailed for my sins and speared in his side. Such love, what else is there? I'm so grateful for this scar on my back. "Thank you, God!" I cried out in my heart. Jesus's piercing wounds gave me thanks and healed me.



Through this sickness, I have received many blessings. God has made it known in every way that He is with me. He has taught me to live with Christ in the very life I have been given now, not the time of life that the doctor told me to live. So, I decided to "live life to the fullest so that God could make me alive." Many people have also prayed for me in my illness. I have received so much grace and gratitude in my illness. And in the midst of this year's many special journeys, God has been present around me.

When I think of the blessings of this journey, I remember a vision I had on my bed in the hospital. That vision was of my husband and I go over and over the waves of the high, rough ocean. Then the next one was of walking into a dark, craggy rock cave and flying down a winding tunnel path, punching through the looming obstacles to the exit. Then, this time, the exit from the cave is in the sky, and my husband and I are flying happily through the air, holding hands, laughing and laughing at the amazing view from the top of the high mountains. Then when we landed, we walked to the top of a small mountain. The top of the mountain is glowing. It was the first time I had ever seen a vision, but the image was so clear and uninterrupted that it didn't stop when my husband walked into the room on the way. It was a very strange experience. As I think about it now, my husband and I went through a rough and tumble path of sickness, moving forward in difficult circumstances and making many journeys.



Our progress so far, which will soon be a year since our illness, could not have been possible without the prayers we have received from our beloved family, churches, friends, and everyone else. I am so thankful from the bottom of my heart. Thank you! This is how I am prayed for and blessed, and now I am being kept alive. In this life, I shall do some of these things! I have decided to do this. It is to guard the fountain of my heart. There are many events and thoughts that still come to me that pull me out of the brilliance of God's life and into the darkness. At those times, I remember the path that Jesus took. It is in the path Jesus walked that I find the pain and sorrow I experience. It's in the Word of the Bible. When I find it, Jesus has gone down that road too, and He is with me, knowing more about that road than I do. When I realize this, the stormy waters of my heart are calmed and replaced with the peace and gratitude known to Jesus.

This is a daily challenge. The other thing is to believe what God tells me to believe while I live on this earth and receive many of the blessings that come from it. I want to enjoy many of the blessings God gives us here on earth. The grace of believing. The grace of praying and being prayed for. I want to know a lot of the richness of God's love. When difficulties come into our lives, we want to say, "Don't be Afraid! "Don't flinch! And he said, "Go!" I just want to go on, believing in what God sees ahead of us as He says, "Go!" Pressing on to the victory, I am so thankful for the God who holds my right hand tightly and moves forward with me!

Translate by Hikaru Seki