



The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod

The Taiwan Times

September 2020 Andrew and Noel Schaff Missionary Newsletter from ChiaYi, Taiwan

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them.

Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

John 20:26-27

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that

Christ's power may rest on me.

2 Corinthians 12:9

Glorious Scars

Dear Friends in Christ, I confess that I am one to keep up with what is happening with people I rarely have the opportunity to see face to face through social media posts. Recently I can't help but notice that so many friends my age appear to be at peak performance in life. They have lovely families with busy cute children. Some have reached new goals in continuing education or career. Several my age post photos or details about their strength stating that they are in the best health of their lives. I must admit all of it looks amazing! I enjoy seeing God's blessings on the lives of so many.

At the same time, I look at my life and face a sobering truth, I am now nearly 40. I do not consider this old. Yet at the same time my body seems to think it is 80. I face significant health problems, which have aged me and affect my lifestyle on a daily basis. So here it is. Brutal truth: over the past decade I have had major surgery removing tumors. I've been through numerous rounds of IV therapies. If all the months of hospitalization for the last decade were added together it would total over one year in days. I have seen about every kind of specialist, been scanned and scoped and biopsied. I take a several page timeline to the doctors in order to give a briefing of my recent health history. I currently suffer from chronic GI and autoimmune problems both which leave me highly anemic. Some days I have edema and joint swelling so much I can't walk or tie my shoes. Sometimes I have a day where I feel perfectly fine and the next two where the pain is so bad, and I am so fatigued I can't get out of bed.

The difficulty in diagnosing autoimmune disease is that it can attack any part of the body at different times. It can also go for time periods leaving me symptom free. As many may or may not know it has also left me infertile. My body has aged numerous extra years in the last decade and perhaps my appearance has more so. First my hair fell out. Then it grew back brown and gray. My face has a rash from the autoimmune disease, my health has limited my energy and movement, and I have liver disease for which doctors continue to try to find a cause.

As a result of my health issues I have been unable to teach full time for the last several years. This often causes me a lot of sadness. Until this time period I had worked all of my life. I always had a job from the summer I was 12 years old. I feel guilt that I have so many financial medical requirements and am unable to help out with work as well. Then my medical needs require me to travel and take time for appointments, so I feel like I cannot be as supportive of a spouse as I would like. Between the days stuck in the hospital or bed and the social awkwardness associated with talking about my situation – I'm somewhat isolated at times. When people ask how I've been if I give them a genuine answer, it is usually followed by a long awkward silence. Discussing "how I'm doing" makes me uncomfortable as well since it means exposing the vulnerability of my pain. The Old Adam in me wants to pretend to be stoic and strong. *Surely Christians possess a peaceful happy presence in all circumstances, right?* I sometimes think.

Realistically though, the scars and trauma on my body can leave me feeling weak and insufficient as a person. I was feeling this way the other day when this thinking was quickly transformed by the Holy Spirit. Another picture was placed before me. I envisioned Jesus when he appeared in His resurrected, glorious self. He was no longer brutalized. Even in His glorious new body His scars still remained. The glorious scars remained for a purpose. On this occasion it was to remind me. His scars not only show physical proof of Christ's atoning work as Isaiah mentions in 53:4-5,

"Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed."

but also proved a plea for us to the Father that Christ has already interceded on our behalf (Romans 3:21-26).

The Holy Spirit and God's Word also reminded me of how so many Biblical heroes of faith, powerful witnesses in history and even those I've known personally all faced significant trials and were completely inadequate alone. It is in those times where one's strength in Christ is revealed. The same instrument that could potentially produce an ear-curdling sound at the hands of one person makes harmonious music in the hands of a virtuoso musician. This is how God transforms people and uses them in His Kingdom. He does this with the most helpless of us so that His glory may be revealed just as Jesus told his disciples about in the case of the man born blind (John 9:1-12).

God also allows painful circumstances both to grow faith and to allow me to step out in faith. It is only when a circumstance requires me moving beyond my personal comfort zone in some way that I am able to respond in faith. I am reminded of a similar circumstance with the woman who bled for years and had seen every doctor. Jesus told her it was faith that had healed her. He was there and she took hold of his garment (Mark 5:25-34).

God has used my very pathetic circumstances as a witness to people both here and in Taiwan. First of all, God uses me as a witness in how I respond to my trials in daily life. He promises the strength and presence that is sufficient to endure any painful circumstances. It is an opportunity to trust. It is also a regular opportunity to share how God has grown my faith through the trials instead of sharing awkward silences when people ask about my health. I have had the opportunity in Taiwan to share with coworkers, students and friends who have asked about this. Spending more time at home in my neighborhood in Taiwan has allowed me to get acquainted and visit with several elderly people and young children in the neighborhood I might not otherwise run into with the hours I spent at the school while I was teaching full-time. This is an entirely new community of people I simply did not see during the school day.

Through it all I have certainty of what is promised in God's Word. The Lord has complete control of the situation and is allowing it for a purpose in my life even if my scars are to lead myself and others to look to Christ's glorious scars rather than myself. Amen! Come Lord Jesus!

Crown him the Lord of love --
Behold his hands and side,
Rich wounds, yet visible above,
In beauty glorified.
No angel in the sky
Can fully bear that sight,
But downward bends his wond'ring eye
At mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of life,
 Who triumphed o'er the grave
 And rose victorious in the strife
 For those he came to save.
 His glories now we sing
 Who died and rose on high,
 Who died eternal life to bring
 And lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of heav'n,
 Enthroned in worlds above;
 Crown him the King to whom is giv'n
 The wondrous name of Love.
 Crown him with many crowns
 As thrones before him fall;
 Crown him, ye kings, with many crowns
 For he is King of all.



Summer Fruits
Passion Fruit
Custard Apple



Star Fruit
Lychee



Dragon Fruit
Wax Apples



Prayer Requests



Andrew and Noel Schaff
#31 Chien-Kuo Rd. Sec. 2
Min-Hsiung, ChiaYi 621
Taiwan R.O.C.

Phone: 011-886-9-84397996

- Please pray for my continued health and especially that the Lord would continue to grant me patience and peace to endure whatever He wills for my life.
- Please pray for Andrew and all the students, their families, and the staff at Concordia as they begin a new semester. Please pray that the Lord would open the eyes, ears, hearts and minds to the Gospel message. Pray that the teachers may be bold in their proclamation.
- Please continue to pray for all the ministries that take place at Salvation Church.
- Please continue to pray for Andrew's and my tutoring students that the Lord would bring about faith in those students and their families.
- Please pray that I would have safe travel and for my quarantine period that all would go safely and smoothly.

We Thank God for You!

Your prayers and encouragement are greatly appreciated! If you would like to financially support the ministry in Taiwan, please make checks payable to LCMS World Mission, clearly designating for Andrew and Noel Schaff, and send to:

The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122-7295

Or adopt us as missionaries through Mission Central in Mapleton, IA. You can contact our friends at Mission Central using the following address:

Mission Central
40718 Highway E 16
Mapleton, Iowa 51034
Phone: 712-882-1029
You can email Gary at Gary.Thies@lcms.org

"I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints."

Philemon 2:4

***Pray for Us
Andrew and Noel Schaff***

Email us at:
noel_beth19@hotmail.com
