



# JOY ON MY JOURNEY



*Andrew C.K. Cheng*

I am a cancer survivor-so far. Three years ago, I found that I had lung cancer so advanced that it was deemed inoperable. Trial chemotherapy was prescribed; at best, it was supposed to buy me 10 months. I drew comfort and strength from my faith in God. I learned to take the good with the bad, make the most of it, and live rejoicingly one day at a time.

Instead of worrying about bad things that would happen or things I cannot control, I focus on realistic ways to strengthen my physical, emotional and spiritual health. I have found great strength from reconciling myself to the Lord Jesus Christ. I place myself entirely in the hands of the Lord. I leave my trouble to God and be healed.

It is surprising to me that I remained rather peaceful through the whole ordeal.

When dreaded things happen and bother me, I am feeling sad and hurt, I just try and think of the good things God has provided for me. Even though my body is weak and beset by cancer, I am near the end of life, but God has continued to bless me in marvelous ways. The daily mercies and the rich bounties God gives to me, I give Him thanks with all my heart.

One long weekend, I went to Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove, North Carolina. I took part in a prayer seminar. There were no television or radio, no newspaper or magazine to distract me. I studied, prayed and was trained in Scripture.

I paused and gazed on the Blue Ridge Mountains, the tranquil view of lush green hills were spread before me, this put me in mind of a pas-

sage from the Bible, "I lift up my eyes to the hills -where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the creator of heaven and earth" (Ps. 121: 1-2). I sensed a closeness to God while praying. I received valuable insights: an inner peace with God.

The Bible says that God, "... who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment" (1 Tim. 6: 17). "... He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy" (Acts 14: 17). To take my mind off my misery in my 42 rounds of treatment -21 months of highly toxic chemotherapy- I pursue after my hobbies and my favorite things.

My favorite things are, to name a few, tulips, daffodils, green meadows, birds chirping, skies full of stars, raindrops on roses, river sounds, white sand beach, oil paintings, classical music, Chinese calligraphy, bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens. These things give me much pleasure.

I am deeply grateful to God that He gave me comfort, strength and protection that I was able to travel so much. It is a great big beautiful world out there that God has created for us. There is much too much to be fully appreciated and enjoyed.

In between treatments, I often rewarded myself with an excursion to another town or a trip abroad, to someplace that I have never visited before. At times, I had to take injections on the trip to raise my white-blood-cell count.

The spring before last, my wife, my son, my

daughter-in-law, and I took a trip to Pebble Beach in Monterey, California. We lolled around the beach, strolled about the fairways and greens. We watched the sun disappear in the west at an astonishingly fast pace. We listened to a steady leitmotif, the swell and surge of the nearby sea. At such moments, I found solace in nature. I praise the Lord for enabling me to see the fingerprint of God everywhere throughout the world.

Back at the hotel suite, a big fire was roaring in the hearth, and the room emanated the air of a great deal of comfort. I bowed down and prayed. I was happier than I had been in years.

The summer before last, my wife and I stepped aboard an Alaska passage cruise. We sat together in the panorama lounge, we read, talked, napped, and prayed. The cruise offered me relaxation and comfort. These were the truly happy moments in my life.

The autumn before last, my wife and I embarked on a Yangtze River cruise in China. I could not help reciting, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, . . . ." (Rev. 4:11).

I returned home in the vacation. I felt rested, stronger and refreshed.

Last summer, my wife and I stepped onto a small plane, and flew over Grand Canyons; viewing the vast beauty of the canyons, gorges and ravines. We had experienced the best the world has to offer—the resplendent and awe-inspiring works God's hands have made.

Last spring, my wife, my son, my daughter-in-law, and I travelled in Holland. We did the sights of flower fields. An exuberant array of colors compiled of millions of tulips provided a feast to our eyes. We paid a visit to The Hague to see special exhibition on the Dutch master painter Johannes Vermeer. His paintings on history scene from the Bible make deep impression on me.

I live much longer than expected. Had I not been blessed by God, I would have been long gone by now. I have become an example of cancer patients in the community. Time and again I

get requests to call someone, to visit someone, to write testimony to be published in magazine and newspaper, and to be broadcast in radio. Knowing that my own experience gave me a special credibility, and being a doctor was another plus, I did as much as I could.

The Bible teaches that God, "who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Cor. 1:4). Cancer patients live with pains and sufferings, so do I. My moment of vulnerability allowed me to make a unique connection with them. We empathized with each other as only people with a shared experience can. It pleased me immensely when I saw the courage in their face, and heard the hope in their voice. God teaches me to reach out to Him in my need, and helps me to comfort others and lead others to Him by my example.

I am not out of the woods, however. After a break of 13 months without chemotherapy, I experience setbacks once again. The cancer has spread to distant bones. I am undergoing several cycles of treatment. As horrible as it has been, I would have to say I have done well. I do not know what tomorrow holds? But I know that God holds my tomorrow. The length of my life is in God's hands.

I do feel life is more precious, because I have seen the face of death. Neither do I look back much, nor look forward to very far, as there is so much to do at present. I am more appreciative of all that is good in my life. Yes, heaven awaits me, but I believe that God wants me to be glad and enjoy with gratitude all His goodness as I journey homeward.

Hopefully I have much longer to live, continue enjoying companionship of my family, relatives, and close friends; hoping that my daughter-in-law and my son will give me a grand child. There are still people and places I would like to visit. And I know, by God's grace, each of these dreams is within my reach. Of course, if the Lord calls me home, when ever that may be, I am all set to be with the Lord. Amen.