

HE DELIVERS

I am writing this message on March 23, 2021. I am finding myself today focused on this same day fifteen years ago. March 23, 2006 happened to be on a Thursday that year. I remember feeling relieved that morning because on the night before God delivered me through a very difficult trial and challenge at my first ministry in Petrolia. God kept telling me as I went through this challenge the same thing He had Moses say to the Israelites trapped at the Red Sea as the Egyptian army advanced.

“Don’t be afraid. Just stand still and watch the Lord rescue you today.”

This promise helped me to trust as God delivered me through a very difficult moment in ministry for me.

With that challenge now behind me, I was focused on a delivery that was ahead of me. Nadine was pregnant at the time and we still had 6½ weeks before the due date. Nadine spent the morning of March 23, 2006 visiting with a friend while I was at the church working. She slept most of the afternoon as fatigue was beginning to set in again in her third trimester.

After supper we went for a walk and talked about finishing the nursery that weekend and getting the overnight bag packed for when we did head to the hospital. Little did we know as we had this discussion that around 11:30 p.m. that night Nadine’s water would unexpectedly break. Six and a half weeks early is not what we expected.

As we drove around midnight to the hospital in Strathroy we felt calm and not anxious with the sense that God’s hand was delivering us. We arrived in Strathroy and they said because the birth was so premature, they were going to transfer Nadine to London Sick Kids hospital. At 2:30 in the morning on March 24, 2006 Nadine was in the back of an ambulance with me following in the car behind heading to London. Once in London the journey unfolded awaiting the delivery of our first child. They took us to the delivery room around 3:00 p.m. on March 24th and at 4:27 p.m. our daughter Coral was born.

Being so premature she was taken away quickly because she had trouble breathing. It wasn’t until 8:00 p.m. that night that we could see Coral. It was touch and go from what we were told but finally we saw our baby in an incubator with so many lines and tubes attached. God delivered us a gift 15 years ago despite a rocky and early start.

God kept delivering for us after that. We spent the next 17 days at London Sick Kids hospital awaiting Coral's lungs to develop enough to come home. Some of the ways that God delivered for us during that time were as follows:

- When our delivery nurse, who was a Presbyterian, learned that the hospital wanted to transfer Nadine to a different hospital but keep Coral at Sick Kids, this nurse advocated for us and delivered by convincing the higher ups to allow Nadine to stay at Sick Kids.
- After Nadine's discharge, God delivered by arranging for a room to be available at the hospital for us to stay in so we could be there with Coral. An interesting side note to this is never before had this special room been available for 16 days. Hospital staff said it was the only time they could recall it being available for that long for an emergency stay – God delivered.
- God also delivered us a nurse whose name also happened to be Coral as well, and she took such special care of our fragile Coral and was determined to get her home safe and healthy for us. She requested to be her nurse on all her shifts.

As I write this you can understand why my mind is journeying back to 15 years ago and reflecting on how God delivered to us not only a very special daughter but faithfully delivered us through her difficult start to life. Fifteen years later God has delivered to us a very bright, motivated, and athletic teenage girl who can embarrass me on a basketball court!

My journey through a difficult time of ministry and our journey through Coral's premature birth were not easy but God delivered. Fifteen years later, as we reflect on this past year living through a pandemic, we recognize this has not been an easy year for us either. We have all had our shares of:

- Highs and lows,
- Disappointments and losses,
- Fears and worries,
- Anticipations and setbacks,
- Isolation and aloneness,
- Good days and bad days.

At times during this pandemic maybe we have felt like the Hebrews at the Red Sea when they saw the Egyptians army advance – panicked and worried. Covid-19 has been a powerful force that has advanced against us and these new strains seem even stronger. If we carefully reflect back upon this past year

and look at everything through the “Eyes of Faith” I think we would be able to clearly see the many ways that God has DELIVERED us through this year.

It is important for us to recognize that God is a great and faithful DELIVERER. A DELIVERER is defined as one who saves others from distress. The reason why Nadine and I stayed relatively calm the night her water broke and through the ordeal of the next 18 days is we recognized that God would deliver us on His promise to be there for us and help us. It is such a source of peace and comfort in times of distress to be able to know that God will deliver you through it.

We all can benefit from getting to this place in our walk with the Lord. This past year living in the pandemic has had its full share of distress for us. Even though there is light at the end of the tunnel with the rollout of vaccines, there is still distress ahead for us now that we are entering the “third wave”. Let’s make the choice to approach this third wave trusting completely that God will deliver us. To help us trust in this way each day perhaps these two passages can help.

“DON’T BE AFRAID JUST STAND STILL AND WATCH THE LORD RESCUE (DELIVER) YOU TODAY” (Exodus 14:13).

Or recite the Lord’s prayer each day and pause for a moment when you get to this petition:

“AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.”

God has delivered all of us through this first year of the pandemic and He will faithfully continue to do so as we enter this third wave. Live each day with the peace and reassurance that comes with knowing God delivers us and rescues us from distress.

I just have to look at my now 15-year-old daughter each day to be reminded of this and to be reminded as well I am getting older.

Keep Safe and God Bless,

Pastor Dean