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Consider the Lilies

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 | Written by Misty Foster

Music ties heavily with my memories. When something happens and there's music, it's forever tied to that moment. Hearing the melody again (even years later) and the memory comes back instantly, like a burst of water from a broken pipe. It hits me hard—especially when I don't see it coming.

An autumn night in 2005 was one of those times. The women's study started after a long summer break and I was anxious for it to start. Fellowshiping with women is a different time; a different feeling than normal church. As a friend once said, there's something sweet about fellowshiping with other women. It's always a sweet time for me, and I was happy to be at the first session.

At the time, we were blessed with Angela DiPrima as our worship leader. If you know her, you know she is spunky, loves the Lord with all her heart, and prays as if it were her and the Lord alone. A few songs in, she started one of my favorites, "Consider the Lilies." It's taken directly from Luke 12:27 where Jesus tells us not to worry for anything, not for what we will wear or what we will eat. "Consider the lilies," Jesus says "How they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." It's an uplifting and encouraging song. Halfway through, she led directly into another song that was so familiar, but I couldn't think of the lyrics. As soon as I looked up to read the words, "Faithful Lord, You are my faithful Lord. All Your promises are yes and amen. You're my faithful Lord," the wave crashed down.

The year before, I had stood in the same place, broken and distraught. I had gone to the doctor for my yearly exam and it was chitchat as usual—until she found a lump in my left breast. Had I felt it? Had it always been there? Did I ever notice it before? Shocked, I didn't have any of those answers. She resumed chitchat tone as she said she wanted me to go and have it looked at: but her words didn't match her tone. Mammogram, ultrasound, immediately, next week, the soonest available. After seeing my shock she tried to backtrack, saying it didn't need to be done the next day, but that I shouldn't wait any longer than a week. The damage was already done; I was terrified.

My mind was blank as I walked out of the office. In the safety of my car the tears began. A lump? How could this be? I was only 27; I shouldn't be having mammograms and ultrasounds. I called my mother and

as soon as I heard her voice my silent tears turned to sobbing. I could barely get out an explanation. I choked out the same words, mammogram, ultrasound, immediately, next week, the soonest available. My mother assured me it was probably nothing, but my mind could only scream *it could be something!* She tried to calm my fears as if I was a little girl again, but it wasn't working. She chastised me: "Oh, ye of little faith. You're the first person to tell people to trust in the Lord and look at you. The first sight of trouble and you panic and lose all of *your* trust." I knew she was right, but I was heartbroken. I wasn't ready for any of it. I wasn't ready to think of cancer, losing my breast, or what my fiancé would think. She told me not to get worked up until I had gone for the tests and received the results.

That night was Bible study and I didn't want to go, but I knew I *needed* to. Mom encouraged me that it was the times we think we don't want to be in church when we need to be there most. I went and sat in the sanctuary crying, feeling sorry for myself, and contemplating how my life had changed in minutes. Two friends showed up and, after a quick explanation, they told me to try not to worry, but to pray—God had it handled. I wasn't so sure. During worship they put their arms around me for comfort as I wept. Then Angela started, "Faithful Lord, You are my faithful Lord. All Your promises are yes and amen. You're my faithful Lord." The loose reign I had on my tears broke and I sobbed. I was so silly, so unfaithful to the promises of the Lord. But it didn't matter because He is always faithful: He never leaves us and never gives up on us.

"When my seas are raging, and my faith is shaken to the core," I sang through my tears. God was there with me. He was there when the lump formed, He was there when my doctor found it, and He was there when I lost all my faith. He never left me, even when I panicked and ran from Him. The song was everything I was feeling: My storm was raging, my faith was shaken to the core, but in all of it, the one thing I also allowed to be uprooted was my firm belief in my faithful Lord.

He gives us trials to make sure we are paying attention, and I had failed miserably. The minute He threw me a curve ball, I didn't even bother to try and swing at it. I dropped my bat and ran to the fleshly side of my spirit that still tripped me up every now and again. But He was there waiting patiently for me to come to my senses and for His promise to permeate my lost soul—and it did, eventually.

The next week was still one of the roughest in my life. The daily waiting and the tall tales my mind could spin nearly overtook me. I received calls from family and friends, all assuring me that God was with me and they were praying for me. My fiancé said he would love me no matter what came. It helped, but my nerves were still on edge. Within the week, I had the tests scheduled. A friend went with me and literally held my hand. At one point, I was so flustered I couldn't work the paper gown; she came in and helped, joking the whole time to calm me. I was scared to death, but I knew God was there. The ultrasound appeared to be normal, but they wanted the mammogram to be sure. After both tests, I waited alone in the little room they placed me in and prayed while they read the results. I tried to be strong and pray that, no matter what His will was for me, I would do it. If there was a lump, a malignant one, I would accept it. If there needed to be biopsies, or surgeries, or breast removals, I would do them and all the while thank God for being there. I would be obedient and follow every path He placed in front of me.

The tests came back normal. I felt like I had held my breath ever since hearing my doctor say the word *lump*. I gasped as the weight lifted off of me. They turned the results over to my doctor who wanted me to see a specialist to remove all doubt. I called everyone I knew and told them the

results. My brother had the most accurate response of all. “Thank God!” he beamed; I agreed. I made the appointment with some anxiety, but nothing like before. This time I knew the Lord walked beside me and within me, filling me with His Holy Spirit. I went to the appointment and I jokingly told her my brother had said I was just a lumpy girl; she agreed. She thought it was normal tissue, but wanted to watch it within the next few years to make sure.

I left the office with a bounce in my step—God was with me! He led me into this trial to see how far my faith had grown. He stood beside me as I crashed and burned and ran away from the comfort He was willing to give me. He waited patiently for me to work through my emotions and come to the place where I knew He would take care of me. He walked beside me until I knew I would be all right, as long as my faith in Him didn’t falter.

It’s hard to thank the Lord for the scariest trials He brings to us. The part to remember is that even if we completely fail them, we still learn something. Hopefully, we grow more faithful—usually what the trial is about to begin with. I thank God for the trials, but also for His promises. I also thank Him for worship music, which can calm our wounded souls, uplift our dreary sights, and remind us of His everlasting faithfulness.

I look back and think of the words of the song: “All Your promises are yes and amen. You’re my faithful Lord.” They still bring a tear to my eye, but it’s a joyful tear—knowing it’s the absolute truth. I look back and think of the turmoil I went through and realize that, even though I bombed the trial, I grew from it. Whenever I hear this song, I remember that time. And even though I can be standing in the same spot, I’m in a completely different place.