

## Chapter 13

# A Light of Hope

*“I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord,  
“They are plans for good and not for evil,  
to give you a future and a hope.  
In those days when you pray  
I will listen  
You will find me, when you seek me  
If you will look for me in earnest.”*

Jeremiah 29:11, The Living Bible

As a man slowly opened the door, I noticed the lights of the small hospital room had been dimmed. A dark hopelessness poured out of that room and consumed me with fear. A father was dying behind that door. My assistant Sharon and I just happened to have knocked on his door that day asking the family if they would like prayer. The man who came to the door said, “The family never wanted prayer before, but let me ask.” He closed the door carefully, and I began to say to God “Please don’t make me go in there. When the man comes back to the door let him say

no.” I prayed that way only because I was afraid. In a panic state I didn’t know what I would pray or even what I would say in such dark circumstances. In a few moments the man came back to the door and said, “Yes, you can come in.” I was in shock. Feeling awkward and humble, we entered the room. I began to pray for the family. I prayed for strength and courage in their dark storm. I prayed that they would know His love and mercy. The relatives that were around their father’s bed began to cry. I believe that God’s Spirit touched their hearts and we stood there in the ‘Light’ of a darken room. I gently laid a prayer blanket on the father. He was in a coma, struggling to breathe, struggling to hold on to life.

When we finished praying we walked back into the hallway. I felt something was wrong. I said, “Sharon something is wrong.” She reassuringly said, ‘No, Connie, you prayed well and the people were touched by God.’ I kept thinking something was wrong. Suddenly, I felt that God was speaking to my heart. His voice gently explained what I did wrong. When I prayed, I only prayed for the family. I did not pray for the unconscious man. I felt he couldn’t hear me so I focused on the family. Jesus told me, “Speak to the dying. I will open their ears.” I realized I should have spoken to the father and said, “Say yes to Jesus, just say yes to Jesus.”

We don’t know what a person who is unconscious can hear at a particular moment. God taught me a valuable lesson that day. Now whenever I go to the bedside of a person who seems to be in a deep darkness I will whisper light into their hearts. I tell them that God loves them. I tell them that Jesus died for their sins and wants to take them to heaven if they will say ‘yes’ to His love and forgiveness.

I have whispered in the darkness the words, “Say yes to Jesus” and in doing so many times the flame of God’s love became a light of hope in people’s lives. “Say yes to Jesus” are words of light that smash against the darkness and bring God’s Kingdom of heaven to earth.

The prayer blanket we give to the sick in the hospital is God’s gift of His compassion and love. These blankets become His hands that touch and embrace their broken, wounded bodies and minds.

The blankets are made by human hands to comfort the body but it is the hands of God that give comfort to the soul.

These are the stories of the Prayer Blanket. They are about people who lived, and breathed on this planet earth receiving a message of hope. For some in their dying breath they heard God’s voice whispering His love to them. For others their anger and bitterness screamed so loud that they could not hear His voice. As you read these stories of the prayer blanket may you hear the ‘God Whisperer’ in your own soul telling you of His great love.

One day Sharon and I went to the hospital. We prayed that God would direct us to the people who needed us the most as we rode the elevator to the fourth floor. We prayed that God would give us the courage to believe Him when he said, “I am the God who heals all of your diseases.” (Psalm 103:3) We prayed for courage that we would boldly speak His healing and salvation. We prayed that He would come close in order that we might know His will for our lives and for the lives of others.

When we got off the elevator we went to the nurse’s station and asked if anyone needed prayer today. She directed us to Gary’s room, a man who was dying of stomach cancer. When we first saw Gary his face was stone gray, worn, and

weary from a battle he fought for some time. We talked to him and I asked him what he was thinking. He said he was afraid. I knew what he meant. He was afraid of dying. As he listened intently, we talked about the love of God. We gave him a prayer blanket and placed it on his thin frail body. Sharon asked him if he would like to ask Jesus in his heart and he said, "Yes." When he asked Jesus in his heart a miracle started to happen right before our eyes. The once stone gray faced man had a beautiful smile, his eyes glistened with hope. We saw a look of love that I have never seen before. For precious moments after praying, Gary stared out into the room as if he saw something we didn't. I think it was Jesus. A few days later Gary died.

We then proceeded to enter Joan's room across the hall from Gary. It was such a short distance from Gary's room of light yet her room was in total darkness. Sharon said, "Hello Joan, we have come to visit you and pray with you if you would like." With a gut wrenching growl she said, "NO". We tried to talk to her again but she kept saying "NO". I even tried to leave a prayer blanket with her but she refused the gift. Bitterness and despair clouded her mind and heart and the light of His love could not pierce her angry darkness.

Sharon and I were both grieved but it reminded me of the thieves hanging on the cross beside Jesus. In their suffering, one thief wanted forgiveness from Jesus and the other thief was just angry at Him. Gary wanted forgiveness, Joan was just too angry to receive it, but they both died on their crosses of suffering.

Another day, we went down the hall and noticed a man standing mournfully beside his bed. The Lord nudged us to go and pray with him. We did think it was a bit unusual that two policemen were in his room at the time; however, we

asked the officers if we could pray for him. They gave us permission to do so. We talked to this man and asked if he wanted prayer. He said, "Yes." He explained that his mother had been praying for him too. I began to pray and said, "Oh Lord set this man free. Break the chains of his bondage." The man began to sob. He was deeply touched by the hand of God. I opened my eyes and looking down, I saw that this man had his feet literally chained to the bed. I realized I was praying for a criminal! It was probably a good thing I did not know this before. I might have been fearful and kept walking past his room. God kept this from me so He could answer a mother's prayer that day.

At Christmas time, we spent a whole day in the cancer ward. We prayed for thirty-two people and gave out thirty-two prayer blankets. We were totally exhausted but my heart was at rest watching the flame of His love flicker in the darkness. During that moment of light, some people prayed and received Jesus, some just listened, some cried, and some just stared out in darkness. I do not know how many received the love of Christ. This I do know; Jesus visited each one of those hurting wounded souls that day and whispered, "I love you."

Once, we went to the hospital to see a woman who was a member of our church. She was in critical care. In order to enter the room I had to press a button on the outside in the hallway and state my name and who I wanted to see. I proceeded to push the button. When the nurse answered she said, "How can I help you?" I said, "My name is Pastor Connie and I have come to see Katie." She said, "It would be a few moments." I didn't realize there was an elderly man standing behind me. He heard me identify myself as a pastor. When I turned around, he asked if I would pray for

his wife. I said we would be glad to. His name was Chris. Sharon and I began to pray for Chris and gave him a prayer blanket for his wife. He began to cry. He said, "If I lose my wife I have lost everything." A compassion for him filled my heart. We said we would come to his wife's hospital bed when we were finished praying for Katie.

Katie was in good spirits when we went in, and we prayed for her, giving her a prayer blanket. Then we found Chris's wife. She was gray haired and frail looking with deep wrinkles imprinted on her face. Hooked up to a feeding tube, and a breathing machine, she could not breathe on her own. I stroked her forehead and pushed her gray hair away from her face. I saw her husband look at her with such love. His eyes seemed to be telling their beautiful love story. We prayed that God would heal her from pneumonia. We felt the presence of God and believed He would heal her. Chris was filled with joy. I think he sensed something changed in that room. He hugged me and kissed me. When God came into the room, Chris's heart was filled with joy and gratitude. I can still hear his voice saying, "Thank you, thank you..."

Another time there was a lady who, upon receiving a blanket, immediately wrapped it around her and was comforted.

One lady lost her prayer blanket in the hospital when they moved her to another room. She was so upset that she cried until I brought her a new one.

There are so many stories to tell but not enough pages to write down all the wonderful things that God has done through these simple blankets of hope.

In all these dark, negative circumstances of the sick, the broken, and the imprisoned I heard God's whisper in my heart

to go proclaim His mercy and grace to set them free. I recognized in those moments His hand of grace upon my life.

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,  
Because He has anointed Me  
To preach the gospel to the poor,  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To preach deliverance to the captives  
And recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed,”*

(Luke 4:18) NKJ

The last story I will tell is about a little boy named John. He was not sick or in the hospital. He was however, a very sensitive little boy who loved God. John lived at home with his mom. He was having trouble sleeping at night so I gave him a prayer blanket to comfort him when he was feeling afraid. He was having show and tell at school. He decided to bring the prayer blanket to school to show the other kids. He told his friends that when he is afraid at night and couldn't sleep he wrapped this blanket around himself. John said it was like Jesus wrapping His arms around him and he wasn't afraid anymore. There were many children in the classroom that shared his fear of the dark too. Out of twenty-three children seventeen of them wanted a prayer blanket. I made certain that John had seventeen blankets to give out to his friends at school. It is amazing that even children sense God's loving hands upon them through these blankets.