

Jesus said, "With God, all things are possible."

I knew that was true as I prayed for my mother. The cancer that had begun under her tongue had spread to her lung, her lymph nodes, behind her eye. Medically her situation was hopeless, radiation and chemo therapy would at most give her a little more time, But with God all things are possible.

I prayed for her healing. Others did too. She would tell me as we talked on the phone how this church or that one was praying.

Then one Sunday my father called excited. She felt better. He thought the miracle of healing had been granted. She died a week later.

In the months of her dying, she spoke of God's grace, and her hope, and of the one thing that troubled her. People sent cards and letters, even books that carried the message: If you believe enough you will be healed. For with God all things are possible." It troubled her that others saw her suffering as a sign of her lack of faith. At times I think it made her wonder: were they right? Was the continuing cancer a sign of her unbelief?

So many times I leave the hospital with a prayer on my heart and on my lips. Lord, this one time grant healing. He's still young, Lord, her family needs her, All things are possible to thee, Lord.

And they went to a place which is called ~~Sathesamans~~ Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." And he took with him Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch."

Sometimes when people talk they make it sound as if a true Christian always greets life with a smile. Especially when it comes to following where God leads. But listen to these words that describe Jesus on this night he was to be betrayed: He was greatly distressed and troubled. Or as another translation puts it, "He began to feel terror and grief." And he spoke these words, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death."

Sometimes people talk as if a true Christian needs no one else for support. My God and I is the only song a true Christian knows, they seem to say. But see what Jesus did, he took three to be with him, he asked them to watch with him, that he would not be alone.

And going a little farther, he fell on the ground and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. Jesus knew what was ahead, the ~~task~~ betraying, the mocking the denying, the abandoning. Pain, ridicule, death, he did not want these. All that was coming filled him with a sorrow that was next to death.

He prayed, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will but what thou wilt." Father, all things are possible to thee. The Father could have spared the Son, just as he could have spared my mother, what Jesus prayed was true, all things are possible to God, but he chose to give his son into the hands of sinners. He ~~chassa~~ chose not to protect him, or shield him, or deliver him but to let the events in this world follow their course. Jesus did not want the cup he was to drink. In that he is truly a brother to every one lies in a bed in intensive care, or who is ~~en~~ered in a hospice program. He is truly a brother to everyone who wants no part of what they must endure.

Yet not what I will but what thou wilt.

Did God will the pain and suffering of his son? Did God will the mocking and the spiting and the abandoning?—was the cup that Jesus was to drink of God's design, his shaping and forming? Or was the pain and suffering, the ^{was they see out to abandon, not to} mocking and spiting, the abandoning the death the deed of sinful human beings? ^{will not to spit} Were the Nazi atrocities God's will for Jews, or were those deeds formed and shaped in the evil that existed in human hearts?

This is a complicated world. We find ourselves trying to understand things beyond our understanding. When my mother died of cancer it was important for me to believe that cancer was not God's will for her, though he allowed it. We get caught in a complicated web that sin and evil weave. As Jesus

was caught by ~~an~~ the envy and political dreams and fears and unbelief of the people among whom he lived. Surely God would have desired that there had been no sin, that the ~~markxxx~~ whole world from Adam on believe and trust in him. Surely God's will was that everyone one recognize Jesus ~~for~~ who he is, and that all believe in him, and obey him, and love him. But sin in human hearts prepared betrayl for him, and denial, and death.

Not my will ~~but~~ they will be done.

Whe Father's will was that Jesus would not run away. The Father's will was that Jesus would not fight and scrtch and claw his way, but that he would let the evil in human hearts be shown to be evil. People like us would turn on the one who had created them, ^{he only wanted to} givene them life, ~~bless~~ bless them with every blessing, ^{they would please deliver Jesus from this evil - all would agree in deriding, Crucify him.} and ~~kill~~ kill him. The Father's will was that Jesus would love and forgive those who deserved only judgement.

. Most all of us gathered here will pray the prayer of Jesus. Father, all things are possible to thee, let this cup pass from me, but not what I will but what thou wilt. And we will ~~wzsh~~ watch for cancer to be healed, or a heart to grow stronger. When you pray and when you wait, remember your brother Jesus. Remember that he did not like suffering any more than you do. Remember that he was greatly distressed and troubled. Remember that he felt abandoned by frieds.

Remember, for if the cup will be yours~~e~~ to drink, you will know that your Lord is not a stranger to you, and to your struggle. He will grant you strength sufficient for the day. ~~Andxxxixxxxixixix~~ He will be with you until your eyes are opened also to God's Easter morning.

That he wants you to know.