

## **Erase 2019**

**Tanya Moore**

My husband, Mike, has said a few times, "I wish we could just erase 2019 from our lives." I totally get why he wants to do that. It was a very hard year for him, for me, for all our family. Mike had spinal fusion surgery at the end of January 2019, and everything went downhill from there. He was diagnosed with post-op psychosis; he was hallucinating; and his hospital physical therapist thought he was having a stroke. The months after that were spent trying to find out what was wrong and how we could fix it. He couldn't walk because he had no balance, and he didn't remember that he couldn't walk, so he fell many times. He couldn't remember how to do day-to-day-living activities. He didn't know what day it was or what year it was. He spent many days in rehab after the surgery; weeks with in-home physical and occupational therapy; and 6 weeks – 3 times a week – in outpatient physical therapy.

We consulted with a brain surgeon and 3 neurologists. He had CT-scans, MRI's, and fluid removed from his spine. The fourth neurologist finally diagnosed him correctly and said he needed a shunt put in his skull to drain off the continuous excess spinal fluid. He had that surgery in August after much advocating to please do it as soon as possible. Before the surgery, we had to hire a caretaker 3 days a week because he couldn't be left alone and I had to work and spend time with my mom who was diagnosed with lung cancer and was in a nursing home. She died in October while Mike was in a rehab facility after the brain surgery.

Oh, yes, to be able to erase that year sounds wonderful. But it was during all this that I experienced the greatest freedom and felt the most love from our heavenly Father that I have ever known. I had nothing to offer God or anybody else. Many days I would wake up and know I couldn't face the day. I would tell myself, "All you have to do right now is make the coffee." And that's exactly where God wanted me – realizing that I don't "do" for Him; He does for me. And I didn't learn that lesson without many failures.

When Mike fell a month after the spinal fusion and opened up his incision, I told God exactly what I thought of Him and it wasn't pretty. The words and the anger I expressed would not be heard of in Sunday school. I railed at God. And then I took Mike to the surgeon's office to re-stitch the wound. In the process of cleaning him out and closing him back up, the doctor found a blood clot that could have caused severe, life-threatening problems. I watched while they pulled the clot and its accompanying huge amount of blood out of Mike's back and I felt so chagrined because of the things I had yelled at God. If Mike hadn't fallen and opened up the incision, the

clot might have gone undetected. While I was standing in line at the drugstore to get Mike's antibiotic, I told God how sorry I was. I felt buckets of grace pour over me and knew God was reassuring me that He could handle my anger and that nothing I would ever do could make Him love me less – or more.

All through the following months, when life was really hard, I often pictured and felt Jesus walking beside me. Sometimes I felt His hand on my shoulder. When I sat on my mom's bed in the nursing home and held her hand and spoke to her and she couldn't speak back, I knew God was sitting right beside me.

I never felt that I was doing anything to enable me to receive any of these assurances and comfort. I just knew I needed God and He was there. The many scriptures that I have read and known for years became very real to me.

“I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5).

Branches can't do anything to stay part of the vine. The vine holds them and nourishes them.

“And He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” (II Corinthians 12:9, 10).

We are very thankful that Mike is so much better. He can walk and finish sentences and do so many things that he was unable to do before! We still have things we are working to improve, but I feel like I have my husband back. There was a time I had to come to grips with the truth that he might not get better and, if that was the case, God would give peace and comfort and even joy in that.

But, as tempting as it is to want to erase all that happened in 2019, I am thankful that God showed Himself to me in ways that I had never known in this particular way before.

“O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; My flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory.

Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.

When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings, I will rejoice.

My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.” (Psalm 63:1-8).

All of us have lives that present challenges – big, small, daily. Life is hard, but God promises to be our peace, our comfort, and our strength. I know it better now than I did before, and I'll know it better in the future than I do now.