



CHRONIC JOY® DEVOTIONAL

A LIFETIME OF TRAUMA

By Bettie Gilbert

I grew up with a mother who was plagued with constant illnesses—and in a faith tradition that put a heavy emphasis on divine healing. Miraculously, my mother was healed from several illnesses, but new ones would invariably take their place.

I remember asking the adults who attended the healing services, “What about those who are NOT healed?” Sadly, very few attempted to discuss that topic.

Years later, when I developed my own chronic illnesses, nagging questions persisted.

- Was my faith too weak for me to receive healing?
- Was this suffering my fault?
- Was God looking the other way?
- Should I somehow have been able to fix this?
- Was my illness a result of the trauma my mother carried?

I did not realize that my past had left trauma on my soul. I was haunted by the times:

- a trauma team was needed to wake my mother from the anesthesia of a biopsy.
- a failed infusion left me so weak I could not even eat.
- another failed infusion sent me to the hospital after I fainted because of extremely low blood counts.
- allergic reactions (too numerous to count) flared.

When medications that were supposed to help me left me worse than before, when the doctors who were supposed to help me treated me as if medication failures were somehow my fault, I felt I was being held at the mercy of a failing medical system with no voice of my own.

The pharmacy that was supposed to compound my medication once gave me defective capsules. For over two months, I was without the only medication that brought any relief for my inflammation. When the pain and swelling became so great that I could not even take care of my personal needs, I took my questions to the Lord and His Word.

The Lord met my questions firmly. When healing doesn't come as we think it should, when the pain doesn't lift as we wish it would, God is still beside us. He sees our past, present, and future trauma as one piece, held together in His redeeming hands. He is our compassionate Savior and speaks peace over every trauma that touches us. He has told us that we are His dear children, He knows what we need, and He brings His strength to carry us through every weak place.

I read about the Apostle Paul and his “thorn in the flesh.” If God could say “No” for Paul's healing, perhaps my answer also lay in his words:

Concerning this thing, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore, most gladly, I will rather boast in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (2 Corinthians 12:8-9)

I can lay my weaknesses at the feet of Jesus and embrace His strength!

I will still pray for my physical healing, but I know now that whether it comes here on earth or in Heaven, my Father has already redeemed every moment of trauma through the precious gift of His Son, Jesus (who dwells within me through His Holy Spirit).

I called on Your name, O LORD, From the lowest pit. You have heard my voice: “Do not hide Your ear From my sighing, from my cry for help.” You drew near on the day I called on You, And said, “Do not fear!” O Lord, You have pleaded the case for my soul; You have redeemed my life. (Lamentations 3:55-58)

PRAYER

Dear Father, thank You for the gift of redemption that You have poured over our lives through Your blessed son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Will You help us lay our weaknesses before you today? We open our hearts to receive your healing over every trauma and every wound. In the precious name of Jesus, amen.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What trauma is lingering in your soul?
- How might God be asking you to offer that trauma to Him?
- Where is He redeeming your past even now?