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I Will Guide You With My Eye

BY JAN DE CHAMBRIER

ake the key out of your pocket and fasten it to your wrist.” The Holy Spirit’s command was clear as I traipsed through the tall grasses en route to the lake. On this glorious sun-dappled afternoon in the waning days of a perfect Swiss summer, my husband Philippe and I had decided to take our family’s little Lazer sailboat out for a spin on Lake Neuchatel. Approaching the weathered-gray boathouse, I obeyed the Lord’s prompting, curious as to why He had issued this instruction. As Philippe was preparing the boat, I reached for one of the child-sized lifejackets hanging on a cord, far less cumbersome than the adult version. “No, put on one that will protect you.” Again, that still small voice was crystal clear - but I wondered why. I’d never had to rely on a life jacket before, my husband is an excellent sailor, it’s a beautiful day. Yet I decided to obey. A few more distinct instructions followed before I joined my husband on the shore and climbed aboard.

As we whooshed towards the middle of the azure lake, propelled by winds of rapidly increasing velocity, a gust assailed our tiny craft and without warning, thrust us into the deep, frigid waters. Bobbing up and down, fighting to find a breath, I cried out to God, “HELP!” The impact had catapulted the boat’s centerboard into the lake apart from our capsized vessel, leaving no leverage with which to lift the sail. Philippe was blessedly nearby, calling out to God for a plan to rescue us.

Within a few minutes, despite the scarcity of other boats on the lake, we were spotted by a couple on a large motorboat who quickly came to our aid. They helped me ascend the ladder to their deck and offered to tow Philippe and the downed sailboat to shore. However, he felt led to persevere, asking the Lord to send a ministering angel to hoist the mast and submerged sail. As I stood trembling in my rescuer's boat, we all gaped in astonishment as Philippe was supernaturally empowered to do what appeared to be impossible.

That evening, safely ensconced in our room, we shared our wonderment at God's intricate provisions for us that day. Philippe mentioned half a dozen specific instructions God had given him prior to setting sail, just as He had given to me. Absolutely nothing was compromised or lost in the process: the centerboard was recovered, the sail undamaged; the ancient key to our house remained firmly attached to my wrist. Even a plastic shoe that had dislodged when I climbed the ladder was found snagged in a rope.

As God guided us with His eye, He likewise counseled us through His Word.

Shaking our heads in awe, we realized that God had been guiding us with His eye, just as He expressed through David in Psalm 32:8-9 - "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my loving eye on you." Little did we comprehend that this modern-day parable would soon become a ballast for us in the tumultuous days to come.

Shortly after returning from a ministry trip to Mumbai, India in late January, I detected a lump in my lower right pelvis. Medical tests revealed an aggressive malignant tumor, a highly unusual recurrence of endometrial cancer that had manifested during my first and only pregnancy twenty-six years before. Having lost twins, endured radical surgery to remove all of my reproductive organs, undergone intensive post-surgical hormonal therapy followed by several subsequent abdominal surgeries, I knew firsthand fear. But God had given me a promise like a rainbow during that ordeal of long ago, one that became my life verse: "I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord." Psalm 27:13-14

Philippe and I had just witnessed God's extravagant provision as He righted our boat against all human comprehension. We sensed that this was not about us, but a Kingdom opportunity to demonstrate God's faithfulness in the midst of another one of the storms of life. He would be the Anchor that would hold us as we fixed our eyes on Jesus. Once I determined that I was only a vessel carrying the presence of Jesus and that the cancer was just a means to carry His love into places He wanted me to go, we had an excitement and anticipation about what God was going to do. It was not about surviving a spiritual tsunami; it was about shining His light in places where darkness likes to hide.

As God guided us with His eye, He likewise counseled us through His Word. I John 5:14-15 was daily bread for me. "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of Him." Just before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He gave thanks to the Father as He looked up towards heaven, saying, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me." And we as His children have that same blessed assurance. Philippe and I asked that God would be glorified in every circumstance as He fully healed and restored me. We asked for grace to be able to count it all joy as He navigated us through this tempest. We asked that we would continue to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

As the loving body of Christ on six continents continually lifted us before His throne, our faithful Father heard and answered every prayer. The Kingdom of heaven came to earth in the operating room as the surgical table was prayerfully offered as an altar of praise. While my superb MD Anderson surgeons had prepared me for the possibility of a six hour operation, including removal of half of my stomach muscles and a bowel resection followed by chemo and radiation, God's gracious provision resulted in an uncomplicated surgery of less than two hours - with no further treatment necessary!

The Lord's unfailing love surrounds the ones who trust in Him. His eyes are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to our cries. Thanks be to God for the victory we have through our Lord Jesus Christ.



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