

Surrounded by a Mysterious Silence

Background

November 30, 2017 In the middle of the night, I had a sudden, severe pain in my left hip area and went to the emergency room. Four morphine shots did not stop the pain and I began to think that this was not just a regular pain; a CT scan showed that there was a 4 cm ball-sized tumor in my left femur that was causing the pain. A further thorough examination revealed that there were other tumors, and I was told that the tumor was probably malignant, and if that was the case, I would normally have about one more year to live.



I was immediately admitted to the hospital, and as a result of all kinds of tests, we found out that I had stage 4 lung cancer, which had metastasized to the lymphatic system, the left femur, and the right hip bone, with the primary tumor in her lung.

From that day on, I was told to never move from the bed. My left femur was in danger of disintegrating at any moment and there was a risk of a major fracture. But the day before I was admitted to the hospital, I had run up the stairs of the church, participated in hula practice, and danced with the steps of the hula, but to think that there was a possibility of a major fracture.... I had no symptoms, no fever or coughing, and was concerned about my weight gain, but this was just out of the blue. My left femur was immediately operated on and reinforced with two titanium rods inserted. I could have had all the cancer cells removed, but I was told that doing so would cripple me for the rest of my life, so the titanium reinforcement was done for my quality of life.

Four days later, I underwent surgery to remove the upper part of my lung in order to remove the tumor from my left lung. Normally, they don't operate on stage 4, but in my case, the primary lung adenocarcinoma was very small and they performed the surgery because it could be removed. The doctor told us that we were very lucky to have that.

We then tested the type of tumor to discuss a treatment plan and found that my Tumor was the type of tumor that the latest treatment, molecularly targeted drugs, would work.

I started taking a molecularly targeted drug called Tarceva on February 1, 2018. There are some side effects, but they are not serious and I feel like I'm getting along just fine.

Immediately after the foot and lung surgeries, I underwent walking rehabilitation and radiation therapy, and I'm slowly regaining my strength. My life expectancy at this point was an average of two to three years. That seems to mean that the cancer cells become resistant to molecularly targeted drugs and stop working.

As of this writing, it has been about 1 year and 9 months since I was diagnosed with cancer, but the molecularly targeted drugs continue to be effective, and I have just received a diagnosis from my doctor that there is no more visible cancer. (The remaining tumors on my left femur and right hip bone.) However, the doctor decided that the invisible cancer cells were probably all over my body, so I should continue to take the molecularly targeted drugs and continue my regular checkups.

The fact that there is no more visible cancer means that, for that reason alone, my body is as healthy as it can be at the present time.

When we heard these words from the doctor, it was a real joyful report for us, but for some reason we both felt a "strange calm" at that moment. As we left the doctor's office and made our way to the car, I looked up at my husband and asked.

'Shin-chan, why aren't you feeling so joyful?' When he was confused himself, I immediately said, "Actually, so am I. In fact. What is this? It's very quiet."

The history of this process has already been published twice in "The Right Side of the Boat" as a testimony, but I will be giving a testimony of the progress from the last time, in November 2018, to the present.



"Made alive by grace."

At the end of last November, I celebrated one year since I was diagnosed with this disease. I say "received the disease" because I don't have the feeling in my heart that the day I was diagnosed with the disease was an abominable day. I experienced pain and suffering and the fear of facing death and the time of life through the illness, but it was at that moment when I cried out to God for help that God's grace came into my life in a way I had never before known. That grace is that "God is with me". And the Lord who is with me is good, and that is the grace of "peace" that I have received from Him. The pain I had never experienced, the pronouncement of life expectancy placed in front of me, made me shed tears I had never shed before, also from the loss of not being able to return to the time of yesterday. But I said, "God, what should I do? Please help!" He brought the Word of God to my mind in response to the cry, and the truth of the Word of God gave me an unshakable peace with the urgency of reality.

'For the work of God has been manifested in this man.' (John 9:3)

'Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?' (John 11:40)

It has sunk into my whole body and into my cells, shutting out anxiety and fear, and protecting my heart and giving me peace by closing off the path to discouragement and disappointment. And the peace that God has with me has reminded me that His Word is sure, even in the midst of the path of sickness, even when difficulties come to

shake and test my heart. And it led me to trust in the Lord again and to abide in the love and word of God.

It has helped me to focus on living in the time of life that God is making me live, not the time of the doctor's pronouncement of how much time I have left to live. I was so grateful to be alive and present now, and I was starting to walk in the Word of God.



“With my family.”

After being discharged from the hospital, I spent a lot of time, especially with my family. I went to church mostly for Sunday services and spent most of my time at home and with my husband and children going about their daily life. I also had surgery on my left leg, so while I went to rehab and was treated with molecularly targeted drugs, I often had side effects such as eczema, hair loss and swollen toes, although not serious, and although I was

relatively healthy, I tired easily, so I had to lie down several days a week. I also traveled with my husband to see my family in Japan so that they could see how well I was doing, and even though it was short, I had the opportunity to see my family in the Lord and chose to do what I thought was best and what I could only do now while watching my condition. When I was discharged from the hospital, four doctors told me that you can eat whatever you want, go wherever you want, and do whatever you want, it really set my mind free. Looking back on it now, in my 52 years of life, I have never received such words from anyone.

That word made me stand in a wide open place. It gave me hope and expectation in my heart to spend more time with my husband and children and to spend more time with them as I surrendered to the time of God's life for one day on earth, like a thousand years. On the other hand, I also wondered how much time I had left to live. It could be just as the doctor said it would be for two or three years. The thought “it could be just as the doctor said” also came and went in my mind. Even though I was determined to live as God would have me live, and even though I had freedom and peace in my time on earth, there was still a part of me that wondered when death was coming. I had no fear of death. But as I thought of saying goodbye to my loved ones, my church, and my friends, my heart was shaken. God, who knows me so well, knew my thoughts well.

“ Firefly between two thoughts”

Last September, when my husband was invited as a messenger to a meeting on the east coast of the U.S., he was allowed to stay at the home of Dr. Manabu and Mrs. Noriko Nishikori who have been looking after us since our seminary days. Then I found fireflies flying in the garden at night. I didn't know there were fireflies in New York! I was very excited. It's been years since I saw a firefly since I was a child. Then, for some reason, I wondered if I was going to die. The thought of death came to me. I had no fear

of death at the time, but gradually I realized that maybe this life I had entrusted to myself was short-lived. Will I still be okay? It became a question for me to ask myself. The fact that I had stage 4 terminal cancer was always somewhere in the back of my mind, and the thought of 5 years, or 10 years, or maybe even 2 or 3 years, was always there, and the hope that I would live a long time, and at the same time, the two thoughts that I might be dying It was co-existent. There was always a readiness for both of these things, living and dying, and I think it made me somewhat reluctant to do so, too. I couldn't help but feel my mind reacting in a complex way to the disease that was in this body, the cancer. What came up during my time with my family was a desire to live longer and see more happiness in my family. I was in a complicated state of mind with these two thoughts, the desire to live and the preparation for death. However, I did not try to dissolve that state of mind, but rather, I tried to accept myself as I was. I think God was watching me closely.



Especially in the second year after I got sick, I learned a lot about staying in God's love and continuing to trust and surrender to Him by meditating on His Word. It has made my walk simpler. Only, God is with me. That is the only thing that has stayed with me. It subdued the surging thoughts that were bubbling up and made me look at the preciousness of life as I was simply present and alive. In June of this year, my husband took a vacation and took our family trip to Japan. On Sunday, we worshiped at "The Lord Jesus Christ Church of Sinners' Friend" which is pastored by Dr. Tatsuya Shindo and Yumi Shindo his wife. In the service, Pastor Shindo introduced me, "Here's the healed Rei-san...". That phrase, "Healed Rei-san," hit me somewhere in my heart that I had stage 4 terminal cancer. At that moment I thought, "Oh, let go of this stage 4 thing from me. I'm getting more than just a disease. I was able to receive that. So, as it was, I got the introduction and he said, "Say hello, Rei-san!" When I was invited to stand up, I said, "I walk as one who has been healed beyond my illness." I expressed my gratitude by saying, I am more

than just sick, I am healed." It was a time of freedom from the chains of stage 4. This trip to Japan was a journey of healing. I was reunited with family and friends and acquaintances, prayed that I would be healed, eczema and swollen toes went down at the hot springs, soul food from Okayama to Tohoku (shiny white rice, tea and pickled plums for me, after all!) I enjoyed the "Whatever I wanted to do!" Thanks to all the doctors who said that! Thank you all for letting me do that and sending me off with intercessory prayers! And thank you so much, God the Father, who said and provided everything for us by creating the heavens and the earth. One day as I was driving back to Hawaii with such gratitude, I was driving along when suddenly the thought of Jesus being God and yet becoming a man and laying down his life for me loomed in my mind and I began to cry. Just then, the radio in my car was playing and the announcer of the Christian broadcast song said, "God loves you fiercely and

strongly!” I heard him speak in English in a strong tone of voice, “Romans 8-11” Then I quickly pulled into the parking lot and opened my Bible. ‘If the Spirit of the One who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, you have raised Christ from the dead.’ The peace that was given to me when I was first diagnosed with cancer and told I had only a few days to live, and the peace that I have now at this time is the same peace of the Lord. The light that I got when I looked up to the Lord when my heart was filled with fear and anxiety and the light of the Lord that is still shining at this time is the same light. The praise and joy that was given to me when I walked into the operating room and the praise and joy that I am receiving at this time are the same. The grace the Lord gives us is always the best. It is not a light peace at that time and a more intense peace at this time. The Lord always gives us the best peace and joy. So, because I have already received the best, this time it is the same peace and joy.

Shinji:

Originally, for me, my wife was someone who was already healed. That means that she has received divine healing that goes beyond medical healing. It wasn't a matter of believing it or not; it was a fact that was right in front of us. The children were really happy to hear this news. Many others were also happy. That was our joy. During the worship service praise that week, tears welled up when we thought we would be able to live more with Rei here on earth.

There are those who have been encouraged by the way the Lord's grace has sustained Rei in the seriousness of her cancer situation. There are also those who praise and rejoice in the glory of the Lord through this report. I believe that we can be witnesses of the true Christ in whatever situation we find ourselves in, whether it is in the midst of a disease or when we are healed, when we are alive to His grace there. It is not only the circumstances and the results that are witnesses, but more than that, I



believe that I am there with the Lord on both sunny days and rainy days, and I am alive with His grace, and that is what it means to be a witness. That is what being a witness means. Praise the Lord!

“Praise the Lord; do not forget anything that he has done for you.”(Psalm 130:2)

“God is Good All the Time” The Lord was good then, is good now, and will be good now!

Please check it out: <http://blog.goo.ne.jp/sanwa5510459> (in only Japanese word)

Translate by Hikaru Seki