

## DOOMS DAY – JOE, WHERE ARE YOU?

It's "Zero Hour" - they'll be coming to get me any moment, and then my fate is sealed; there will be no turning back. Fear immobilizes my body, it's hard to breath—I want to run, to escape—get as far away as I can; hide and never surface again! *I don't want this cup Lord, please take it from me* I silently scream toward heaven; but no answer is forth coming! Heaven is silent! I'm doomed!

My "Dooms Day" is upon me; time for the surgery—time for the Mastectomy. *Oh God, I'm not ready for this*, I whisper. I thought I could do this with style and grace, but I'm shaking inside like a cement mixer and I'm screaming; but all I hear is croaking sighs. So, in my head, these words run rampant and I see them flash by as on a ticker tape—*I'm not brave! I don't want to do this. What if the Cancer has spread, and is worse than the doctor suspected? What if I die on the table? Oh Joe, why did you have to die and leave me alone to fight this battle? Where are you, Joe, when I need you? AND I have to tell you God, that I am really angry at You for taking Joe away when I need him here with me, by my side. And I'm angry at Joe, too, for leaving me to face this alone. I feel betrayed by you both!!! Oh, I know I'm not making sense, but I'm so scared, so alone. Oh no, I can hear the gurney; they're coming! Okay Katie, put on your "I'm tough" mask and get it together. You can do it girl, YOU HAVE TOO!*

Heart pounding furiously within my chest and my emotions about to explode; to expose me for all to see, I give it one last shot; as I, in desperation, silently cry out, *"Okay God, You need to quiet my heart! Lord, calm me down because I'm going to lose it any second now. I can't do this alone; I desperately need You by my side! I need Joe by my side! Oh Father, I'm so sorry for being angry at you and at Joe, I am just so scared. Oh my sweet Joe, why aren't you here with me to hold my hand and tell me it's going to be all right, as I did with you so many times—I just miss you so much; why, why why?"*

*God, you knew I would be going through this surgery! You knew I would need Joe! Why did you take him home and leave me to face this alone? Why didn't you wait? I don't understand! How could you be so cruel? How could you do this to me—let me go through this?"* But no matter how many times I asked God these questions, no answers were forth coming; heaven once again seemed closed to my cries. Was God punishing me for being angry at Him? I am so confused; I don't know what to believe anymore. Too late! Too late! They're coming!

I was putting on so many masks that it was becoming hard to breath. On went my "brave" mask, my "I'm tough" mask, then the "I'm fine" mask. Next came the "Making Jokes" mask and I added a few more, so no one could see the fear, anger and anxiety I was battling. And yes, you guessed it, on went

the “*Pride*” mask and the “*Disguise*” mask was at my fingertips. After all, I had an image to uphold; I was a counselor, a prayer warrior, so I couldn’t lose it; I had to hold it all together. Lies, lies, lies!

My precious family is with me, trying to comfort and encourage me, so I hide the fear and crazy thinking, as best I can. I smile and with all my masks in place I assure them that I am ready for whatever the outcome, and that I am okay. But, reality wise—I’M NOT! I’M SCREAMING INSIDE! I want Joe with me to hold my hand and tell me it’s going to be all right, as I did so many times with him.

Let me give you a little background as to my husband, Joe, and why in this situation, I am so angry at him. We had been married a total of almost 44 years with many stormy battles and emotionally ups and downs. Then the Lord came on the scene after twenty-four years of marriage when we received healing, through counseling, for wounded areas in our hearts and souls and with God’s help; our marriage, through His love, completely changed—did a turn around.

The first twenty-four years were what we later laughingly described as our “*fighting years*”, but through God’s healing, the last twenty years were the “*best ever*”. Unfortunately, our children suffered the most and that broke our hearts. So many times Joe and I talked about “*If only*” we could go back and change what we put our children through, but the poor choices of earlier years of marriage were the consequences that we would all have to live with. God graciously and miraculously restored our marriage through His miracle of love. He covered our marriage with His love and our love for one another also changed; it grew by leaps and bounds. And as our children suffered through the “*fighting years*”, they also benefited from the last twenty “*best ever*” years. We truly serve a loving and faithful God.

In 1997, we bought our trailer home and the night before we were to move in, Joe became sick. The next day as friends were helping move us in, we all agreed that I take him to the hospital. He had a heart attack soon after we arrived and had to have surgery—a four-way bypass. He was in the hospital for a month before he was released to come home and spend his first night in our new home.

Joe’s health started to decline after his heart attack and we were constantly in and out of doctor offices and the hospital. Joe had heart problems, diabetes, several lung diseases and rheumatoid arthritis, so it was one battle after another with him. I quit my job in 1999 to take care of him and he passed away in August of 2000. The night before he died, we sat on the couch together holding hands and talking. Joe thanked me for taking such good care of him and told me several times how much he loved me. God knew He was taking Joe home the next day, and that I would need this memory of our last night together, to carry me through the pain of his death. Joe’s words are carefully tucked away in my heart—in his own special place. So, you can see that lots of time was spent with Joe in loving him and caring for him.

All that to say this, bottom line—I was scared and just wanted my Joe to be with me through this battle with Cancer, but I had to resign myself that no way could it happen. Joe was gone and I couldn't bring him back. The door opens, the gurney rolls in and they are here to take me to surgery.

As I am being wheeled down the hallway, the tears are falling and I whisper, *Okay honey, I wish you were here—I so need you to be with me—but I still love you darling and I'm sorry for getting so mad at you and God.* They transferred me to the operating table and as I was waiting for them to put the mask on, I felt someone take a hold of my hand—such a light touch—but I felt it. I opened my eyes and I saw two figures standing by the side of the table. One was Joe and the other, I sensed, was the Lord. Joe leaned down and said *I'm here honey; I've been with you from the start. I was always with you. You weren't going through it alone. I love you—I 'm here and together we'll make it through the surgery. You are going to be okay. I'm here with you. I'll stay with you and hold your hand until it's over. God knew what you were going through and we were both with you all the time. I'm here, Katie.*

I didn't understand how this could be possible, but I still felt his hand holding mine. I heard every word he spoke and I could clearly see him and the figure standing behind him. At that point, I knew God had heard and answered my cries. The mask covered my face and I drifted off, but somehow throughout the surgery I felt Joe's hand and I kept hearing his voice telling me he was with me and to fight back.

When they brought me back into my room where my sisters and daughters were waiting for me, even though I was still groggy from the meds, the first thing I told them was that Daddy was with me in the surgery room. He didn't abandon me; he was right there. He held my hand the whole time and kept telling me he was with me and I was going to be okay—he was right there beside me! He was there! And I vaguely remember telling them that the Lord was there too, and then I was out again.

When I came to, my daughters told me what I had said, as if wondering if I would remember and still insist their daddy was there with me. They said I was so excited when I came into the room, told them about Daddy being with me and then I was out like a light. I became excited all over again, because it was still fresh in my mind and my heart knew it was true. No one could ever convince me it hadn't happened. God knew my inner most heart—that I needed my husband by my side to hold my hand and tell me it was going to be all right and he answered my heart's cry. He gave me a miracle that day.

My surgery was in July of 2004 and seven years later I am still Cancer free and the surgery incident is as clear to me as if it happened yesterday.

This story will be added into the book I am writing—*Miraculous Love*—the life story of Joe and Katie Kee.