

Hello my dear friends,

You will never know how much your prayers have ministered to my heart and have sustained me. I have experienced the graciousness of our Great God in ways I can only explain as an answer to your prayers.

On Monday morning, my friend Pam and I went for what we thought was going to be my first round of chemo ... upon arriving and meeting with the oncologist, she quickly determined that my breathing was so labored (not really able to even say more than 3 or 4 words without stopping to get a little more air) and my cough so persistent it might be better to remove some of the fluid from my lung before beginning the chemo treatment ... hence, a change in plans. I was sent up to the pulmonologist and went through the procedure ... it took a total of about 1 hour and they drained almost 1 liter of fluid (there is at least another liter still in me but what a difference a liter removed makes) ... the draining part only took about 15 minutes ... the rest of the time was sitting with oxygen and being monitored as my lung began to readjust. But what an opportunity the Lord opened up as I sat with the doctor and had a conversation with him about his family, how he decided to become a doctor, places to visit in Spain and most of all of the graciousness and faithfulness of God. The pulmonologist told me it would take 2 or more hours before my lung was really working again ... and by later that afternoon and evening there was a remarkable difference in my breathing, my coughing and being able to actually speak in complete sentences without having to stop for a breath every few words. What a gift that was!!!!

After the fluid removal procedure, we returned downstairs to the oncologist where she gave further instruction for the chemo ... instead of doing both things on the same day, we were to return on Tuesday to begin the chemo. The chemo will be administered once a week for three weeks (on Tuesday's) and then the fourth week will be a week of rest. That constitutes one round ... there will be six of those rounds. She told me that normally this chemo treatment does not make you sick (YEAH), but that I will once again lose my hair. I will also experience numbing in my fingers and on my feet. And over time will feel more tired. It will also affect my taste of food. Because of the urgency of beginning the chemo, I have not yet had a port put in ... that is being scheduled ... so these first few sessions of round one will be directly into my veins via an IV (and I have very hard veins to find).

On Tuesday morning, Pam and I arrived and went straight into the chemo room ... literally within five minutes the nurse had me set up ... she hit the vein the first time (PTL!!!!) ... she did the blood work required for the scheduling of putting in the port and then connected the IV apparatus and began administering the chemo. By 9:40, chemo was being administered. At 1:10, she removed the IV and I was done. Amazing to me that I did not feel any different after the chemo treatment than when I went in. I told my friend Pam, I think it is time to go and have a really good lunch ... I want to celebrate the goodness of God.

Later that evening, Pam and I visited in the home of one of my Spanish neighbors who naturally wanted a full update. We sat in their family kitchen, sipping hot chocolate by the fireplace as I recounted to them God's incredible goodness. Obviously they could tell the remarkable difference in me just being able to breathe better and speak better. We spend a couple of hours just sharing life together. At one point, because it has been soooooo rainy here, I recounted to my neighbors the story of Noah in the Bible and that we may all soon have to build a boat (it has rained almost every day for the last 2+ months here) ... and when I finished the story I told them of God's promise to Noah and to the world that He would never again send a flood to destroy the world. They know so little of the stories of God's faithfulness from the Bible.

These past few days have shown me fresh and anew God's great grace and His personal presence especially in times of fear and uncertainty. I know in my head that He is with me and He will be with me ... but in these days God broke through to the very core of my heart, pouring His grace in me like an overflowing fountain. Please continue your prayers for me ... each Tuesday will be my day of chemo ... pray I will stay healthy (no colds, no infections, no fevers, etc) ... pray for continued opportunities to be a testimony of God's faithfulness and to be used by Him for His purposes along this journey. I will continue to keep you updated.

*Blessings,*  
*Donna*

