

Firefly Chapel

By Billy Bruce Teague

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It happened the winter of 2007. A young woman in our church had been rushed to a local hospital because it was thought she was having a seizure. What is unique about the situation was that this girl eight years earlier had been diagnosed with a brain tumor and given only months to live. She and her family rallied with faith in God and fought the growth to a standstill with the girl completing high school and college. Symptoms, medicine and thoughts of fear never broke the youth's spirit to live, bringing us to this day in February.

Tests were run revealing water collecting on portions of the brain creating the seizures and the fact that the tumor was still present. Though the tumor was known it was thought to be inoperable. All was in place to manifest the girl's faith of total and complete healing and nothing could stop it.

Many of the church's intercession group, as well as the pastor and co-pastor rose early to drive several hours to reach the hospital before surgery. The pastors prayed with the girl then sat in the waiting room with the family as the intercessors took their positions in the small chapel of the Medical Center. Whatever was left undone through the years of prayer, these intercessors prepared to tackle it.

The chapel contained six pews, three on each side of the room. Taking their positions, they began to pray only to discover from God that no other prayers were necessary. Grateful for the revelation each intercessor entered into praise and worship to God. I was not one of those interceding, but had come along to lend support in whatever way I could. Three of them began to sing a melody with different words that filled the atmosphere with a calming sensation. Then it happened.

At first, I rubbed my eyes thinking I was tired from rising so early in the morning. I blinked trying to focus figuring that would shake the fatigue. I was not fatigued at all, but understand now that I had been caught up in glorious praise. You see, fireflies rose from the pews and altar and hovered in the air. The activity was unnoticed by the intercessors who continued their praise for the girl's deliverance. I, on the other hand, was captivated by what I saw.

I could remember running in the pasture behind my grandmother's house catching fireflies and placing them in a jar. The feelings of excitement were the same as when I was young. Mesmerized by their flashing I reached for one taking it in my hand and amazingly the

fly did not dart away. Stunned, I slowly opened my hand where the firefly sat in no hurry to scurry away.

The warmth of its light transferred into my hand and the blinks slowed. I felt as though time were standing still. In truth it was not standing still, but had somehow taken me captive exposing me to its treasures. A nurse walking through the hallway outside the chapel entrance caught my eye. I wanted to make sure I had seen what I thought I had seen so I followed her. She was dressed strangely as if from the past. She wore a hat and uniform I had seen only in the movies made during the forties and fifties. There were no longer fluorescent lights lining the hallway ceiling, but instead there were dimly lit fixtures. It became evident I had been taken to another time and to a memory contained within the chapel's history.

Glancing back at my hand the firefly lay peacefully in my palm as if resting. I left the hallway and returned to the chapel where I found the intercessors had gone and a single gentleman rested on the right front pew. He began to speak.

“God, I have served you my entire life and you owe me. I have never asked you for anything and that should count for something, but am asking you now to help my wife. The doctors have told me that her injuries will not allow her to live through the night and I need what only you can supply. Surely, I have earned this one answered prayer.”

I wanted to cry. My heart was breaking as I listened to this man spill his heart to God. I noticed at that moment the fireflies' flashing increased in speed. Looking up, I had whisked away to a street corner only a few miles from the Medical Center. There was a car tipped on its side with the windows busted. It was the car the man in the chapel's wife had been driving when she was struck by another car that had not bothered to yield.

Once more I was in the chapel where the scene repeated itself, but this time the words the man spoke fell to the ground lying lifeless. A nurse entered the room and touched the man on the shoulder. No one had to tell me what had happened because I knew that his wife had died as the man's face fell into his hands and he began to cry. My hand then grew very warm so I opened it releasing the firefly which returned to the exact spot where the man had been sitting. The vision was over.

Another firefly flew near my face and stopped as if to say to me “I'm next”. I opened my hand and reached for the firefly that sat in my palm.

There were now three people sitting on the right front pew talking.

“I will not accept it,” a woman told the other. “I will not allow my child to die.”

Closing my hand upon the firefly I was transported to a child’s room who lay in a coma. The medical equipment looked very old and substandard to what we have today. A ventilator was traveling up and down as I noticed medicines being administered through intravenous methods. Two doctors entered the room and discussed the boy’s condition. He had been diagnosed with rheumatic fever with no hope of recovery. As the doctors left the room, I heard the mother of the child praying in the chapel.

“God,” she said, “my son will live and not die. He will live and I will see him play again. He will marry and have a family. He will die an old man.”

She went on to express her inability to change what was happening, but was convinced of God’s power to change her circumstance simply because she asked. She did not bargain with God. She seemed to simply believe and that made the difference from the man I had observed earlier who thought he had earned his wife’s healing. A nurse entered the chapel and bent to whisper in her ear. Falling to her knees the woman lifted her hands and thanked God for her son’s healing. He had awakened with the fever broken and was asking for her. Instinctively, I opened my hand and released the firefly and as before it disappeared into the pew where the women had sat.

Dazed as to why I was seeing these things, a firefly was attempting to pry itself into my hand. Raising my ring finger, the firefly perched in my hand. I held my breath because I wasn’t sure whether I wanted to open my eyes after what I had experienced. But curiosity got the best of me and I opened them.

A boy not more than nine years old was facing the cross at the front of the chapel. He had a little red car in his hand, his face wet with tears.

“Lord,” I said, “I cannot watch another tragedy.”

Wiping his nose with his arm the boy spoke to God.

“Sir,” the boy said, “my Mommy is upstairs having a baby she thinks my Daddy will never see. Daddy is gone fighting in the war and we haven’t heard from him in a long time. Since I am the man of the house, I am coming to you for help. You see God, I heard in Sunday school that you will work in our lives if we ask you. I don’t really understand what all that means, but I ask for your help. I have brought my red car to give to you and it is the best I

have because my daddy gave it to me before he left. I know I do not have to give it to get your help but I want to. It's my favorite toy in the whole world.

I don't know if I am doing this right. Please accept my best prayer and bring Daddy home and keep Mommy and the baby safe."

I could not contain my tears as the boy laid the car at the foot of the cross and left the chapel. Following the boy to the nurse's station I heard them tell him his mother and the baby were fine and that he would be able to see them later that afternoon. A huge smile came across the boy's face.

"My Daddy is coming home!" he yelled running down the hallway and outside.

I knew inside the boy's father did come home. God had honored the boy's simple faith. The toy ended up in the children's ward of the hospital where every child who played with it experienced God's favor and influence miraculously recovering from their illnesses.

The fireflies began to grow dim and what God had been revealing ended. The intercessors appeared as they had vanished in a state of praise and as three times before, a nurse entered the chapel and gave us the good news. The tumor was discovered to be of low grade with most being removed.

The doctor had done what he could and faith had done the rest. All that remained were two areas where water still lay upon the brain of the young woman, but that, too, would fall to the power of faith in God. Though this girl's battle for life lasted beyond the hospital episode she fully recovered to glorify God. It impacted me that God is never glorified in the sickness, but only in the recovery.

As the nurse and intercessors left the chapel, I saw a firefly float through the air and disappear into one of the pews. Someday, someone else would see what had happened here today. Another, like myself, would discover that God asks only for our faith in Him to answer prayer.