

# KEENER THOUGHTS

## DECEMBER, 2012

### GOOD EXPERIENCES IN BAD TIMES

*"And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Cor. 2:9-10)*

For those of you who may have wondered why I did not publish a November issue of Keener thoughts, here is the explanation. Since December of 2011, I have felt weak without any explanation. I went to a little Access Clinic in January and the physician's assistant saw something she did not like, and sent me to the heart hospital for some tests and they pronounced my heart good. I had not selected a primary care physician since moving to Oklahoma City, so in July, I think, our neighbor recommended a doctor that fit that description and I made an appointment with him. He examined me, and did not like the way my heart sounded. He gave me an EKG and pronounced my heart sound, and OK. Now, I have had some chest pain for years, sometime accompanied by forearm pains and wrote it off as indigestion, and I do not know, even now, that it was anything but that. On October 18<sup>th</sup>, I had the second surgery for melanoma cancer on my left ear, and of course, was completely put to sleep. I woke up and got home about 6 PM, ate supper and went to bed. Except for a sore ear I felt fine. I was awakened a little before mid-night with some minor chest pains. I got up and sat in my recliner a few minutes, felt better and went back to bed. Just after mid-night I had the same kind of wake up call, but severely enough that the pain would not let me sleep. I went back to my recliner, and shortly I felt very strong pain in my chest and both forearms. I called my wife out of bed and we soon agreed that I was having a heart attack. I had been instructed to take no aspirin because of the previous surgery.

We decided I should take one anyhow, and the doctors agreed that it probably saved my life. In fifteen minutes or less, the ambulance arrived. They placed a pick in my arm and gave me either two or three shots of something on the way to the hospital where I arrived in less than 30 minutes after the ambulance was called. The surgeon arrived at the hospital almost as soon as my wife could get there, even though she left

the house right after the ambulance did. He said I had experienced a massive heart attack, and could not survive surgery, and therefore, he installed two stints, one to open a 100% blockage and one to open a 95% blockage. I reportedly had another 85% blockage, but the doctor did not think I could survive long enough for another one at that time. When he came out and reported to Mary, he expressed uncertainty as to my survival. God happened to be at the hospital that night, and I am still alive. I am not sure, and it seems the doctor is not either, if I will need surgery, or more stints, in the future. That is in God's hands, and I am perfectly satisfied, and at peace, with that.

Now, I wrote all that to say, God's grace was, and is, sufficient for me. Since the heart attack, I have said many times, and I repeat, I am thankful for that heart attack. After I awoke, I found myself crying about everything I said, or tried to say. A heart attack apparently has that effect on your emotions, or at least, so I am told. But my tears were not tears of pain, or fear, or self-sympathy, or even sadness, they were tears of gratitude and pure joy. I was not aware enough of time to be sure, but I think, by noon the next day there were flowers, and phone calls, which I could not answer, and as the day wore on, there were more visitors than the doctors would allow. I don't even know how people found out, but expressions of care, and promises of prayers, were coming from all over the country, even cards with names of all the families in the church promising to pray for me. Early the next morning, and maybe even in the after midnight hours following my surgery, Brother Paul Brown, my pastor arrived, and stayed at the hospital almost constantly for the next three days. Sometimes he was in the room, and at other times he was seated near the elevator door, so that even the people who would not be allowed to visit, were given a first-hand account of my condition. There were at least four preachers at one time, two with tears on their cheeks, who just wanted to drop in and say, "We are praying for you," and to pray with me. Many members of Sherwood Baptist Church, in spite of the fact that they were told I had too many visitors, came to see me and to pray with me, and several even came all the way from the church in Lawton. Many of my family members from surrounding cities came to visit. There were actually too many for me to keep count of. One church even sent an envelope stuffed pledges from, perhaps, fifty members who had signed pledges to pray for me. Cell phones were held to my ear, for me to hear verbal messages from far away friends. I was weeping tears of joy almost continually.

Now to add to all of that, the doctors and staff in the heart hospital, were the most wonderful attendants you could ever have. Without exception, they treated me with

loving kindness, and a respect that you could not anticipate. Though most every one of them voluntarily confessed that my recovery was in God's hands, and of course, I must say, "that is true," nevertheless, I must also say that they were instruments in His hands. I was able to speak to almost all of them about the goodness and mercy of The Lord, and they seemed to appreciate it.

A recliner or futon was in each room and my wife slept at the hospital every night I was there, except one. That night my daughter, who with son-in-law, Larry Jones, had traveled all the way from Galveston, TX., to be with us, insisted on staying, so Mary went home to bathe and get some rest. Of course she bathed, but did not rest much, so the rest of the time she stayed, almost constantly, within speaking distance of my bedside. After I came home she has been the best doctor and nurse anyone could ever dream of. From cooking the proper foods to keeping track of my prescriptions, and having all my medications ready to take at the proper times, she has been more able and efficient than anyone could expect. What a wonderful Christian Lady God has given me for a wife. Looking back at the innumerable blessings, I have received from The Lord, by the hands of some of the most wonderful people in the world; I am constrained to say, Thank God for the heart attack.

Now I am weak, and have a few other maladies, some related to the heart attack and some not, but I am gaining strength and looking forward to a good recovery, and to getting back into wonderful ministry which God has given me.

--FLK