

Day 3:

Scripture: Psalm 34:1-3

Spiritual Lifelines: The Word and Prayer

Over the years one of my biggest fears was, "What if my husband, Tom, or one of my children were to die?" I did not think I could face that. Wait, no, I knew that I could *never* face that. I wanted to emotionally flee from the idea. I wanted to ignore it and act as if it would never happen. But then I met a woman who had watched six of her nine children burn up in a car fire right in front of her and her husband. It was as if God pointed right to that big fear in my heart and said, "Time to grow up in this matter."

This woman shared that when she and her husband were loaded into separate ambulances due to their own burns, he shouted to her, "Quote Psalm 34!" He was a pastor and their church had been memorizing this psalm. Her first response was to refuse, but she finally began to quote, "I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My life makes its boast in the Lord. Let the humble and afflicted hear and be glad. Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together." She shared how God's Word calmed and comforted her.

As I wept for this woman over her loss, I determined that I would also memorize these verses. I wanted to be armed should I face my greatest fear. And then, I forgot about those verses.

Twenty-two years later, in 2017, our 40-year-old son, Michael, died of a heart attack while on a bike ride in a mountain park five minutes from our house. When I got the news, my whole body felt like it had been purged of life. As Tom and I drove to the park, God reminded me that I had memorized those verses for such a time as this. I quoted Psalm 34:1-3 out loud and we prayed together. These were not mere activities. They were spiritual lifelines locking my heart to God's for what I was about to face.

The strength of God began to fill my lifeless heart as we got out of our car and climbed the hill to be with Michael's body. His wife, his two sons, and his in-laws were already there. As we sat down in the circle around him my heart was flooded with pain. Simultaneously, my spirit was filled with the awareness that Christ was present. This was the most agonizing pain I have ever experienced. It was *not* easy. *But*, Christ in me urged my spirit to recognize that I can bless the Lord as my worst fear is realized. Indeed, God's calm filled my spirit. God's calm settled in me. His calm helped me to fall on Him that night and the days and weeks ahead.