

The Weaving

Preface

For each of God's children, life is like a weaving. Our Master designer is weaving both dark and bright threads in the pattern He has planned. Now we see only the underside, and may wonder why so much is dark.

He tells us that “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works...” (Eph. 2:10a). Also He promises that all things including pains, trials and losses work together for the good of making us like the Lord Jesus! (Rom. 8:28-29).

May He use the following short stories from my life to encourage you to trust and praise the Master Weaver for His wise and loving design for your life.

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Fire! Fire!

One cold winter night, when I was three years old, our family of five were safely tucked in bed, never dreaming that a major catastrophe lurked just ahead. We were living in one of five apartments next to a gymnasium, all in the same large building. This was part of a complex where missionary candidates and missionaries on furlough could live temporarily. My parents were hoping to serve the Lord as missionaries in Africa.

Early that mid-November morning, Mom awoke to feed baby Daniel. After a while she smelled smoke. Investigating, she saw thick smoke oozing out from other apartments. She cried out to Dad. Quickly they discovered that a nearby room where sweet potatoes were being cured was in roaring flames already!

Immediately Dad began hurling basins of water on the fire, but it was already out of control and too late.

Meanwhile, Mom was hurrying up and down the hall, calling out "Fire, fire!" to the sleeping residents. Dad called for Mom to bring the baby, while he picked up my little sister Faith and me in our pajamas. He took us outside to our car that was parked away from the building. I remember standing there watching the raging fire, as we shivered in the cold.

That night all our belongings, including important family records, picture albums, Dad's college notebooks, were destroyed, except the clothes on our backs and the car! But God spared our lives because He had special plans for us.

It was almost six months after the fire that I felt convicted of my sins. Tearfully I asked Mom to help me. I wanted to ask the Lord Jesus to wash my heart clean and come to live in my heart. So my merciful Lord has also rescued me from a fire that never goes out! Also He has given me ministries to help thousands of boys and girls know how they can be saved from that eternal fire! Thank you, Lord!

Bullied

At age five I was enrolled in first grade in a little two-room country schoolhouse near Greenwood, South Carolina. Earlier Mom had taught me how to read from the Gospel of John. This school had one teacher for grades one through eight, with about 24 students. Some of the children would bully me day after day by their words, laughter and other actions. I was too intimidated to know what to do. I'm not sure if I ever even told Mom about it. For sure, I was no strong Christian at the time; but in no way did I fight back.

My sister Faith came to school with me the next year. The other girls disdained and made fun of us. Of course, this was emotionally painful for us. Their actions may have been because we were poor; I don't really know.

Likewise, years later when we attended a country school in Newberry county in South Carolina, we received similar treatment and ostracizing. This was fortified by the

fact that our family was living in a two-room former schoolhouse, rudely referred to as a "nigger schoolhouse." That really endeared us to our classmates! As did our outhouse.

Our Lord Jesus knows what it's like to be slandered, disdained, shunned and hated. He knows how to comfort us so we can comfort others in similar situations. God allowed us to experience those humiliating, painful treatments in order to enable us to empathize with hundreds—and later thousands—of poor, minority, and bullied children, Black, White, and Hispanic. The Lord gave us the opportunity and privilege of giving the Gospel to many of these in schools, our Bible clubs, and on mission trips in other countries.

Our troubled experiences were part of His preparation and training of us for His service.

Thank You, Heavenly Teacher!

Excitement Turns to Dread

One day, in our seventh grade class at Greenville Junior High School, we opened our spelling books for the new lesson. When I saw whom the story was about, I grew excited. Our dad often gave the story of George Washington Carver in Black schools where he preached. I had a great idea.

George Carver, born of slave parents, learned as a boy how God answers prayers. As an adult, he began his early mornings with prayer and Bible reading. He became famous for his hundreds of useful products from the lowly peanut, and the sweet potato. Giving God the credit, he stated publicly that the God of the Bible had shown him how to develop all these products.

I took my bright idea to my teacher, Mrs. Coleman, asking if she would like my dad to come and share his pictured story of George Carver with our class. She thought that was a fine idea.

Arriving home from school, I reported the good news to Dad, little dreaming how deeply I would regret it. He decided he had a better idea. (You guessed it, right?) He would train me to show and tell the story! “Nooo!” Inside, not aloud! That afternoon, midst many tears, I was drilled in telling basic facts about George Carver, showing the colorful pictures at the proper times.

The next morning with much dread and a trembling heart, I took the flannel board, easel, and the set of pictures to school.

Mrs. Coleman was delighted, and eagerly announced the news to the class. I have no recollection of the reaction or response of the class, but I’m sure I was relieved when I finished showing and telling the story.

Or so I thought. Mrs. Coleman had another bright idea. Out the door she hurried. Soon she returned and gestured for me to bring my story and pictures to the next door seventh grade. That class received the presentation, and I probably told the story with a bit more confidence. Before the day was over, I had given the Carver story to a total of seven classes of seventh graders!

And I’m looking forward to meeting Brother George in Heaven some day.

God had a specific purpose that day, besides challenging those children by Carver's godly character and diligent work. The Lord was beginning to train me for the ministries He had planned for my future, teaching Bible in many places and sharing the Gospel with large, even huge crowds overseas...especially in South Africa.

To this day, I am not characterized by charisma as I speak or teach. However, thanks to the all-wise Heavenly Father, He chooses to use poor, weak vessels so that He will receive the glory and honor He deserves!



*Our family in the mid 50's Left to right:
Paul, Joy, Mom, Daniel, Faith, Joseph, Dad, Grace*

Rheumatoid Arthritis

When I was 20 years old, having attended Prairie Bible Institute in Canada for a year; and having worked full-time in my parents Gospel ministries for a year—including chapel programs in many public schools—I began attending Columbia Bible College in SC.

Early in 1963 I started experiencing pain and stiffening in my neck and ankles. A doctor prescribed pills that (I was told later by a nurse) were basically aspirin. I took those for some months; but since they gave no relief or healing, I stopped taking them.

For years I asked the Lord for healing. He healed me of every other large and small health problem over the years—usually apart from doctors or hospitalization. However, in this case, God had a different plan; and He makes no mistakes.

He has allowed me to keep the arthritis for over 60 years now. It has deformed most of my fingers, and prevents much sideways movement of my ankles. Praise God, most of the time now, the arthritis does not pain me. My dear Lord enables me to drive, play my small keyboard, generally take care of myself, as well as help others in various ways.

Whatever all the Heavenly Weaver's purposes are, I'm not sure. But a few truths in this are clear to me. People can readily see that one does not have to be perfect—physically or otherwise—to serve the Lord. He is willing, praise God, to use broken, marred, or scarred vessels, if we are willing, and yielding to the Potter's hands. Also, sometimes He chooses dark threads as He weaves according to His perfect plan! We can trust His wisdom, power, and lovingkindness.

Blow Out

Our Uncle Jim in New York had just given us a station wagon and a travel trailer for our Gospel ministries. Dad, Mom, and I had driven our van up to New York to bring the vehicles home to South Carolina.

Dad chose to lead the way, of course, driving the van. I was to drive the station wagon with the travel trailer, and keep Dad's van in sight.

Everything was going well until a semi decided to pass me. Now Dad's van was out of sight. Very carefully, keeping the speed limit, I began to pass the semi. Suddenly the travel trailer began to sway. (I learned later that one of its tires had blown!) The swaying became more severe, and I soon realized we were going to flip over! The semi driver kept going, perhaps unaware of my plight.

But God was in control! He caused the station wagon to fall to the right, which meant I landed on my feet rather

than on my head. The seat belt had gotten stuck that morning and would not fasten around me. (This was back in the mid-70's.) Except for a scratch on one arm, I was uninjured, praise the Lord.

Very soon, along came another semi. This driver prudently parked his truck across the lane behind me so that no other vehicles would hit mine. Then he carefully pulled me up out of the window which I'd been able to roll down. Thank the Lord, damage to both our vehicles was not tremendously serious. Also no one else was involved in the accident, praise God! He is so merciful and compassionate. Eventually the two vehicles were set upright again, and we safely returned home. God is so good!

A Sacrifice

In December of that same year, our family enjoyed the excitement of hosting a large Christian family for several days. They were ministering in several places in our town at the time. It was most fascinating to discover how many things we had in common with them. We compared our Bible training, musical ministries, and memorizing of thousands of Scripture verses. We all thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship in the Lord.

Their oldest son became interested in pursuing a special friendship with me, the oldest child in our family, with the possibility of marriage in the future. He loved the Lord, knew God's Word very well, and was only a few years older than me. After the family left, he wrote to me with high hopes.

However, our all-wise, loving Lord had different plans for each of us, and He said, "No."

This was hard, and I felt this was sort of an "Isaac sacrifice." Bruised heart and tears notwithstanding, I knew that, not only does my Lord make no mistakes, but everything He does is good and right—whether we understand it or not.

Since then, I have been ever so grateful to my Heavenly Father. I believe He gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him. His plan was far better than my wish.

If I had married, and had children, I seriously doubt if I would have had the wonderful opportunities and ministries the Lord has graciously granted me in these past four and a half decades! These include more than 40 mission trips taking the gospel to thousands of precious boys and girls in Kenya, Ukraine, Mexico, Russia, Uganda, Zambia, and South Africa.

I am happy and satisfied with my precious Lord's choices for me.

Therefore will the Lord wait, that He may be gracious unto you, and therefore will He be exalted, that He may have mercy upon you: for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all those that wait for Him (Isaiah 30:18).

Mom

My mom had the daunting task, along with Dad, of raising and training six children. Mom gave me godly training in so many ways. She prayed for me before I was born, and throughout her life.

When I was three years old, she taught me a simple Bible verse for every letter of the alphabet. She and Dad taught us both by precept and example to read the Bible daily. We had family Bible reading and prayer together.

Mom also read special books to me, including *Pilgrim's Progress* (perhaps the children's version). Another book she read me was *Children Under Communism*. This one made a deep impression on me and eventually was instrumental in my desire and opportunity to minister to children in orphanages, hospitals, and schools in two formerly communist countries, giving them the Gospel and other help.



Mom

Evidently, by the time I was four years old, I couldn't wait to learn to read. So, using the Gospel of John, Mom taught me how to read. I've loved to read ever since.

When I was about 11 or 12 years old, Mom taught me how to play simple hymns and Gospel songs using simple chords. This has stood me in good stead for many years—especially since we did not have money for music lessons. She had a beautiful singing voice and used it extensively as she served the Lord and played her autoharp.

As we children were growing up, Mom's regular habit was to arise very early to spend time alone with the Lord in His Word and in prayer. Then before we left for school she fed us breakfast, and prepared bag lunches. She knew how to

make many different yummy sandwiches—usually two or three sandwiches per child.

She helped us memorize and recite hundreds of Bible verses so we could attend Bible camps and receive awards along the way. More importantly, I'm sure she prayed God's Word would dwell richly in our minds and hearts, guiding our lives for eternity!

In turn, we taught the students in the various Christian schools where we were teachers to memorize Scripture also and earn a week at camp. In 1982 we were to take a group of our students who had memorized the required verses to Bible camp in Cleveland, Georgia.

Mom had been sick with colon cancer, and in much pain. We had prayed for her healing, and for a while she was better. I went to her bed to tell her goodbye. I gave her a kiss, and told her I wanted her to be better when I returned home. That was on a Monday.

The Lord was giving us a wonderful week at camp of Bible teaching, recreational fun, and special friendship with other Christian friends. On Wednesday we got a call from home. Mom had gone to Heaven! She was better—better than she ever had been!

I learned later from Joy, who had stayed home to help Mom, that she had heard Mom talking to the Lord

Wednesday morning. She was saying, “You promised I could go home today.”

He kept His promise, of course, and brought her to a joyful, bright Homecoming! No more pain or sorrow, but pleasures forever. Psalm 16:11 was—and has been—a great comfort to me about her. Of course, this was very sad for us as we missed her! I still miss her today, and it's been almost 40 years. But I look forward to rejoining her, thanking her again, and reminiscing with her up there. The Lord did so much for me through my Mom!

“You Were This Close to Death!”

My Heavenly Father had a very important lesson to teach me. This time I had to learn the hard way. If I had obeyed the Lord quickly, I would have saved myself and others a lot of trouble! One day a friend accused me of something, shocking me and severely hurting my feelings. Knowing we should forgive others, and doing so from the heart are two very different things.

Soon, whenever I thought of the accusation, it brought not only emotional pain, but also physical pain. Eventually a mastitic cyst developed, growing larger and larger. I wondered if it was cancer.

At some point I became aware that this was the consequence of my unforgiving heart. Listening to the story of a Dutch missionary who had also learned the hard way to forgive, I repented and forgave—let it go—from my heart.

Consequences do not always disappear immediately. (King David repented of his sin with Bathsheba and of having her husband killed; but chastening lasted for years!) Unforgiveness is a very serious sin! God graciously forgave me, and did not send me to Hell.

However, He knew I needed an ongoing reminder to forgive every time from my heart—the sooner the better. So the cyst continued to grow. Someone described it as huge as a watermelon! It was about the size of a sugar baby watermelon. A doctor was sending me for surgery. When Dad and I discovered this, we declined. Dad did some research and learned of pills that would gradually reduce the size of the cyst without surgery.

I had become quite weak, and needed to rest early every afternoon from my school teaching. A natural health doctor who had been helping me made the statement one day to me, “You came this close to death!” as he held his thumb and forefinger close together.

A medical doctor researched and gave permission for me to take the healing pills. In answer to prayer, the Lord did use the pills to begin reducing the giant cyst. It took many months for it to reach a reasonable reduction. Even now the Lord has left me a physical reminder to forgive from the heart. He forgives me, and I need His forgiveness often. I want Him to forgive me continually!

She Ran Well

My sister Faith was 16 months younger than me. She and I attended school together most of our student days, from grade school through Bible college. She loved to run in races, such as 10k races, and won a number of prizes.

More importantly, she diligently ran her race of life for Christ. She was skillful and gentle teaching kindergartners and first graders in Christian schools and our Sunday School. She was especially kind and compassionate toward senior citizens in nursing homes.

The year after my mastitic cyst began, Faith developed candida which sapped her strength. A nutritionist tried hard to defeat it, but Faith continued to decline. A day or two before our staff was scheduled to drive to the Accelerated Christian Education fall workshops in Charlotte, NC, Faith was busily preparing homemade snack treats for the A.C.E. speakers. She would do this each fall and the staff speakers loved the gifts.

Faith had been looking forward to the workshops. However, the Lord had planned a better trip for her. That same afternoon, from our bedroom, He took her home to Heaven! She was only 41 years old.

Now for those of us left behind, her absence left a big gap that needed filling. How would we be able to pick up where she left off? I felt overwhelmed. How could I take care of her ministries and mine? Thankfully, our sister Joy became our new cook and did well.

The Lord comforted and encouraged me that He was in charge. My times/schedule are in His hands. He gives needed strength, courage, and wisdom day by day as needed. Faith ran her race well, and my Lord can help me run my race and win by His grace. He is my El-Shaddai—the God who is more than enough!



Faith with nephew James

Where's the Bottom?

For Easter vacation from our Christian school one spring in the early 80's, my brother Paul, sister Joy and I drove down to Georgia to visit our brother Joseph. He also was a teacher in a Christian school down there and was on vacation. We four decided to drive to a beach. It was a real treat to swim in the ocean and a rare experience for us. Paul, Joy and I swam out a way, and Joseph stayed on shore.

Paul and Joy soon reached a sand bar. I followed slowly behind. (The mastitic cyst had drained my strength more than I realized, as I continued recuperating.) Needing to stop swimming once in a while, I'd stand before moving on. The waves were pushing me sideways as well, farther away from the sand bar.

After a bit, I tried to stand again to rest, but my feet could not find the bottom. What I had not known was that the ocean floor was undulating, and I had no idea how soon I could reach ground high enough to stand again!

My ebbing strength could not keep my head above water, and I was swallowing salt water. I had neither the time or energy to call for help. The roaring waves were too loud anyway for Paul and Joy to hear me if I did. They were probably at least 30 yards away by this time, unaware of my predicament. I had no idea if higher ground was closer in front of me or behind me. "Where's the bottom?" I wondered.

Knowing I was in danger of drowning, I prayed the Lord would set my feet on solid ground soon because my energy was nearly gone! I felt no fear of dying: I knew I'd go to Heaven. But I didn't want Paul and Joy to feel terrible, and be blamed for not rescuing me. They had no idea I needed help.

Graciously God heard and answered my plea. I turned toward shore and the Lord guided my feet onto solid ground again. As I eventually reached shallow water, and was stumbling toward shore, Joseph saw my plight, came to me, helped me to shore and into the car.

A number of nights after that I would dream about floundering in deep waters, but was always thankful to wake up safe and sound. God in His lovingkindness and eternal plan, rescued me to fulfill some of my most fruitful ministries He had prepared for me in the years to follow.

Sad News, Good News

In April of the tenth year of our Central Christian School, my brother Paul gave me some unsettling news. Well, it was both good news and bad news.



Paul

The Lord had been blessing our Bible clubs for nearly 20 years. We held the clubs for children from different parts of town and out in the countryside on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays every week. (These four Bible clubs had all started from one very small class.) God had been using us to give the Gospel to hundreds of needy children each week. Some of these boy and girls also attended our Sunday school and church.

We were training our CCS students to serve the Lord, giving them experience in several nursing homes. We took

them monthly to sing in devotionals for seniors not only in Newberry, but in two neighboring towns.

Paul did teaching in our school and all of the preaching in our Bible clubs. (I just helped bus in the children and played the accordion for the singing.) He also taught the adult Sunday School class. He drove one of the vans for the Bible clubs and for Sunday School. He did much of the visitation for church, and most of the “man work” on our property. (Dad was nearly 70 at this time.)

Aware of some of my trying times, Paul had been a special encourager to me personally, as well as helping me grow in the Lord through his preaching.

On the 13th of April, 1988, Paul let me know that he believed the Lord was leading him to begin full time evangelism away on the road. This was sad news for me, for our school, for the Bible clubs, and for our church. But for him it would mean enlarged coasts, as he would be preaching the gospel not just to hundreds of people each week, but eventually to thousands each week. Later, even more by television and YouTube! So for him and for multitudes of people who needed Christ it would be wonderful news! I was glad for his sake, knowing the Lord is the perfect, faithful Guide, not only for Paul, but also for me. God was preparing me step by step for enlarged coasts as well, though I didn't know it at the time, of course.

The Life...Is in the Blood.

Twice during my change of life I nearly hemorrhaged to death. The heavy bleeding so drained me that I nearly entered Heaven early.

The first occurrence was while we were at Bible Memory Camp in Cleveland, GA. I could feel life slipping away from me. Although I don't recall if I asked the Lord for healing, I feel sure I did. And He did! I wrote in the margins of my *Daily Light* devotion that evening, "Miraculous recovery at BMA Camp. Thank you Lord."

My second such occasion was here in Newberry almost a year later. Our Christian school had just held a devotional program of hymns for a group of special ed children and young people. Then I allowed our students to play awhile in the park next to the facility. Sitting in our van feeling so weak from loss of blood, again I thought I was about to go to Heaven. So I was sharing some final, I supposed, encouragements to Lana, a fellow teacher, for serving the Lord.

However, the Lord still had ministries—larger than before—for me to fulfill, reaching thousands of children overseas with the Gospel. So He staunched the flow, renewed my strength, and has carried me safely through 30+ more years of service. Praise the Lord!

Runaway Wheel

Our Christian school students had memorized scores of Bible verses, thereby earning a week of Bible Memory Camp in Cleveland, GA. Now we had two van loads of excited campers, with two staff members who had also memorized the designated verses, traveling smoothly along I-26 west towards northern Georgia, from Newberry, SC.

As usual, we had begun our trip with prayer for the Lord's protection on our trip, and for a good week at camp. A number of us led in prayer. All of a sudden, from the eastbound line of traffic came a large wheel from a semi hurtling straight toward us. Leaping easily over the concrete barrier between us, it smashed directly into the front corner of the van I was driving—right next to me!

Seeing the wheel zooming purposefully toward us, Mrs. Lana, who was driving the van behind us, was horrified and afraid we might be killed! The runaway wheel jolted us to a hair-raising stop, but I was able to steer the limping van off to the shoulder.

Someone later stated that the corner hit by the wheel was the least dangerous spot it could have hit! God had

wonderfully answered our prayers for our personal safety, even though we were shaken up. No one was actually injured. The van itself was labeled "totaled".

Now what? We and our luggage certainly could not fit into the second van. But God was definitely not baffled! Soon, as we were sitting on the grassy bank beside the road, here came a large van that stopped nearby. The Christian driver learned what had happened and where we needed to go. (We were near Easley, SC, and still about 84 miles from camp!)

The driver volunteered to take our whole load all the way to camp. As we considered his offer, we believed this was God's gracious provision for our need; so we accepted the offer with grateful hearts. The driver did deliver us safely to camp, and would accept no pay from us! The Lord gave us a great week at camp, and this experience was an encouragement to many campers, and a memorable learning opportunity for our students of God's mercy and faithfulness.

By the way, the insurance from our van enabled us to purchase two more used vans for our Bible clubs and Sunday School ministries! :-) Praise God.

He Taught Us Faith

Our Dad, Edwin Burnham Young, Jr., learned early in life to trust God, work hard, pray and expect God to do great things for His glory. By faith he attended several Bible institutes and colleges, successfully finishing graduate studies as well.

He pastored churches in New England, and later here in Newberry, for 20 years, especially ministering to many poor, often spiritually neglected children, Black, Hispanic, and White.

Between New England and Newberry, Dad preached in hundreds of small and large (mostly Black) public schools using filmstrips and flannelgraph pictures to make clear the Gospel. He did this for nearly 30 years. Most of his life Dad was unsalaried (and Mom worked hard at home caring for him and us six children). They believed and lived by God's promises to provide all things needed if we seek first His kingdom and righteousness. God keeps all His promises!



*Probably the last photo of Dad before he went to Heaven
Front row: Paul's wife, Vicki; Paul, daughter Evangel, Dad
Back row: Grace and Joy*

Some of the basic life lessons Dad taught us, by word and example, included:

*Follow God's goals.

*Read and meditate daily on God's word, obeying Him for spiritual success.

*Seek first God's kingdom and righteousness.

*Give back more than one tenth to the Lord.

*Believe God for great things for His glory.

Dad taught us personal Bible reading, family Bible reading, Scripture memorization, and Bible teaching. He trained us to serve the Lord in VBS's, Sunday schools, churches, camps, Bible clubs, and Christian schools. (I don't think he dreamed that some of us would minister on a number of foreign fields; but he trained us well.)

In September of 1997, shortly after he began his 80th year, Dad was taken away quietly in his sleep to Heaven to be at home with the Lord. When he left, I felt as if a protecting wall behind me had disappeared. Also the responsibilities of the Southern Gospel Crusade, covering our various ministries, were now mine. (He had legally taken care of this transfer.) How could I handle all of this faithfully? These were huge responsibilities! The Christian school, in which I was supervisor, our Bible clubs, the Sunday school, the upkeep of the property, etc., etc.

Well, this was neither a surprise nor a burden to the Lord, and He was my Heavenly Father. He certainly had never left me, nor would He ever! In fresh new ways, He showed His loving fatherhood to me, His faithful care, His

powerful protection, and His gracious provision. He is utterly trustworthy. Even a little faith in our omnipotent God can bring His glorious results!

What precious light the Father of lights shined to scatter my darkness! How marvelously blessed I am to be His little girl, a daughter of the King! He is my refuge, my faithful Guide, my Fortress, my forever Protector and Provider!

Ash Wednesday

Five months after Dad had left for Heaven, I was out working in our Christian School building one evening, preparing for school the next day. Suddenly my sister Joy called me urgently, and exclaimed, “Grace, 925 is on fire!” “925” was our guest house, and we referred to it by its street number.

I dashed over to the flaming building, but could not go inside for the raging fire was already making short work of the wooden, two-story house. Praise the Lord, our three current guests were outside and uninjured.

The fire station was only a block away. Although two parties had called the station, by the time fire trucks did finally arrive, the house was beyond saving. Very little had been rescued from it.

Dad had bought the former parsonage at an auction forty-one years earlier for \$3925.00. Our family had lived in it for almost seven years.

Then the larger old house next door, abandoned for years, and also a former parsonage, was to be auctioned off by sealed bids. Dad won the bid, bought the house (for not a lot more than the 925 house), and we moved in some months later (It's still my earthly home.)

We had used the former house for our Bible clubs, and as a guest house for about thirty-four years after we had moved out of it. Some time after the big fire, we discovered it had happened on Ash Wednesday! We learned later that one of the guests had left a damp towel on a heater to dry.

Not long before the fire, we had suspended the insurance we had been paying for many years, because the rates had risen—we felt—sky high, and we couldn't seem to afford it.

Our Heavenly Father comforted us with the wonderful reality that we have a home in Heaven that can never burn or be otherwise destroyed! Praise God!

I Don't Remember

When we six siblings were children, our parents had us memorize Bible verses. Sometimes there were small tangible rewards, and then larger rewards for more verses. Having learned 200-300 assigned verses, we earned a free week at camp. Mom listened to a lot of Bible verses!

Our first Bible camp was Children's Bible Mission Camp. Later we memorized booklets of Bible verses through Bible Memory Association and attended their Miracle Camp. We loved these highlights of the year.

One year our sister Faith took the initiative to enter a contest at camp of reciting 100 assigned verses at one sitting to some adult "hearers." Eventually in the following years at camp, the other five joined the challenge, sometimes quoting several hundred verses at one sitting. Even more important than the wonderful weeks at camp, God's Word hidden in our minds and hearts has had a huge impact in our lives and ministries over the years!

However, a sad and perplexing change began showing up in my brain and memory in my fifties. I began experiencing short term memory loss. This is ongoing now. I may forget five seconds later if I locked the door. Where are my keys? What is that word I need? Trying to remember people's names.

Sometimes I can laugh at myself and call myself names. Other times, especially if it involves other people, or wastes time or fuel—which I HATE to do—I may berate myself or even cry. It is very frustrating at times.

Each morning I do usually ask the Lord to help me remember all I need to remember. So often He does help me find or remember what I need. Also I beseech Him to prevent me from developing Alzheimer's!

As my sister Joy kindly reminds me, our Lord does not forget us or His promises to us! I am so grateful for this. He is loving and patient with me. Maybe He is using my forgetfulness to help me lean more fully on Him. That's good!

By the way, I do still remember many of the Scripture verses I memorized as a child, praise the Lord!

Walking with God

Little did I dream that chilly morning of December 9, 2002, as I left on a mission trip to Johannesburg, South Africa, that I would return home nearly a month later than planned—and in a wheelchair! Or that God had planned not just one, but two fruitful mission fields for me this time!

As my friend and fellow missionary Lana and I prepared for this trip, we prayed that God's plans would be fulfilled. Our Lord is so kind and wise not to let us know beforehand what trials and pains we will experience. Just think of all the dread, worry and fear He spares us.



Lana teaching at the day camp in Johannesburg

God gave us the joyful privilege of teaching His Word to boys and girls originally from several African countries during the week-long day camp. We told and dramatized many Bible stories, showed object lessons, taught Gospel songs, and gave small gifts to the children.



Grace teaching at ground level

On the final day of the day camp, the director decided to begin with outdoor games. However, the usual recreational leaders were away at a retreat. This left the children without supervision; so I decided to teach them a game. We began to play “Drop the Handkerchief.” They loved it. Eventually a little girl dropped the handkerchief behind me. As I began chasing her around the circle, suddenly I skidded on some

nuts or berries from the tree above us, and down I fell, hard on my left side!

After I caught my breath, I discovered I could hardly move my body, much less stand up! In terrible pain, I couldn't understand why I couldn't get to my feet.

When Lana and the pastor missionary, Dale, tried to roll me onto my back, that hurt frightfully! Finally they succeeded, then placed my shoulder bag under my knees—since I felt I couldn't straighten out my legs—and that was less painful. Then Dale called the hospital for an ambulance.

Meanwhile, since my mind, mouth and hands still worked, thank the Lord, I decided to go ahead with the final stories and object lesson—especially since we had saved the best for the last day. The children needed to hear from the God Who loved them and wanted to save them.

Lana brought my little keyboard, visual aids, and object lesson out to me.

We sang an action chorus with the children, “Wide as the Ocean,” about God's love. The Lord gave me the strength to tell several pictured Bible and Gospel stories. Then I showed them my favorite object lesson, “The Gift Box,” illustrating the Lord Jesus being God's greatest Gift and all we need.

Primrose, one of the lady helpers, was stirred by the Lord, and suddenly began translating for me. What a blessing! The children could understand English, one of South Africa's national languages, fairly well, but were much more familiar with their mother tongue, of course. Primrose wanted to make very sure the boys and girls clearly understood these eternal truths.

We had prayer with them, giving the children the opportunity to receive God's best Gift of love, and to be willing to let Him use them to bring others to the Lord Jesus.

Never had I gone to such length for undivided attention of children, but it sure worked! Seeing a white lady lying on the ground teaching about the Lord Jesus was unique for them, I'm sure.

Finally, about 45 minutes after Dale called for an ambulance, he walked over, smiled, and said, "You'll have to stop now, Grace. The ambulance is here."

Being rolled onto the ambulance gurney was exceedingly painful, as was the bumpy ride to the hospital. From the emergency room they transferred me to the X-ray room and rolled me onto the X-ray table. It was excruciating! Now I hated to hear the word "roll."

Eventually, I was taken to a ward on the fifth floor of this twelve-story hospital in the Johannesburg area.

Regularly I could hear jets roaring away from the nearby airport.

Dale kindly let me call my brother Paul in Cape Town where he and his wife are missionaries. I informed him of my situation, and he passed along the news to our sister Joy at our home in Newberry, SC.

Although I'd fallen on my left hip area, which hurt worse, X-rays showed that my right pelvis was fractured.

In my journal on that first day in the hospital, I listed about 30 evidences of the Lord's goodness and sovereignty in this whole situation. Here are a few of these which I have not already mentioned.

- Hospital workers were considerate and kind to me.
- Although I do not have regular medical insurance, for this mission trip I did have medical insurance.
- Lana and Dale stayed with me much of the first day after the fall, and arranged to bring needed items from the missionaries' (Dale and Avril Fries) house where Lana and I were guests.
- Pain was awful only when they rolled me or put me on a bedpan.
- A nurse brought me a basin of water for bathing. It felt so much better to be clean—

after lying so long (45 minutes or so) in the dirt with the wind blowing more dirt in my face and hair.

- It was not one of the children who fell and was seriously injured.
- The Lord gave me the strength, while in severe pain on the ground, to tell the final Bible stories and object lesson to complete the day camp, as we waited for the ambulance.
- This fall had not happened earlier in the camp.

That first night I was thankful I was able to sleep for three or four hours. The next morning the Lord encouraged me through my Bible reading. Daily Bible reading was one of the most important habits my parents had taught us as we were growing up. Now this was still strengthening me spiritually, mentally, and physically.

When the doctor came by for the first time that afternoon, it seemed funny to me that he appeared more interested in my crooked, arthritic fingers than in discussing my fractured pelvis! He asked what treatment I was taking for the arthritis. Informing him that I wasn't taking anything, I assured him that I could still write, drive, and play musical instruments, etc.

He did have good news: because the fracture was stable, I would not need surgery. The doctor added that since I was “tough”, he felt it would suffice to have therapy for two or three days. That afternoon therapy began. In my journal: “Whew! How extremely painful! I understand why some patients refer to physical therapy as torture!” (So much for my being “tough,” huh?)



*In Johannesburg hospital
Holding on to the "monkey bar"*

While napping from exhaustion, I was suddenly awakened and moved to another ward. This one felt very public to me: six patients plus visitors and workers—almost a constant stream. But God had a special purpose for this. He had now brought me to my second mission field! This hospital.

About this time, Paul’s wife Vicki called me from Cape Town. We discussed plans for me to recuperate at their house—even though her parents, sister, and nieces were also coming for a visit. That had to be tough for Vicki! But

thank the Lord she and Paul showed such sacrificial compassion to me.

Vicki told me that when their five year old son, Timmy, heard I was coming, He asked, “Can she stay for two years?” How sweet!

When I learned that the therapist, Arno, was coming for my second workout, I jokingly commented to my roommates that I ought to put out a doormat like the one I’d seen at the market. In big bold letters it read, “NOT YOU AGAIN!” Just kidding.

Trying to take even a few short steps with a walker was so laborious and painful that I nearly fainted. Before I even finished, I was pale, sweaty and exhausted. The therapist, however, was very pleased with my progress and increased mobility since the first session. I thanked the Lord for strengthening me.

My fellow missionary, Lana, sorry that she had to leave me, flew on to Cape Town. Paul’s family took her for several hours of sightseeing, including the outside of the huge prison where he preached almost daily. Then she flew home to South Carolina.

Considering all the extra burdens my sister Joy was carrying because of my prolonged absence, I prayed the Lord would grant her special wisdom and strength by His sufficient grace.

The next morning after my quiet time with the Lord, I did a personal workout, taking about 20 minutes to be able to sit up, then 10 more minutes to stand, holding tightly to the walker. Asking the Lord my Strength for the ability to take each step, I then thanked Him for the energy He provided.

As Arno and the nurses would take me for the longer, exhausting workouts, patiently walking beside me, I would apologize for moving so tediously slowly. They each kindly assured me, “I’m here for you.” That really warmed my heart. I thank my precious Lord Jesus that He is always there for me!

My numerous roommates needed and appreciated having someone listen to them, and I was encouraged that the Lord wanted to use His vessel to be a comfort to them. What a blessing to see the ladies reading for 30-40 minutes in the little Scripture booklets I’d given them, *God’s Rainbows for Our Dark Skies*.

Several times nurses and fellow patients discussed with me singleness, serving the Lord, and priorities in life. Several asked for prayer. I was happy that, since I couldn’t go out to reach and teach others, the Lord brought them to me! How I thanked Him.

Through the pain, pressures, tears and exhaustion, I was deeply grateful when someone showed compassion and understanding—which most of the workers did.

Family members and other friends sent emails through the Frieses, reassuring me of their love and prayers. This “good news from a far country” was refreshingly encouraging!

Having opportunities to minister to others was a thrill, whether in material or spiritual ways. Cleaning ladies enjoyed receiving fruit from my ample basket. One of the ladies requested prayer for her unsaved husband. We two actually got to have a couple of quick Bible studies from 1 Peter 3 and Ephesians 5.

One day Primrose, who had translated for me that noteworthy last day of camp, surprised me with a visit. I was happy to see her. Many of the day campers, she told me, had attended that church the following Sunday. (Some asked if “Pastor Grace” was all right.) Primrose now believed the Lord could use her to teach God’s Word to boys and girls too.

What a joy it was to gain a little more strength and mobility each day. God was teaching me to lean more on Him for both physical and spiritual strength. I wanted to please Him as Enoch did by walking close to Him.

What an encouragement it was to receive an email (forwarded by Joy) with Christmas greetings from dear friends in Korosten, Ukraine! Lana and I had met and ministered with them in the spring.

Christmas Eve was memorable as Dale and Avril Fries came and caroled me and brought presents! Usually back home several of us would go caroling, especially for older folks. Now my roommates and I were the recipients. It was heartening also when Paul's family called from Cape Town, especially as we anticipated seeing one another soon.

On Christmas Day many patients were able to go home. I was not lonely because the Lord Jesus was with me and never leaves me. I was thankful He was willing to use me there. It was His birthday after all, and I was reflecting on His coming as the Lamb of God that first Christmas to take away our sins.

It was fun to be able to give some pretty Bible verse pens, fruit, and Christmas tracts to several patients and a number of workers. One nurse, who rarely smiled, looked puzzled and asked, "Why?" I smiled, "It's Christmas!" Later she returned, thanked me, and said, "That was very nice."

Another nurse, receiving her little gifts, threw her arms around me, thanking me as she smiled widely.

Also on that day, on my own initiative, I took four walks with the crutches, being strengthened by my dear ever-present Lord. I found each day that the least exhausting time to walk was mid to late morning through early afternoon.

The day after Christmas, early in the morning, a nurse gave me exciting news: I would be allowed to leave the hospital that day if I liked! Wow! I called the Frieses with the good news. They were happy for me but guessed it would be evening before a flight to Cape Town could be arranged. I had asked the Lord for a flight during my peak of strength.

In only about 1 hour after I had called the Frieses, Avril called back to announce that an 11:00 a.m. flight had been arranged! What a wonderful, kind, in-control heavenly Father we have!

One sweet Christian lady came and helped me in several ways. Another came and prayed with me. Several workers said they'd miss me; and I was really going to miss them as well.

I was able to dress myself except for my shoes. Avril put those on for me. They took me out in a wheelchair from the 5th floor down to the Frieses' van. Thankfully the airport was very close to the hospital, and soon we said our goodbyes.

I felt really bad that I had become so much trouble for them, but they were very gracious and kind through it all. I thank the Lord for these dear friends, Dale and Avril Fries.

Apart from a bumpy shuttlebus ride at the Johannesburg airport, and the extremely jarring and

sideways-heaving jet ride through the clouds, my trip was fairly comfortable, thank the Lord. (I was reminded of “rolling” again!) I praised the Lord for holding me in His tender, loving hand; and I apologized for not being a good soldier when I cried from the pain on the flight.

Arriving in Cape Town after less than two hours, I was seated in a wheelchair and pulled backwards out the door. Seeing nothing I was connected to besides the wheelchair, it felt like I was going out over a cliff backwards! A bit hair raising! Soon I discovered that the chair was now attached to a lift/lowerer. It was comforting to reach solid ground again!

Paul and Vicki soon greeted me and wheeled me to their car. How wonderful to be welcomed by family! They were so thoughtful and encouraging to take me in to recuperate until I was able to fly the long trip back to America.

They were loving and helpful to make me comfortable. They even installed a “monkey chain” over the bed which greatly facilitated my getting up, out of, and back into bed. Not owning a wheelchair, Paul gave me use of his rolling office chair which smoothly carried me through the house.

My nephew James and his wife Gloria lived next to Paul and Vicki, helping them in their missionary work and

with the children. Gloria was a cheerful, ever-ready help to me, with a loving, servant heart.

We celebrated a belated Christmas together. (I was thankful I'd had the opportunity in Johannesburg to shop before my fall, so I did have gifts for them.) Paul's family made me feel like a princess.

The next day, Vicki's parents, sister and her two daughters arrived on their Christmas vacation. Full house now! They brought me many cards, letters, and even gifts that Joy, neighbors, and other friends had sent. What a happy surprise!

Each new day my Heavenly Physician provided a bit more strength and mobility. Since it was vacation time, no therapist or crutches were located; but the Lord was healing me without those.

On December 31st, Paul and James carried me down the outside stairs in a lawn chair (scary!) and over to some friends' house to their pool for water therapy. That did make me more limber, and I thanked the dear Lord.

Later that evening we celebrated the end of the year with family games, snacks, and recounting many of God's special blessings of the year. He had brought so much good out of the painful times for me!

At various times when I was laboriously returning to walking—especially while still in the hospital, I remember thinking, “I should never take walking for granted again.” Of course, I usually do now, but I certainly appreciate this ability more, much more than I used to. God was also teaching me to walk more closely to Him.

On January 1, 2003, I was even more limber. (I had enjoyed another pool therapy which did wonders for me.) During my Bible reading the next day, I chose my year verse: “Enoch walked with God.” How I needed and wanted to do this every day!

In my journal for January 4, I wrote, “One night recently, I dreamed I was able to walk easily...Well today, with the Lord’s strength and courage...I walked very slowly more than halfway across the living room without crutches or humans!” Free-walking for the first time in 19 days. Was I thrilled!

Most of the family members were gone when this happened, so I kept it secret until the next morning. As they were eating breakfast, suddenly they were happily shocked to see me free-walking into the dining room.

That evening, since it was still morning in America, and service time in our church, I called to tell them the good news. With the telephone right in the sanctuary, with the speaker-phone on, I shared what the Lord had enabled me to do. They clapped joyfully.

Of course, after any walking, my legs and hip area would be really sore from lack of use, but it was worth it. Various folks had predicted it might take weeks, or some months before I would be able to leave South Africa. However, in less than three weeks, I felt strong enough to go.

Of necessity, I would need to use wheelchairs en-route to America; and that actually made my traveling through the various airports quicker: Cape Town, Johannesburg, Atlanta, and Columbia.

Joy and Lana graciously and generously celebrated my homecoming with a rented wheelchair, beautiful flowers, lunch at a restaurant, and a specially prepared recuperating room all thoughtfully arranged for my comfort at home.

What an unexpected way that mission trip unfolded! However, I trust the Lord fulfilled His purposes, for which I am eternally grateful. He is still teaching me to this day to walk daily with Him, pleasing Him most of all.



*Visiting back with hospital friends
three years later and thanking them*

Cherish

In 2003 the Lord gave our brother Paul and his wife, Vicki, a new baby girl, Cherish Faith Young.

I got to meet her the next year while on a mission trip to South Africa. The Lord had given me the privilege of traveling with Paul to many large schools in the Cape Town area to share the Gospel with thousands of precious boys and girls who needed Jesus. Paul and Vicki graciously allowed me to stay in their home.

Cherish was a cheerful little girl almost from the time she was born. Some folks considered her the happiest child they knew.

In 2005, on a return mission trip there, I discovered that Cherish and I had some special things in common. I think our first spoken word as babies was “book,” probably because our moms would read stories to us early in our childhood. Likewise, we each had a love for books. So

sometimes Cherish and I would enjoy reading time together. I'd read a page, then she'd “read” and describe the pictures.



We celebrated her second birthday early, shortly before I left for home. Little did I dream that it was the last time I'd see her on earth.

One day my sister Joy phoned her from our home in Newberry, SC, and told Cherish she loved her. Cherish exclaimed, “I love Daddy t-h-i-s much!” as she stretched out her arms. She often told her mommy, “I love you SO much!



Joy holding Cherish

One time when she was sick, Cherish begged Vicki, “Pway, Mommy, pway!” Another time she was out in the yard looking up to the sky praying, “Help me, God. Please help me.” In her final weeks she loved to say, “I’m God’s girl!”

On August 6,
Cherish died at a

hospital on a Sunday evening. She was two years and ten months old. The night before she had started vomiting, and her parents took her to a doctor on Sunday. After several hours the doctor sent her to a children's hospital. Very shortly after she entered there she stopped breathing. Seven doctors and nurses tried to revive her but were unable. Paul and Vicki were not even allowed to be with their little girl at the end.

How unexpected, shocking and heartbreaking this was to her family and all of us! We were thousands of miles away and couldn't be there to comfort her family. What a dark time!

But our God, the Father of lights, has shined His light of love into the hearts of Cherish's family and into the hearts of multitudes of others as well! He has used this traumatic experience in many wonderful ways for eternity. Her family has been better able to sympathize with other grieving individuals and comfort them. Paul has used this event to challenge many thousands of people to be sure to come to Christ and to look forward to the joys of Heaven. Paul and Vicki are sowing in tears and reaping in joy!

Often in my own ministries of teaching, especially to children, I refer to Cherish's sudden death, and urge my listeners to turn to the Lord Jesus NOW.

Praise God for bringing much light out of that dark time!

Bold, Brazen Robbery

One Friday afternoon in South Africa, Paul was driving me to the Cape Town airport for my trip home after my mission trip.

The Lord had graciously taken us with the gospel to about 15,300 students and teachers in 18 schools and a church during the past two weeks. Staff members, including a number of Muslims, had gratefully welcomed us. Many students and teachers had asked the Lord to save them, and we praised the Lord for His mighty working.

This day, Paul had just preached with his chalk art at a historical memorial service to a small gathering outdoors. Now as we neared the airport, I reached to the back seat to retrieve my shoulder bag with my passport and ticket. Horrified, I discovered that not only were these all missing, but so were my phone, money, and large suitcase with clothes, gifts for friends, and more!

Bewildered, we turned around and headed back to the memorial site to report the robbery, and to make a police report. At the memorial location Paul was assured that “They never had any robberies there.”

We knew we had carefully locked the car when we left it. Now we discovered one or two locks had been broken!

No plane trip for me today!

Obviously, we did not know for sure who had broken into the car and stolen my valuables. However, I figured out eventually who had the perfect opportunity. Between Paul’s car and the spot where he was preaching was the security guard’s booth. He could easily see both ways, and had the time to do the deed.

Now I needed to obtain a temporary passport (good for one year), and a new ticket for returning home. (The airline would give no credit for the original ticket. ☹)

Here are a few entries from my journal that day and following:

“Dear Lord, thank You that none of this took You by surprise, or was out of Your control... Thank You that You will bring good out of all this. Yes, I missed my flight; but you have something better. Thank you that many friends are

praying... Yes, I've cried several times about all this trauma, and all the time and trouble and fuel it's costing Paul and Vicki. I'm searching my heart trying to ascertain whether this is chastening for something, or just testing. Please show me, Lord."

As nearly as I could discern, this was not chastening. The Lord encouraged me with numerous promises, especially in Psalm 138:7-8.

On Monday, our nephew James who is a valuable helper to Paul there, drove me to the American Consulate to apply for a temporary passport. (Earlier in the weekend, the emergency facilitator would not help, since I was not "kidnapped or killed".)

I filled out the necessary forms and we returned to Paul's house. This process could take seven to ten days to receive the necessary passport.

We had been home hardly half an hour when a lady at the Consulate called to say my passport was ready! So we returned and I received my new passport...good for one year.

Paul very kindly had given me the \$135.00 to pay for the passport and needed photo, since I was "fresh-out" of money! Back home in Newberry, Joy was finally able to scrape together enough money to pay for plane fare so I could return home. I was to leave Cape Town on Wednesday.

Praise the Lord, on Tuesday, He took us to two schools where we proclaimed God's good news to hundreds of attentive boys and girls. One lady in the second school exclaimed to me afterwards, "I especially liked your story. [My] church makes it [salvation] so complicated, but you [both] made it so simple that *all* of us could understand it." Thank God, He does! Turn from sin to the Lord Jesus!

Wednesday God gave us the privilege of ministering in two more schools...one with about 1200 students. A principal wanted Paul to "return any time." Praise God for all those who responded, asking the Lord to clean their sinful hearts....

Then the Lord brought me safely home to Newberry.

I praise my dear Heavenly Father for shining His merciful light in so many dark places on this extended mission trip...some I haven't listed here. I believe He fulfilled *His* gracious plan in His own special way! One *huge* blessing was that I was able, along with Paul, to minister to about 2700 *more* precious children and teachers after the robbery. Thank you, Lord! Brilliant light after darkness.

Fall in the Spring

Driving toward home one beautiful spring day, enjoying the bright pink and red azaleas blooming along the way, I stopped for fuel near Columbia. After paying, I began filling my tank. Meanwhile I decided to wash the pollen and dust off the windows. Once the front windshield was clean, I headed for the back windows.

Stepping carefully over the fuel hose with my right foot, as I had done many times before, I lifted left leg to clear the hose. Somehow, my foot caught once, and then twice on the hose, throwing me to the pavement. I landed on both hands, then elbows, and crookedly on my right leg. Unable to rise, I knew this was big trouble! (For some time I was convinced that my fall was due to my clumsiness. Eventually, however, I realized it was caused by the protruding sole of my shoe—the way it was made that I was not used to yet!)

Several other customers nearby asked if I needed help. Two men kindly and cautiously picked me up and set me in my car. Someone replaced the hose onto the pump. At my request, one man parked my car away from the pump.

I called Joy in Newberry and asked if she would please come and take me to Parkridge Baptist Hospital, which was only two miles away from this gas station. Big blessing!

A small Hispanic man who had helped carry me to my car came back, asking if I needed more help. Feeling cramped in the back seat and not able to stretch out my injured leg, I asked to be put into the front passenger seat. He quickly called over another customer who had just arrived—a big guy. They adjusted the front seat fully back and leaned the back rest partway down. Carefully and gently they moved me to the front. How kind, and to a stranger!

The Hispanic's little boy saw some of my scraped, bloody knuckles, elbow and knee, and gave me a bandaid. How sweet!

Someone offered to call an ambulance; but knowing that could cost hundreds of dollars, I thanked him and said my sister was coming for me.

Thanking the Hispanic father and son for their kindnesses to me, I gave one of Paul's DVDs with Gospel chalk messages, including three in Spanish. I asked if they

had a DVD player. 'I don't know.' His little son answered, 'Yes, we do.'

As I waited for Joy, I called Paul in South Africa. We talked for quite a while, and he was so encouraging.

When Joy arrived to carry me to the hospital, two friends from our church took my car (after transferring me into Joy's car) to our house, then returned to their houses back in the Columbia area.

At the ER entrance at the hospital Joy and I asked if I could please be carried from the car to the wheelchair.

“No men are available,” was their answer. They pulled me out of the car, only supporting me somewhat under the arms, to the wheelchair! I'm not a screamer; but, oh, I hollered from the excruciating pain from having to stand, and then land in the wheelchair.

The hospital was full of patients, so I remained in the ER area overnight. X-rays showed my right femur was broken as well as my ankle. Surgery was performed about 7:30 Saturday morning—my first ever surgery!

Once I woke up, they began allowing visitors. What an encouragement! My pastor came, then Joy, Lana and Lisa. Soon four cousins, some of them traveling about 90 or more miles! Other pastor friends visited, some of our church

friends and Newberry friends. Two couples sang hymns with guitars.

Knowing how I love flowers, relatives and other friends brought bouquets and potted flowers, brightening up my room and my heart.

I was in the hospital four days, including my 77th birthday. Many cards, letters, texts, emails and calls cheered me. Friends near and far, brothers and sisters in Christ overseas—many of whom did not even know me—were praying for me! Paul had requested prayer of many of his friends in other countries. How humbling and encouraging! Our Heavenly Father is so merciful and kind.

Joy, Lana and Lisa visited several times with more loving greetings and gifts. What surprises and blessings! Our cousin Tom and a helper came and built a 16 foot ramp leading up to our front porch the day before I arrived home. What a huge help that was—and still is today!

Therapy had begun at the hospital, continued at home, and finally in Newberry Physical Therapy. The Lord was strengthening and healing me day by day. Wheelchair, crutches, cane.

Our parlor was well-suited to serve as my bedroom, dining room and office during my recovery. Four tall windows shed plenty of light during the day. Joy opened up a couch and added her own ten-inch thick memory foam

mattress from her bed upstairs. She had brought it down by herself!

It was lovely to be visited by friends at our home. One dear friend loaned a wheelchair for my use. That was a big help! Another good friend provided a seated walker. The Lord loaded me with so many gracious blessings that I didn't deserve!

Three days before my fall Joy had helped me book flights for a mission trip to South Africa for May 28-June 12. Eventually it became obvious that I would not be mobile enough to fly, etc., on these dates. This was quite disappointing; but I knew that my times/schedules are in my Father's hands. (See Psalm 31:15.)

In late April we rescheduled my mission trip, booking me for the following January 27-February 12. One funny/scary thing happened as a (new?) ticket agent tried to send me to Switzerland and leave me there! :-) Her supervisor rescued me.

The Lord graciously blessed that mission trip, enabling Paul and me to proclaim the Gospel to about 12,000 needy boys, girls and teachers. Praise the Lord! He lovingly gave many beams of welcome sunshine during and after my dark episode. So many evidences of His lavish care for His little girl!

FATHER GOD SHOWERS BLESSINGS DURING THIS TRAUMA

Answers to many prayers of friends and strangers around the world

Beautiful flowers and birthday gifts from brothers and sisters in Christ

Cousins who drove 100 or more miles to visit me in hospital

Deliveries of fresh fruit and vegetables by loving friends

Endurance God gives as I increase walking with platform crutches

Faith in El Shaddai, tested and strengthened regarding huge medical bills

Gentle picking up and placing of me into my car by strangers when I fell

Helpful gifts dear friends are giving toward medical costs

Increasing strength and mobility God gives day by day

Joy's unselfish, constant care of me, despite her painful back (better now)

Kindness of nurses and techs each day at hospital

Love, peace and joy the Lord Jesus gives my heart day by day

Much encouragement in various ways from brother Paul and wife, Vicki

Niece who calls and reads special Scriptures to me

Opportunities God gave in hospital, and gives now, to share His love

Provision of 10" memory foam mattress Joy brought downstairs for me

Quick recovery that friends are praying for me

Ramp 16' long built by concerned cousin & crew on my birthday

Sweet daily fellowship alone with my precious Lord

Texts, cards, calls, emails to encourage me

Unfailing/unchanging love and presence of our Lord Jesus

Visitors cheering me up in the hospital

Wheelchairs dear friends have loaned me

eXceeding great and precious promises from my faithful Heavenly Father

Young lady therapist, very helpful, kind and pleased with progress

Zweet :-)) little Hispanic boy at the scene of my fall, gave me a band-aid for my bloody scrapes

Lost Luggage

Four years after that robbery, the Lord again let me go and accompany Paul into 20 schools in the Cape Town area. We proclaimed the Gospel to more than 16,000 students and teachers. Praise God for such a wonderful privilege!

The Lord graciously prevented any postponements, cancellations, sickness or missed flights.

The day I arrived home from my mission trip, October 30, I learned that my carry-on luggage was missing, with very important items inside. This was disheartening! That day and the next, the Lord reminded me, in my regular quiet time Scripture passages, that I would not need to fight in this “battle,” for the battle was not mine but His. Three different verses promised this. Once or twice more He brought this encouraging truth to my ears and/or eyes.

As much as I wanted this luggage back (which included valuable, enlarged, visual aids of Bible lessons that

I use for large crowds of children), I told the Lord at various times that, most of all, I wanted whatever He knew was best.

On December 31, I wrote to praying friends the following letter.

Day before yesterday, after praying that [above] again, I asked that if He was applying these verses to this situation, and not just in general, He would give me one more verse like that. A few minutes later, as I read in my regular reading in Deuteronomy 3, there was this promise: "...the Lord your God He shall fight for you." This was amazing and exciting.

Yesterday I received a call from United Airlines, "I need to speak with Grace Young."

"This is Grace."

"We've got your luggage here at the Columbia airport."

Since I happened to be in Columbia already (helping Lana with errands), I asked if I could go pick up the luggage myself, instead of their delivering it several hours later to our house in Newberry. "Yes."

So we joyfully drove over the few miles to the airport and picked up my carry-on, exactly two

months from the day I arrived here from South Africa. The young lady at the ticket counter gave it to me, heard this story, and rejoiced with me.

Praise God for enlightening our darkness! He is so faithful and compassionate.

Mountain of Medical Bills

The Lord my Physician was compassionately healing my leg and ankle step by step. Thankfully He does not charge for His healing. :-) But the doctors and hospitals do! I was encouraged that some of the medical bills were reduced for various reasons (as “self pay”).

Bills came from orthopedics, emergency room, physical therapy at the hospital, radiology, anesthesiology and anesthesiologist's assistant. That last bill was the highest bill of all of those!

Never in my life had I been responsible for such huge bills, partly because I had never had surgery before. (Having been unsalaried most of my life, there was no government help, medicare, etc.)

On April 21 I was excited to be able to attend our church's Easter Sunrise service. Since we were meeting

outside, with no organ or piano, I was able to sit in our car's doorway and play my keyboard for the congregational singing.

The next morning at my doctor appointment—after paying \$300 up front—the surgeon was pleased to report from the x-rays that my femur had healed so well “you cannot even tell it had been broken!” (He had inserted a rod in my leg and three screws in my ankle.)

My April 23 journal entry:

Very early I was feeling overwhelmed especially regarding the mountainous bills coming in. [This was even before the hospital bill had arrived—which turned out to be more than four times as much as all the previous bills put together!]

Am I going to truly trust my Father to keep His promises (such as Psalm 55:22, 1 Peter 5:7, Philippians 4:19, etc.); or am I going to worry, fret and fear? [I had to make a choice! I remembered we have a Mountain Mover. I didn't know how or when He would move it.] By His grace, I will rest on His faithfulness. He cannot lie or break a promise!

The hospital bill arrived about the beginning of June. Over the next six months—without my asking for money, but only

requesting prayer—the Lord put on the hearts of a number of His children to reach out and help me.

Before the end of that same year, our Heavenly Father, through family and friends, had given enough to pay the full amount of that huge hospital bill, as well as all the others! What a compassionate, loving, giving Lord we have!

There have been many other dark threads in my life. Often I did not understand why. Yes, some were chastening. Some were testing. All were part of the Master's weaving.

He's not finished with me yet, still working on the pattern He has planned. He makes no mistakes. All He does is good and right, whether we understand or not. I love and trust His wisdom and lovingkindness. I hope you do as well!