



During several recent and severe trials in our church, Pastor Scott spoke of three "lifelines" available to us from God and His Church: Lifeline#1 "I am not alone" (the Church as described in 1 Corinthians 12:26), Lifeline#2 "God has a plan" (from Romans 5:3), and Lifeline#3 "I have a future" (from Romans 8:18).

Now, I can attest that the Lord, with these "lifelines," pulled our family through a difficult year, when we saw the suffering and healing of our infant and innocent son.

Lucas was born two months premature and weighed just over four pounds. That was not the only shock that cold night in January 2000. We were told that our son had an extremely high and dangerous white blood cell count. The neonatologist had never seen anyone born with this condition, and immediately arranged to have our son, tubes and all, transported by ambulance to Johns Hopkins Children's Center, while my wife, Jane, would stay at our local hospital and recover from the Caesarean birth.

The ups and downs began. In tears while driving to Hopkins, I was anxious for my family, and I was upset with God (more on this later). However, I did get some comfort from the fact that I had turned to our first lifeline. Just before Lucas's delivery, I had sent a quick e-mail to brothers and sister in the church asking for prayer. I knew God was with us. His people supported us with prayers, visits, gifts, and food.

At Hopkins, we saw oncologists and various specialists, who believed that Lucas had leukemia. Some doctors suspected he had other abnormalities based on biopsies

conducted on him. After being monitored for almost two weeks at Hopkins, the leukemia literally, if not miraculously, disappeared. The doctors were pleasantly surprised, and they agreed to move Lucas back to our local hospital, where he was treated as a normal, premature baby. After five weeks at the hospital, Lucas was deemed strong enough to go home. The doctors at the local hospital also felt that Lucas had had a remarkable recovery (his high white blood cell count was thought to be simply a leukemia-like reaction). Thank God. However, our ordeal was not over yet.

Lucas spent five, relatively peaceful months at home. Then the day before we were to fly out-of-town and introduce the baby to my relatives, we took Lucas to Hopkins for a routine check-up. We, along with the doctor, were shocked Lucas was diagnosed with full-blown leukemia. The doctor wanted to start chemotherapy as soon as possible. Lucas was to have five chemotherapy treatments in six months.

Again, we turned to our first lifeline (again and again) for prayers and strength. We trusted that God had a plan for us (the second lifeline), a reason for this suffering. Obviously, we could not simply follow our own plans.

Of course, I got angry, especially on the day after Lucas's diagnosis. Lucas went in for what was supposed to be a routine surgery for implantation of a catheter. Our baby was in pain and did not stop bleeding for two days after surgery (Why, God?) a situation that was brought under control, but not until after Lucas was put in intensive care.

Despite the anger, I knew deep inside

