

Lucy Toor and Neil Cameron Testimony 29.10.16

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Preacher: various

[0 : 0 0] Okay, so there's a part of me that really isn't comfortable standing here sharing, but there's also a much bigger part of me that really wants to share, particularly what's been happening the last 14 months of my life. That's what I want to be talking about tonight, so just bear with me.

I'm also aware that some people can be quite uncomfortable talking about the reality of what life can be like when we're going through hard times, but I think it's really important that we do actually talk about these times. I think maybe it's something we're not that good at doing, but maybe we should be better at doing, so again, bear with me.

So, 26th August last year, I headed off to Raidmore for what I thought was going to be a quick visit to just check out a lump that I'd found in my breast. We weren't expecting it to be of any great problem. I had a shopping planned for the afternoon.

That was a quick trip to Raidmore, shopping trip, and then home in the evening. That was the plan. In the couple of days before that day, I had such a strong sense of God's presence with me, such an overpowering sense of the Holy Spirit being with me.

Now, there were other things going on in the family at that point, and I just thought it was God just reminding me that he was here and that I didn't need to worry. So, I got to the breast unit, saw the consultant who likewise thought there was nothing to be worrying about.

[1 : 1 2] I started off with different investigations. Second time of investigations, the nurse was chatting away to me, and the doctor was busy doing his thing. And I was just becoming aware that the nurse was chatting a lot less, and there was a lot more, kind of the air in the room changed.

And I began to think, okay, maybe this isn't quite as straightforward as we were thinking. And I began to think, maybe that's why I had such a strong sense of God being with me in the days before. And sure enough, by the time I was done, hours later, I'd been told that the doctors were thinking very much that it was breast cancer.

They had to take biopsies and so on then to be able to confirm it, but that was very much their opinion. So, there I was in Inverness, by myself, having had this totally unexpected news, kind of thinking, okay, what do I do?

So, I walked, because I just needed to walk. So, I walked on into town, sat down by the river, had hours to kill, because I had planned just on spending the afternoon shopping.

Had to wait until the evening flight. So, I was sat down by the bench, or down on a bench, down by the river. And I genuinely wasn't looking distressed or anything. I barely cried. I was looking sorted, settled.

[2 : 2 3] I wasn't looking in any way in distress. And I'd been there for about half an hour, texting and phoning people. And this lady came and sat on the bench next to me. I had no idea who she was. There were empty benches around. I thought, for goodness sake, I don't need anybody sitting here.

But she sat there, and she was eating a sandwich. And about 20 minutes later, she just, somehow we started talking. She started to talk to me. And somehow, very quickly, we discovered that we were both Christians.

And that's when she said to me, that's why I needed to come and sit with you today. She said, I was going to, I shouldn't even be here. She said, my husband should have picked me up half an hour ago. I don't know where he is. I had no plan to come and sit on this bench.

But I know, I just felt God really saying to me, you must go and sit down next to that lady there, to me. And so then I was able to say to this complete stranger, well, I think God's put you there.

Because I'm here by myself, and this is the news that I just had. So that was the beginning of God just showing how amazingly he was going to be with me.

[3 : 22] So we prayed, sat down by the river in Inverness. It was amazing. She was a lovely lady called Jean, who's actually a missionary out in Uganda. Now, of all the countries that God could have sent a missionary to sit next to me, Uganda was one that, for our family, kind of has a real special place.

I'll explain why later, it's not important. But of all the countries that God could have given as a sign, you know, that this lady came from nowhere to pray next to me from Uganda. And it was such a clear sign that God was with us and was in control.

So a week later, my man and I, this time, went back to Raidmore. And sure enough, we got the diagnosis that, yep, it was breast cancer. On the drive up that day, even by Harris standards, there were so many rainbows.

I've never seen, even by Harris standards, so many rainbows. It was just amazing. And then as we came out of the hospital, having just had the news confirmed, coming out of the main road, or going on to the main road at Raidmore, traffic lights, lots of cars coming past very slowly in the evening traffic.

And who was in the car, but Anks Alec and Ina. They had obviously no idea, you know, that we were at the hospital. Nobody knew at that point what was happening. And they were just, of all the kind of the times that somebody from Harris, and, you know, somebody that we'd love to see from Harris was driving past.

[4 : 42] So we couldn't talk with lots of smiles and waves. And it was just, again, such a reassurance that, you know, just showed to me and our man that, you know, God had this all under control. So a few weeks went on.

And again, in God's great providential timing, a few of us ladies had a weekend away, or a night away, already planned in Portree, before we went to a ladies' conference in Portree.

That happened to be the weekend before my surgery. So on the Friday night, we went off for a fantastic night. And then Saturday of fellowship and friendship was an amazingly special time. And that was just before the surgery.

Again, it had been planned for months and months in advance. So on Wednesday in September, Emma and I headed off to Inverness, got all the pre-op radioactive dye injections and all sorts done.

We had a lovely meal that evening together. It was a wonderful surprise gift from two people here. It was such a blessed time. And I can honestly say I was so perfectly at peace that night.

[5 : 37] I wasn't anxious at all. A peace that passes all understanding. It's just so much what I had. I had a brilliant night's sleep. Never had such a good night's sleep. So I got up the next morning, went in and had surgery.

Things started to get a whole lot harder after that. But I just knew so clearly. God had made it so evident that he was with us and in control. So I'm just going to read Psalm 91 in a moment.

Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty. This I declare about the Lord. He alone is my refuge, my place of safety. He is my God and I trust him.

For he will rescue you from every trap and protect you from deadly disease. He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armour and protection.

Do not be afraid of the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies in the day. Do not dread the disease that stalks in darkness, nor the disaster that strikes at midday.

[6 : 40] Though a thousand fall at your side, though ten thousand are dying around you, these evils will not touch you. Just open your eyes and see how the wicked have punished. If you make the Lord your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, no evil will conquer you.

No clay will come near your home. For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go. They will hold you up with their hands, so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone. You will trample upon lions and cobras.

You will crush fierce lions and serpents under your feet. The Lord says, I will rescue those who love me. I will protect those who trust in my name. When they call on me, I will answer. I will be with them in trouble.

I will rescue and honour them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation. And it's not necessarily a promise of healing in this world, but it's just God's promise that he is with us.

Regardless, he is with us throughout. He is our shelter and our protection. So, a few weeks later, I forget, kind of a timeline. Back we go again to Raidmore and got the really good news that, as far as I could tell, everything had been caught early.

[7 : 52] And the surgery removed everything and had been caught before it spread. After lots of prayer and discussions with the oncologist, he made the decision that I wouldn't have any chemotherapy. But I'm on hormone therapy for 10 years.

Which isn't without its side effects. So, we're all kind of learning to cope with the new kind of way of life at the moment. I get pretty tired. My brain gets pretty tired.

So, excuse me if I kind of, yeah, lose my way a bit. So, yeah, I've had the first annual check-up. And everything, as far as we know, is all clear.

So, that's the brief outline of the last 14 months. But what I really want to share is what the Lord has taught me and done in this time. I don't think that this is for no reason.

And I really feel I have to share, you know, everything that he's shown me and done in that time. So, as I've said, God made it so clear from the very outset that he was with us, even before.

[8 : 47] Little did I know why. But he made it so clear that he was with us and he was in control throughout. That feeling isn't based on the fact that my cancer outcomes have been so good so far.

I'd be saying all of this exactly the same, even if they've been different. My faith, my hope and my peace aren't dependent on the physical state of my body. And if anyone's thinking, I couldn't cope like that, or, you know, she's so brave, or blah-de-blah-de-blah, I'm not.

I've had wonderful support from my family and so many of you guys, which I so really, really appreciate. But the main reason I can stand here and share this has got nothing to do with me or with all of you wonderful people, but with Jesus and all that he's done.

And I just can't emphasize that strongly enough. And sometimes when we become a Christian, it's this kind of, some people assume that's it, job done. You've ticked that box and that's it.

But that's so not the case, and it should only be the beginning of our journey. And God really wants us to grow in our relationship with him. And that's certainly what he's done in his last 14 months with me.

[9 : 52] Yeah, we've moved so far. So often our desire is for God to fix broken things. We spend a lot of our prayer time kind of, yeah, asking for God to fix the things that we think need fixing.

But his desire for us is to fix our relationship with him and for us to grow in our relationship with him. So while we keep on praying for, you know, for our answers, giving him our answers to prayer, if we keep doing that, we're missing out on so much of an opportunity to actually to grow with him.

And though he deeply loves us, loves us so much, he'll allow us to feel the pain of the broken world that we live in, if it's going to bring us closer to him. And, you know, it doesn't have to be a cancer journey.

There are so many different ways that we all go through difficult times and feel the pain of the broken world we're in. And we need to use those times and not waste them to have yet to grow closer to him. And when the trials of life do happen, which they happen to all of us, we need to hold on to Jesus.

It's an opportunity for us to look in the darkness for the less obvious, but the deep and the wonderful blessings that we can have. We might miss those as we rush along in our lighter times, but God's light shines brightest in the darkest, in the darkest times.

[11 : 05] So just don't waste the opportunity we have when we're going through those darker times, being really able to see God's light. And we so often like to think that our life plans are better than God's.

You know, at the age of 41, I was not planning on having cancer and things kind of changing in our life. That really was not in my life plan. I'm sure many of us can think of ways that, you know, we have it all set up.

We think we know what's going to happen. And we just kind of carry on in our merry way. But we have to surrender our dreams and our expectations. And if we are Christians and walking with the Lord, we have to remember that where we are in our lives right now, if we're walking closely with him, is the right place and it's the best place we can possibly be.

And it's the only place that we should be. I'm just going to read Jeremiah chapter 29, verses 11 to 13. For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord.

They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. In those days, when you pray, I will listen. If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.

[12 : 10] So we have our expectations, as I say, of how we think our life should go and how it should look. But God keeps the promises that he puts in his word. And as he said, he will never leave us, he will never forsake us.

We shouldn't hold him to promises he never made when life doesn't go as we planned. So often we think, well, where's God in this? You know, why is this happening? But God never promised in his word that life would be easy.

In fact, he very clearly says that it wouldn't. So we should be railing at him when life isn't going the way we think it should be going. We have to remember the promises that he has made in his word. Promises like he will never leave us or forsake us.

He'll be with us through every trial. He's holding us, shielding us and loving us. Those are the promises that he gives. And those are promises we need to cling to. So, as I said, one of the side effects of the ongoing treatment I have is that my concentration isn't always the best.

And I tend to get tired. So I found that spiritually it's been harder in the last year or so to have the kind of prayer times and the study times that I used to have. But I've learned that just to rely that God in my weakness will bring his truth, will bring his strength.

[13 : 20] So he brings his truth to my mind, his light to my darkness, and his care and refreshment when my mind just feels worn out. So I just send up short prayers. And it's amazing what God can do with those and how much he can actually use them.

So I used to kind of feel guilty, thinking, well, this isn't good enough. Kind of, you know, this is really not what I want to be able to do. But I think it's such an encouragement for all of us that God just uses our little bit and he maximises that.

Don't let the devil kid you that you're not doing enough. God's hold on my life isn't dependent on my hold on him. So, as I say, my life at the moment feels very different to how I expected it to be.

I think all four of us can say that. Having to live life in the slow lane wasn't in my plan at this stage of life. And the four of us are having to adjust and re-look at what's important, finding joy in the small things.

We don't know how long this stage will last and we don't know which direction it will go in the future. But what I do know is that I'm where God wants me to be right now. So I've tried to surrender my dreams and expectations, remembering that his are far, far better.

[14 : 26] It's very much a work in progress with the many ups and downs. I battle, I resist, I get frustrated and despondent. Don't think for the moment that I don't. But what I do know is that Jesus is with me throughout.

And if I do kind of forget that, it's just so wonderful that it reminded me again. And what I found so amazing in this last 40 months, even more than I ever knew, was the power of God's word.

And how he uses that. And just that God's word is alive and able to actually work in us. And he can use that so much. And so sometimes when I can't do anything else, just reading a few passages.

And God is unable to do so much through those. So I just close by finishing, by reading just a few passages that really meant a lot to me in these last few months. So the first one is Isaiah chapter 43, 1 to 3.

But now, O Jacob, listen to the Lord who created you. O Israel, the one who formed you says, Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name, you are mine.

[15 : 30] When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up. The flames will not consume you.

For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Saviour. And it talks about when you go through deep waters. When you go through rivers of difficulty. You know, when you walk through the fire of oppression, you're going to come out the other side.

That outcome may be that you don't get the outcome that you want until you're in heaven. But we are going to come out the other side. And God is walking through with us. In Isaiah 41, verse 10.

Don't be afraid, but I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand. And then just finally, from Ephesians chapter 3, verses 20 to 21.

Now all glory to God, who is able through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus, through all generations, forever and ever.

[16 : 41] Amen. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Well, it's an honor to be here with you tonight.

I feel privileged to be asked. And last Sunday, when David approached me at the door there, he asked if I would do a word of testimony tonight.

I was thinking of that old good man up in Lewis. A body case. A day of the case. It was very unusual for the presenter to be asked.

But I know that it was leading the place to be asked to speak to the case. But lo and behold, he was asked to speak to the case.

He talked to the minister and said, This is how death comes sometimes when it's least expected. So, I'm glad that I have a testimony.

[17 : 53] There was a day I didn't have one. So, I'm not going to dwell on how I was. But I am going to speak of how God has helped me since I came to face in Jesus Christ.

And I remember when I was just seven years old, when my father died. And the best memory I have of him is taking me by the hand to the bar and making me kneel down beside him in prayer.

Now, I can't remember the prayer, but I'm grateful to God that he was taking me to the throne of grace. And there's no other thing better in our lives to know that our parents are taking us to the throne of grace.

Now, I grew up and I went to the worldly things, like some of us don't anyway, but I did have a desire for God, the things of God.

And I got married and two of the family and when everything was going well with us and when the communion times would come, I had this desire and there was one elder there that was saying to me, you should change your name, you should be called Neocamater, and not Neocamera.

[19 : 32] That is in Gala in English. What is it? Neel Stuburner. Something like that. Anyway, the time came when I was constrained but I was making all bare excuses.

And I was saying to God, when I get these things right, when I put this right, when I put that right, I'll then come forward.

And pure with himself, the devil said to me, no, you're not worthy. And he was true, I wasn't, and I'm still not worthy. I was, but anyway, I was going home on Wednesday from the prayer meeting.

And the word of God spoke to me. The communion was on Thursday. And the word of God spoke clearly to me on the Grosjebe road. and it was from Matthew chapter 6, verse 33, where it says, seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all of these things will be added into you.

And fear not, what, how does it say, fear not a small flock or little flock for it's the good pleasure of God to give you the kingdom.

[21 : 09] And I went forward on the word of God and it was a dear friend and brother and Salik that took me into the session.

And I think he is the only elder that I know that was there at that time. Is that right, Angus? Think so, yes? Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Bill Ken. Yes. Bill Ken. So, God has been good. We had problems in our lives like everybody else has but there were some problems like businesses, finances and that but I'm not going to go into that at the moment.

It could be for some other time. But since I came to the Lord, the Lord has been gracious to me in every way.

I've let him down many times but he has never let me down and he will never let anyone down that comes to it in faith. I was by year I was thinking about Lucy's testimony there and it was something of that that I was thinking about myself.

[22 : 36] I was taken to hospital that year last August and when I went into the hospital in Stornway I had I opened up my Bible and it opened up at Joshua chapter 1 verse 9 and there was a mark put on verse 9 I don't know whether I put it on but it was marked anyway where it says have I not commanded thee be strong and of good courage be not afraid neither be dismayed for the Lord thy God is with you wherever thou goest and that was my every day although I was reading the Bible and reading other parts

I always had this verse and Psalm 121 I to the hills will lift mine eyes from whence does come my name my safety cometh from the road that heaven and earth has made my safety my safety cometh from the road and I to the hills will lift mine eyes from whence does come my name my safety cometh from the Lord who heaven and earth has made thy foot till not let slide nor will his slumber that he keeps behold he that keeps his health he slumbers not nor sleeps the Lord he keeps the Lord thy shade on thy right hand is day the moon by night thee shall not smile nor yet the sun by day the Lord shall keep thy soul he shall preserve thee from all in and force thy going out and in

God keep forever waiting and then I had that morning and evening but I always had my readings in between and there was a young Asian doctor there he would be coming on duty at eight o'clock at night and he was saying to me I was coming in to see you but then I saw you were reading your bible and I said how did you know what was my bible and he said it was your bible and he said I didn't want to disturb you and I said no don't bother that's alright you can come in anytime so he came up the next night again and he said the same thing happened and I said that's fine I don't mind and I said keep reading the bible and keep praying for me no I didn't see him before I left but he was such a gracious young doctor but they were all good anyway so anyway

I was in hospital for about 26 days and they were very very concerned about me because I was in heart failure and other problems but I was quite happy there and I was never even asked when I was going to get home because it was like a sanctuary to me God was with me I didn't feel the time long I was so conscious of people praying for me people from our own congregation here that visited me there and prayed with me and the prayers of our congregation and our friends here and we appreciate it very much and as a family and there was one occasion I mentioned it before it was about ten minutes to two I was already in that clock I wasn't sleeping very well anyway and I heard this prayer and I looked prone and

I sometimes get quite emotional when I think about it and speak about it it was my good wife Catherine praying for me and I looked round again I thought she was beside me but that was at ten minutes to two in the morning and it was wonderful nothing in her lives like prayer and sometimes we might think that our prayers are not much but the devil cringes when we pray and I was very very conscious of the prayers and a few prayers and somebody was asking me if I was lonely and I wasn't and every time long I was thinking of the man that used to go up to the house of God every day at eleven o'clock he would go into the church stand in front of the pulpit or the altar and say

[28 : 29] Jesus this is Jimmy and he did this every day but Jimmy had an accident and he was taken to hospital and at visiting you nobody came to see Jimmy and this happened for about a week and one of the nurses said to him this evening Jimmy you must be very lonely you've got no relatives and nobody is coming to visit you he said that's not true nurse I've got a visitor coming to see me every morning at eleven o'clock and he stands at the end of my bed there and he says Jimmy this is Jesus so Jesus was with me and he is with he never leaves us he never forsakes us and he when although we our lives as

Christians we always have troubles storms whatever you call them and when we like to look back into the Jesus and the life of the disciples and when they were on the sea of Galilee and they were in that boat it wasn't Jesus was sleeping in the boat it wasn't the storm that woke on them it was the cry of the disciples and it showed crying that Jesus is waiting for it too and when Jesus died on that cross he died with his hands out and his head up his feet down east west taking the world in that whosoever and whosoever believeth in him and whoever comes to him he will know wise pastor and if if you've got to decide to come to Jesus we're never too young to come to

Jesus we're never too young to die and Jesus died for us it was what a gift what a wonderful gift and when we look at when we look to Jesus when we stop looking to Jesus like what we had the other night when Peter took his eyes off Jesus he began to sing and we will sing too and we will stumble but we have a God a great God and a true God and when D.L.

Moody the great American evangelist he was preaching on a Sunday night in Chicago that was before the great Chicago fire and he said I'll give you till a week tonight when you come back to tell me what you're going to do with Jesus before the morning some of them were in eternity 300 300 people died in that fire and it was waiting from Sunday to Tuesday or something like that anyway next Sunday he said I gave some of my congregation a week but some of them were in eternity before the next morning and God has given me a lesson that it is today because we're not promised tomorrow so with that

I think that this is a wonderful opportunity we have a communion and we have been a wonderful occasion with others and as said already the session is open and if you still have a desire Jesus is ready to accept you and we're ready to meet you as a session pardon me and before I sit down and stand I were thinking about God has finished it all because when David was on the psalms there especially psalm 22 the end of psalm 22 he has done it and the kids in here

[33 : 34] I think they they will remember it because he has said it to them so often and I was thinking there was something here I think I forgot about faith I saw the other day on Facebook and young glassy I put this on it says faith is not believing that God can it's knowing that he will that is faith is not believing that God can it's knowing that he will and faith F-A-I-T-H is forsaking all I trust him F-A-I-T-H forsaking all I trust him and I will read just the last two verses of

Psalms 59 they've been a wonderful blessing to me over the years but of thy power I'll sing aloud at morn thy mercy praise for thou to me my refuge was and tell in troublous days O God thou art my strength thy will sing praises unto thee for God is my defense a God of mercy unto me and he'll be a God of mercy to all which trust in him and I think I will close with Billy Graham used to finish off his evenings with may the

Lord bless us we are good done half a night line ■ hee did thing a but a I bet fish with man