

This is from several messages between a friend and me; therefore, some sentences may seem disjointed – even so, I hope you are blessed and encouraged by my experience. Over the years since this all happened my relationship with the Lord has grown and my understanding of these events has become a bit clearer.

My wife and I usually tell about this together because there is much that I wasn't aware of until I was told about it over the months and years after the surgery.

When I was 18 and living in a small town in Maine I woke up one morning with a bad headache, I had been having headaches through my teen years and was never taken seriously because of my history of drug use... Soon the headache just got so bad that I passed out and fell onto my bed (on my stomach and my head turned to the left) where my wife was trying to sleep. Thinking I was in diabetic shock (I don't know why she thought that - I'm not diabetic) she called an ambulance because I would not wake up. The ER doctor diagnosed that I had a brain hemorrhage - as he was discussing this with others in the ER he didn't realize that my wife was just outside the door and heard everything they said. When he was sure as he could be of my situation he told her that my condition was hopeless and asked her if she wanted me to die there or at a larger hospital in Lewiston. She of course, opted to have me sent to Lewiston (about 15 miles away). They didn't have a neurosurgeon on staff but there “just happened” to be an accomplished neurosurgeon there teaching a seminar on the subject. After running some tests he confirmed what the first doctor said and told my wife that the convulsions I was having was having would get worse and within the next 12 hours my body would give up and I would die.

{just to back up}

As the headache got worse I was complaining to my wife - as usual. Out of helpless frustration she asked if I had taken any aspirin to which I said "no". So I went to the kitchen, got two aspirin out of the bottle, filled a glass with water and I took the aspirin...immediately I vomited (sorry). I was holding my head and told her that this headache was much worse than usual, but she didn't know what to do to help. In minutes the pain was more than I could bear and I felt myself passing out and falling forward - I had just enough time to silently pray, "Lord, take away the pain!". The next thing I knew I was standing up and my head was turned to the left just as I would have landed on the bed. I could tell I was somewhere else, but it was mostly too dark to see any detail. The next thing I knew, I heard a male voice from behind me and to the right say, "If you allow the pain to continue, I will receive Glory". I think this was in response to my quick "help prayer". I'm not sure if or how I processed that, but my response was, "Oh, ok, but remember my mom". [detail - my dad was an alcoholic and my mom didn't know Jesus.] I feel kind of strange when I think that I put a qualification to my giving Him glory, but it was what it was.....and there was music – it didn't have any real beat, but it was always there.

[by the way, my pastors led mom to the Lord in the ICU waiting room!]

As the evening progressed the convulsions became less severe and the time between them grew longer (opposite of what the neurosurgeon predicted). They did have to wait 2 weeks for the swelling to go down enough to operate.

Another detail, mom was a Catholic and happened to be very superstitious. When the

doctor announced that surgery was scheduled for Friday, May 13th it was hard for mom to handle (a sister of mine died on a Friday the 13th three years before). The doctors could not stop the bleeding for some time and later informed my wife that I should not use aspirin (good thing I couldn't swallow the ones I tried to take the first morning). There are lots of details that I have gathered and I never find a good place to tell them, so they will probably be scattered here and there.

My mother-in-law lived here in NY (where we had grown up) and her husband's neurologist told her that the best case scenario was that it would take 6 months for me to learn to walk if I did survive – which wasn't likely. I did have to learn to walk, talk, chew and swallow without choking...

One of the things I didn't realize for a while was how the Lord had been preparing me; When I first came to know Jesus when I was 15, I had a very vivid dream - normally I never remembered my dreams.....

In this dream I saw myself standing on one end of a large plain when I noticed something far away flying toward me. As it came closer I could see that it was actually two small clouds - on one was written "faith" and on the other "healing". The clouds kept coming toward me and finally entered my forehead a bit to the right (where the aneurysm was). Of course, being a charismatic I took that to mean that God was giving me the gifts of faith and healing...

Now, back to the hospital...sorry, this is how I think and talk - it still makes my wife crazy...

The surgery was scheduled for eight hours but done in 4 - they misplaced me between the OR and recovery for a while. Apparently a "hematoma" (clot) according to the doctor, "the size of a double-yolk egg" had formed at the bleed site which helped slow the bleeding. The surgeon used two metal clips to stop the bleeding.

After surgery I was in and out of consciousness and in an ICU with many other patients eight or ten I think - my eyes were both swollen shut which I'm told was normal after that type of surgery. I celebrated my 19<sup>th</sup> birthday in the hospital and my brother found a birthday card that said something like, "the doctor told us not to worry about the dark circles around your eyes – he said you fell asleep on a six-pack...." I will remember that card forever!

I somehow asked my wife if she would "sing that song" and she knew that I meant the one that goes, "Thou art Worthy, Thou art Worthy, Thou art Worthy oh Lord..." my time in the charismatic church was showing. My wife says that she knew I had some kind of experience with the Lord at that point.

[detail]

When the doctor took off the skull cap to remove the stitches the skin had grown so fast that it had almost completely covered them and he had to cut through the new skin to remove them.

[detail]

Every time the surgeon's assistant brought student interns into my room as they were entering he would say, "and this...is our miracle patient". I was pleased that they understood that they weren't responsible for my recovery... two weeks later, 22 lbs lighter and 2 inches taller (from being on my back for almost a month, I think) I walked out of

the hospital – my pants fell to my ankles before I got to the elevator – it was a bit embarrassing ☹️ but during any hospital stay modesty goes out the window. There are many more things involved and I will note them as I remember them

More of those “other things”...

Several years later when the movie “Ghost” premiered I was stunned when the shaft of light was shining and Patrick Swayze’s character walked into it, they showed a crowd of people nearby. I shouted, “I saw that!” It was eerie, and I wonder how the writer or director knew.

I was never able to turn my head to see the One who spoke to me there, but I know that it was Jesus. Through the difficulties after this surgery He has been Faithful to help me endure. Our relationship is no longer – “I’ll fly away” or “when I get to Heaven”, it’s a moment by moment relationship. We walk side by side – through the good and bad. I can sense His presence and know when He is speaking to me; now He is my best friend!

More details....

A common reaction to this kind of brain trauma is epilepsy so I was put on maintenance and anticonvulsant meds; initially 23 pills a day. For 22 years I took meds to control it - a few times I tried to "stand in faith" and discontinue the drugs. Every time a grand mal seizure would set me back a month or two and leave me with another 3 or 4 day headache.

In 1985 the Lord spoke to me in a way that seemed almost audible and said, "It's time to return to New York and help at Solomon's Porch". Solomon's Porch is a coffeehouse where I began this Christian life and I was excited to know that God wanted us to go back there.) After My wife was satisfied that it was the Lord's direction she agreed and gave two weeks notice at her job.

When we arrived here in April (the 13<sup>th</sup>) of that year, one of the first things I did was take the man who was overseeing the coffeehouse aside and told him how the Lord directed us. His eyes got huge and he told me that the Lord had been directing him to go into the mission field and he had been praying for Him to send someone to take over... John Henry is now on staff at YWAM and is involved in the University of the Nations where they are training foreign students in how to convey the Gospel through our actions – (I personally think this is the method Jesus used).

In 1997 George Isley, my pastor here in New York, invited me to go with him to a Friday night service at a nearby church. After that evening’s teaching, the teacher started praying for people's healing. Before he prayed for me I told him I had brain damage. This man prayed, and I could sense the presence of God’s Spirit. I was encouraged to continue my medication and two weeks later I started getting very sleepy at my desk job and had a sense that something was different. I was very hopeful and wanted to consult with my neurologist. When I walked into his office I forgot what I was going to tell him and blurted out, "This guy prayed for me and I think God healed me!" He was not a Christian, but agreed to send me to have another EEG which is the definitive test for seizure disorders...the results were negative and he weaned me off the

anticonvulsant drugs over the next few months.

Note: The brain is the only human organ that does not heal itself.

I don't know why God chose to wait 22 years, I suppose He can do what He pleases...