

JOHN 14:1 Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. **2** In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

4 **You know the way** to the place where I am going." **5** Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" **6** Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. **7** If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." **8** Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." **9** Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? **10** Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. **11** Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.

January 2008

By Joyce Anderson-Reed

The day after Christmas David went for his 20-mile bike ride, and in the midst of an uphill climb experienced a sharp chest pain. He coasted home! Because of his family's history with heart disease, we booked flights to Phoenix, AZ to visit his brother's cardiologist. The stress test and the nuclear stress test came back normal. But because of David's symptoms, the cardiologist went

ahead and scheduled an angiogram. This took place on Friday, January 25, 2008. Two blockages in the left artery were discovered and could not be repaired with stents. The news took us by surprise. We'd been expecting that David would need stents. Now he was facing by-pass surgery. It was a shock to suddenly change gears.

However, as that day unfolded, God showed up in so many visible ways. David's dad Bill, David's brother Bill, and a dear Christian friend Everett were with me in the waiting room. All three of them have had heart procedures. They were allowed to accompany me when the cardiologist gave me the results of the angiogram. They helped me listen and know what kinds of questions to ask. It gave me great comfort!

The boys were with David's stepmother Linda. I called to let them know what had happened, explaining that their dad would need surgery, but not that day. After we'd talked, Linda was able to explain to them further what by-pass surgery was and how long it would take their dad to recover, because she'd gone through it with their grandfather ten years earlier. God was providing information and peace for all of us.

Later that day we sent out an email updating everyone about the impending surgery. We received so many words of encouragement from friends and family around the world! Those who had gone through by-pass surgery themselves were especially able to offer us words of hope and love. Isn't it amazing to be a part of the body of Christ?!

The next Sunday we attended First Baptist Church of Scottsdale, our home church when we're in the Phoenix area and where David was baptized 30 years ago. Pastor Bob told us that the church was going to adopt us, assist us financially with a love gift, bring us meals when David came home from the hospital, provide a car if

we needed it—basically, however they could support us through this crisis, they would. What a powerful way to see God's love in action! Near the close of Pastor Bob's sermon that same Sunday, he reminded us that we are made in the image of God. Therefore, when we look at one another, we are looking into the face of God. He smiled and said, "God looks pretty good today, doesn't He?"

This morning we received prayer shawls from the First Baptist Church of Littleton, MA. This is the church we attended before leaving for Mexico. The enclosed note said, "Dear Joyce and David, These 2 prayer shawls come to you from your family in Littleton. We ARE your family! Each thread is one of us, woven together in prayer to make a blanket of love to embrace you with. Please feel our prayers with you this week and always! Love, Pastor Debbie and The Family"

What does God look like? God looks like you. God looks like me. Sons and Daughters of God. We're family.

P.S. We have a consultation with the cardio surgeon on Tuesday, February 5, at 3pm. Surgery will be scheduled after that.

Last Wed night we talked about what some of this means. We talked about and tried to visualize what life would be like for this family in our community in the near future...

What the needs would be...

What could we individually and collectively do to assist in a significant way the family that has served us so well these last few years.

Morale, finance, space

We spoke optimistically about the 'procedure'...

Possibly robotic? Non-invasive

I talked to David

We were wrong

Cut sternum open chest cavity heart shut down reboot

recovery from routine but major surgery

David say's "it is what it is"

And that the best thing is to get up and moving quickly

Maintain a normal workload and remain physically active

We pray and ask God to ease our fear...shore our creeping
faithlessness...protect our friend...show us your face in the storm

Christ had to be broken for Gods gift of mercy and love to be
revealed

Why shouldn't His child David

I told David about how after men's breakfast Thursday... We
visited Raul

We talked about the details of his accident

Details...

Some of the day to day issues...

We talked about the ride to the hospital

Jerry driving all the way

Police escort

I asked where he sat...

Insensitive

I know what he feels

That he is no longer one of us

That he is too delicate

That he is no longer useful to us

That what earned our love and respect and validated his life is no
longer there, that his social currency is exhausted and that he is
socially bankrupt useless to us

You are here for us
For us to learn to see you
To see God in you
Sustaining your faith

To hear your witness
A witness of God standing by you
A witness of God's grace in the fire
A witness of heroism and pain

To take the time to hear you
To take the time to hear God speak through you
To learn patience as you are learning patience
To wait on God's miracle being lived out in you
To discover how deeply we love you and how badly we need you

Christ had to be broken for Gods gift of mercy and love to be
revealed
Why shouldn't His child Raul

All he wants to do is serve...and he serves

I am loved, I am loved, I can risk loving you
For the one who knows me best loves me most
I am loved, I am loved; won't you please take my hand? We are
free to love each other we are loved

Being there meant a lot to my brother CE
Or may I say half way being there meant a lot...

Negotiating the hilly and gravelly road to Raul's door was no easy task for a man whose brain tumor a year or two ago left his right side paralyzed.

Creative cramming...

CE helped build the house where Raul lives and for the first time in a long time he came to visit.

There and back we talked about some of the challenges of day to day being.

Armpit, Pants, climbing two steps

Different challenges

But a common concern

That he is no longer one of us

That he is too delicate

That he is no longer useful to us

That what earned our love and respect and validated his life is no longer there, that his social currency is exhausted and that he is socially bankrupt useless to us

That he can't install the cover plates for the boxes on the wall

Don't worry...if unfinished projects make a person useless

You need to bury me now so I can at least do some soil fertilizing

Because I am the king of unfinished projects...

CE you are one of us

And you are not that delicate

Your sense of humor remains intact

That's good enough for me

And your faith remains intact

And that's good enough for the Lord and the rest of us

Christ had to be broken for Gods gift of mercy and love to be revealed

Why shouldn't His child CE?

You want to do maintenance for us? Maintain this.

I am loved, I am loved, I can risk loving you
For the one who knows me best loves me most
I am loved, I am loved; won't you please take my hand? We are
free to love each other we are loved

Bill Smiles was there as he was a few weeks back helping put in doors and windows, a stair and porch for Raul's house. "Good we'in" he calls it. Since his stroke a few years back and a few other medical episodes where in his words "Papa had to Lazarus him back up" he has had to take a roundabout approach to language to overcome his aphasia, a speech disorder. Bill's new friend Raul speaks no English, not that that would help much, and Bill only speaks a little bit of Spanish. But, when Bill Smiles smiles Raul knows just what Papa has put in his heart. The gift is plainly seen and heard and felt.

Christ had to be broken for Gods gift of mercy and love to be revealed
Why shouldn't His child Bill.

As I sat there with my friends dwarfed by having only the 7 stiches in my hand...a mere flesh wound...I suddenly kinda felt like the outsider.

I realized that I sat in a room with three dear friends each of whom had been close enough to the gate to hear the Masters voice. But, they were each still here.

I remembered Christ's words in John 14:3 ***And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.***

I suggested that maybe our group needed a very particular place to keep the rest of heaven's population...safe... and it was still under construction.

I truly believe that they are still here to help Christ prepare a place in the hearts of some of us where he can dwell forever

Pray for our friends but try something different
Pray for God to give you eyes to truly see them

To see past the scars
To hear beyond the twisted words and stories of brokenness and suffering to the stories of redemption and the blessing of peace

Pray for the wisdom to understand who and what they are becoming by the hand of an all knowing and all loving God and how you can share the journey with them

Pray for God to show you how your hands can help them in meaningful ways

If you saw Jesus would you get hung up on His scars...and look away?

Pray that God would help you to seek Him more fervently.
Pray that God would help you to see Him more clearly.
What does God look like? God looks like you. God looks like me. Sons and Daughters of God. We're family. We are loved.