

## John Tefertiller Health Update - 29 January 2010

Dear Friends and Family,

### Complications-R-Us, Redux

It has ceased to be a real surprise when something pops its ugly little head up to try and frighten or discourage me during these times. We're right on schedule, it seems!

Without going into unnecessary details, there has been some bleeding, possibly the result of the blood thinner and the residual effects of radiation in the pelvic area last summer. The upshot of that is that the doctor has taken me off Coumadin temporarily to see if the bleeding can be stopped. If that works out there will be use of a steroid foam to try and toughen up the blood vessels in that area. For some reason, it has been difficult to stabilize the level of Coumadin in the blood. There was a dangerously high level at the last test, the result being that now I will be tested at every chemotherapy session or office visit.

We are approximately halfway through the chemotherapy. This puts the end of the process at somewhere around the end of March. That will be followed by a procedure to reverse the colostomy and return bodily functions to normal. If we can get beyond the current complications and remain on a steady course, I should be able to return to "real life" in April or May.

### State of Mind

My parting shot to the doctor the other day was something to the effect that "I am growing very weary of complications." Side effects are known, and you are informed in advance of what to expect. No problem there. But complications such as blood clots, abscesses, and bleeding throw like a stick in the spokes that really throws you for a loop.

I guess the thing that is disappointing is that activity is severely restricted. I feel at times as though I am making no contribution to anyone or anything. We all like to feel useful, no? I believe that God is teaching me lessons. I read the scriptures daily and I mull over the content of what I read, looking for insights that might be helpful in my own life, or that I can use when sharing the gospel.

And indeed, there have been some unexpected opportunities- I took my rent check down to the complex office at the first of the month. The young lady there remarked that I always seemed so upbeat in spite of my situation, and asked how I maintained such an attitude. I was able to explain that the public persona is one thing- the unflinching confidence in God that people seem to see, but there are plenty of private moments when the world is very dark and hard to live in. But no matter the mood of the moment, the choice is always the same: Trust in the Lord, or don't. It really is that simple.

### Prayer Requests

1. The good news is that I have been approved for Medi-Cal financial assistance. I don't know yet the full extent of what is on offer. Pray that I can begin to clear out some of the Big Scary Numbers from my desk.
2. Pray for God's intervention regarding further complications. Pray for minimal side effects. The last couple of months of treatment may be the worst yet, as some side effects become cumulative.

3. I keep requesting prayer for spiritual growth and insights. Perhaps that's the reason things have seemed to go wrong, if the Lord is using the circumstances to inform me about his nature, attributes and character. Nevertheless, I desire to be the person that God would have me be. What is a little trouble here and now compared to the glory of eternal life with Christ?

### **Final Thoughts**

As we read through the Psalms, we encounter plenty of moments when the writer, often speaking prophetically with the voice of Christ, lifts up his complaints to God. "How long, O Lord?" The question is asked four times in Psalm 13 about four aspects of the writer's life, but in the end he makes his petition and then closes with a profound statement of trust in God:

"But I have trusted in your steadfast love;  
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.  
I will sing to the LORD,  
because he has dealt bountifully with me."

I am no hero of faith. Many days I barely struggle through, laying down at night full of sorrow, fear and anxiety. The dark moments come, but God is faithful, trustworthy and altogether generous toward those who trust in him. In the end, I am learning to acknowledge God's provision, even when I don't see it. He looks down from far, far above- seeing the end from the beginning, while I can see only what can be seen through the clutter of life.

I remain thankful beyond words for every prayer on my behalf. Knowing that people are lifting me up before the throne of God is of substantial comfort at those times when things seem most difficult. Please remember to pray.

With warm regards,

John T.