

## **Philippians 4**

**4** Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

**5** Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

**6** Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; **7** and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

**8** Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. **9** The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

### **SAFE IN THE ARMS OF JESUS**

**22/04/23**

I'm finding it very difficult to type at the moment so I'm recording this and hopefully I can edit it. But I just wanted to share with you my testimony over the surgery. It was totally amazing.

Last Saturday, I had a terrible day. I ended up in a really black hole. I was so overwhelmed when I got the message to say that I had been booked in for surgery on the 19 and that at last God was going to take away the pain that has been my constant companion for the last three years. I was so grateful for that but absolutely scared witless because I have had really bad experiences with general anaesthetics in the past. And I know they can't give you a block and do shoulder surgery with a block, because they can't do it. They can give you a nerve block, which they do to make the pain easier, but they have to knock you out to do the surgery.

And I was battling this fear and on last Saturday, because I foolishly looked something up online and then ended up going down a rabbit hole of reading things about the surgery. (Ah, what a stupid thing to do.) I was in a very, very dark place.

Sunday, I did my very best to get myself worshipping and just being in God's presence as best I could. And then I went to bed on Sunday night thinking about it all, and I had been given words for a dear friend in Canada, whose daughter is going through a medical issue at the moment. And those words were the first line of that old hymn "safe in the Arms of Jesus". So, as I went to sleep on that Sunday night, I can remember saying those words over and over and over and over to myself.

I was woken by the puppy dogs at about three o'clock and I kept saying those words because the battle in my head was horrendous. I could feel myself spinning with all of this fear of general anaesthetics going on and on and on and on in my head.

Then I remembered I'd had a visit from a friend the day that I heard I was going in for surgery, she had been prompted by God to come and visit me. And she told me about something she had done one day when she really needed to have the peace of God fall upon her for something she had to do, and she said she put her hands literally on her head and reminded herself that

she was wearing God's Armour, that her head, the thoughts, were protected by that helmet in God's Armour. And nothing was going to penetrate it. She physically put her hands on her head. So there I was at about 10 past five in the morning, having spent almost two hours battling these stupid thoughts. I put my hands on my head as I lay in bed and, silently because I didn't want to wake Mike up, I said "I am protected by God's Armour. My thoughts are not controlled by my enemy. My thoughts are controlled by God. I am yours God – protected".

And, immediately, God led me down a path of seeing images. The first image was of Moses in his basket, being cradled by God, as his sister put him in the Nile. Crocodile infested waters and yet he was protected, cradled by God in that little basket. And then God moved the picture on, to me seeing the Ark door being shut by God, not by Noah, but by God. So that Noah and his family were in there, and they were safe. They were secure. They were protected. Because God had shut the door. And then the words came to me. "Jesus is your Ark. Jesus is your Ark". And I knew that peace of God that I had been longing for, just absolutely flooded my being. I knew I was safe. I was secure. I was in the Arms of my Saviour being held against his breast, I was in the Ark and God had shut the door.

Monday and Tuesday, I could not believe the difference. It was astounding. I forgot; when I got up on Monday morning I went into our bathroom, and we have a calendar on the wall in our bathroom that has a scripture of the month and then daily scriptures. And I had read the scripture of the month for 17 or 18 days, but I had not really read it, "and the peace of God which passes all understanding will guard your heart and mind through Christ Jesus". That was the scripture that had flooded my being at quarter past five in the morning and I had gone to sleep. Bang, immediately.

So on the Monday and Tuesday, I was absolutely staggered at the fact that I was filled with this total and absolute peace. The fear had completely gone, absolutely and completely gone.

We left to go into the hospital on Wednesday morning. And we'd originally been told Mike was only allowed to come into the reception area and then he had to go. But he was allowed to come into the admissions reception area and sit with me and both come into the little room and go through the pre admin interview and all the rest of it. And it was only when I was taken into what is a sterile area, that he couldn't come any longer. So, that was a blessing that he was able to stay that long with me.

And then I got taken into this lovely, beautiful sterile, clean, comfortable area. Manuka Street Hospital is a private hospital, and it is just lovely. And it's being used by the public health system because they can't catch up with elective surgery. So they are contracting. They're paying for using the operating theatres at this private hospital in Nelson.

I sat there, and I sat there, and I heard other people being spoken to by their surgeons and their anaesthetists. Two other people, three other people, and I was still sitting there. And then the surgeon came and he had this lovely chat with me and went through everything, and I kept thinking "I'm not getting frustrated, I'm not getting fearful, I'm not getting anything." And then I sat there, and I sat there and three quarters of an hour went by. And I thought "This is a bit weird. Where's the anaesthetist, who was supposed to be coming

to speak to me". Then the surgeon came back and he said "oh you haven't seen the anaesthetist yet". I said "no", and he disappeared.

And by this time, I would normally have been thinking "oh my goodness, what's going on? Maybe they can't do it". And all of these thoughts would have been going through my head. But it didn't happen.

I was so calm, and just singing "safe in the arms of Jesus", singing all these wonderful songs, "the Lord God Almighty reigns" and all of these lovely songs that I'd been listening to for days were going through my head. Eventually, about five minutes later, the anaesthetist came rushing in and he was huffing and puffing. and I remember saying to him, "oh, golly, you okay?"

And he sat down and he gave me my talk about what was going to happen.

And I asked him the questions I had to ask. I said to him about my previous experiences of getting dreadful, claustrophobic panic attacks coming out of the anesthetic. I was trying to fight off the staff and fight off the blankets and all the rest of it. And anyway, that was that, then his nurse came and spoke to me and said "right we're going in now". So in we went and they helped me get on this very narrow, very uncomfortable bed thing. And another nurse stood by me and took my hand and she said "how are you?" I said, "Well, I'm sort of a bit nervous about the surgery, but I'm fine. Thank you". And she said "so tell me about you, where do you live?" And we talked about grandchildren and great grandchildren and we chatted away. And then she said to me, "okay, Night night", and I was out like a light.

Next thing I know, I'm waking up with a nurse either side of me saying "hello, it's all over."

The last time I had a general anaesthetic, when I came out of it my body was shaking so much that the whole bed was shaking, and the nurses had to hold me down because I was shaking so much.

There was no shaking. There was no panic attack. There was no claustrophobia. All I had was terrible wind. I wanted to burp. So the nurse said, "hey, that's okay. I'll just get you some ginger beer, shall I?" And she brought me a glass of ginger beer with a straw.

And there I was with ginger beer and a straw in the recovery room thanking God that my memories now of general anaesthetics are no longer of panic attack and fear. My memories are all of God, holding me being safe in the Arms of Jesus, inside the Ark and God shutting the door.

I am utterly and completely in awe of what God did and how he has healed that awful memory for me and replaced it with such a beautiful, beautiful one.

I want to thank you all for your prayers. For the support you've been, everyone has been over the past few years, because it's been hard it's been really hard.

But God has got me through somehow, His way, and I thank Him for the skill of the doctors, the nurses, the researchers, the people who have created, from what He originally created, anaesthetics that don't cause the awful side effects that they used to.

And I thank him from the bottom of my heart for showing me that I am safe in the Arms of Jesus.