

March 18, 1987

Dear family and friends,

We are writing this letter as a "thank you" to the scores of people who have been supporting us in various ways during the last two months. We know that there have been many, many who have been praying for us; your prayers and the Lord's grace have turned what could have been only loss and misery into a testimony of love and victory!

The Lord has proven Himself faithful in every respect. Jackie has continually felt "encased in a cocoon of God's mercy and grace".

You are probably aware of the unexpected surgery that Jackie had in February. After a diagnosis of "Paget's disease" (cancer the ducts in the breast), we sought the Lord for healing, having ministry in Minneapolis and in Tulsa, Oklahoma. A repeat biopsy brought the same diagnosis; the difficult decision was made to proceed with surgery, two ("simple" vs "radical") mastectomies. The cancer was found to be localized, not having spread, and it was considered by the doctors to be a surgical cure, needing no chemotherapy, etc. The plastic surgeon began reconstruction at the same time. There will be at least two more reconstructive surgical procedures needed over the next months. We are trusting the Lord that these will go well.

The Lord has shown us His mercy, love, and compassion repeatedly through this difficult time. His body, people like you, have responded in so many loving ways. Financial gifts have come (we have no medical insurance), cards by the dozens, flowers and plants (as far away as New Zealand!), many calls and visits, -- how precious to us has each one been! Meals have been sent to our home for more than a month now and some have even come and cleaned our house for us! One lady, Anne, has befriended Jackie's mom, taking her out for lunch on occasion, giving her respite from her faithful labor in the Matthews' kitchen and laundry!

Jackie's physical recovery would appear to be long and slow; we are trusting the Lord to intervene in this process; He has been faithful to give wisdom in even little things, such as revealing to Jackie how to gently exercise away a "charlie horse" in her shoulder rather than needing addictive pain medication for it.

John has had a more difficult "inner" struggle than Jackie through this time. Part of that is watching his mate go through the difficult surgical procedures; part of it has been a spiritual warfare against his soul and his ministry. But through such difficulty, John is learning to trust the Lord in a deeper way, with a more complete abandonment to Him.

A special word that has come to us through this is Psalms 46:10:

"Be still (cease striving, let go, relax) and know that I am God..."

FROM JOHN AND JACKIE

A SPECIAL THANKYOU

This has been for us a time of casting ourselves on the mercy of God in the middle of circumstances that seemed to "press us to the wall". When we were tempted to strive, worry, and fret, the word of the Lord called us to a simple quietness in Him -- are we going to trust His goodness, faithfulness and loving presence?

"Yes, Lord, we trust in You."

Once again, thank you, family and friends. Some of you have come like angels to us; the love expressed through so many of you has brought the Lord's comfort to us; and the intercession and spiritual warfare you have done on our behalf has had its fruit in our spiritual victory!

In another letter we will tell you of the progress in our missions ministry with AIMS. We are going on ahead with God; though the enemy has come "in like a flood", the Lord has "raised up a standard against Him!" Jesus Christ is Victorious in us!

"Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, we press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:13,14)

There is a continuing need for finances for Jackie's medical expenses. Church Upon The Rock has established a fund to receive gifts for this purpose. The Lord is providing as the bills come in a marvelous way; We are confident that He will finish what He has begun to do -- and that He will show you what your part may be in standing with us.

Resting in Christ's comfort,

John and Jackie
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