

WELCOME - Jay - Good Morning! It is great to be here!!! "This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!" Amen?!! My name is Jay Tornquist, and this is my beautiful wife Kathy and we so appreciate this opportunity to share with you / to celebrate with you I what God has done in our lives this past year.

About two months ago, when Pastor Don asked us if we would be willing to share our leukemia journey with you, I immediately said "Absolutely" because what better way for Kathy and I to say a heartfelt "thanks" to so many of you, and even more importantly We want to give God all the glory He deserves.

Due to a couple of reasons, we have written out most of our story with you. There is so much to share and so little time, that we want to make sure to stay on track. Also, I still have a mild case of chemo-brain. Sometimes thoughts escape me and it is very hard for me to get back to where I was. So, thank you for sharing our journey!

As we look around us, we are overwhelmed! We are surrounded by: Church family, BIC class, Friends from playing basketball, Relatives, Neighbors, Brothers and sisters from different churches, Coworkers, High school friends, Former football players that I coached, Some 30+ year old youth group "kids" from when I was Youth Pastor in Kerkhoven, A few of my 3rd grade students from CCS from nearly 30 years ago-- --and the list goes on and on...

Thank you for being here this morning!

I have a deep desire to share what God has done in my life! We appreciate your love and your listening ear. I feel very much like the man in Luke 8:39: "Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.' And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him."

Kathy - Good morning! As Jay mentioned, our main purpose in sharing our journey this morning is to give God all the glory for what He has done! We want to praise His holy name! To God be the glory!! We especially enjoy this opportunity to share together, as husband and wife, each sharing from our different perspectives, with myself being the caregiver. May God bless the telling of His amazing work in our lives!

Setting the table - Jay - This chapter of my life's story begins about 5 years ago when I was first diagnosed with low platelets. I have been monitoring this ever since. Last November I went in for a check-up and my platelets were alarmingly low. On December 10th, I was sent in for a bone marrow biopsy. One week later, on December 17, as I was boarding an airplane, I received a call from my doctor's office. The voice at the other end of the line said:

“I am sorry to tell you this, but the results of your bone marrow biopsy are in. You had 21% blasts in your bone marrow which means you have Acute Myeloid Leukemia. You also have an underlying blood disorder called MDS (Myelodysplastic Syndrome) which complicates things. I am sorry to tell you this diagnosis-- it wasn't even on our radar. We need you to come to the hospital ASAP, to start treatment, since time is of the essence.”

My life literally changed that moment. When our airplane landed, my friend/boss David Chapin went directly to the airlines and changed my flight so I could go straight to Chicago, where our son, Nathan, was receiving treatments for his sickness and continuous headache that had been plaguing him for almost a year and had kept him out of school. It was there, in a hotel room, at 2:30 in the morning, that I informed my family that I was diagnosed with Leukemia and revealed the news that the prognosis was very poor.

Due to the urgency of this type of Leukemia, we didn't even have time to go home. On the way to the St. Cloud Hospital, we stayed at Peter and Megan's house (our oldest son and his wife) which turned out to be a special evening.

Knowing that I would be in the hospital in the midst of treatment on Christmas Day, they immediately made plans to have our Christmas celebration at their house that Sunday night, December 20th. It was a night of celebration, but also many tears. As I was watching our grandchildren open their presents with such excitement, I was thinking there was a very good chance I might not see another Christmas It was a bittersweet moment.

The following day, Monday, our whole family had the opportunity to meet with my doctor in St. Cloud. 14 of us met in a conference room and he was very straightforward. This diagnosis was not good and my prognosis was no better. We were told that my best chance was to take the chemotherapy and hope that it worked well enough so that eventually I could have a bone marrow transplant. So, as a start, we agreed to do the first session of intense chemotherapy, wondering how it would all turn out. Little did we know!

During that first week in the hospital, when I was getting the chemo treatments, I felt pretty good. I was able to go on consistent walks and I enjoyed having family and visitors around. (Jeff Brown was in the hospital at the same time, so we had a chance to go and visit him.) During this time I received hundreds of emails, texts, Facebook comments, etc. that were of great encouragement. My spirits remained pretty high. However, my condition soon changed just as they had told me it would.

When I had completed the seven days of my chemo, the following four days were the darkest for me. I couldn't eat, sleep, walk, sit up, read, talk or do anything else to help pass the time. I felt like I was in a time warp that wouldn't go forward. I would watch the clock,

and it seemed like I could account for every tick-the days seemed to last forever! Finding a comfortable position in bed seemed unattainable. I had to go to the bathroom every 45 minutes because I was taking a drug to get rid of the 12 pounds of water weight I had gained, even though I was eating very little. I felt nauseous all the time. One night I had a fever which set me back. I developed rashes on my upper back, bottom, and groin area from the transfusions. I knew these transfusions were keeping me alive, yet my body seemed to be objecting. My family did all they could to encourage me, the nurses were very caring, but I just wanted to make it through this, hoping that good news awaited me at the end of the tunnel.

The biopsy results that I received on January 9th did seem like the end of the tunnel. a dead end tunnel. My treatment had been a failure. My cancerous blasts were at about 15%, which meant that cancer was still ruling the cells in my blood. This, along with the fact that I had the underlying MDS and abnormal chromosomes, left me with very little medical hope.

I think the best way for me to share how I felt - after receiving the most devastating news of my life - is to have you join with me as I read a portion of my Caring Bridge entry that I wrote at 3:00 am, in the midst of a sleepless night:

“Sadly, the chemo treatments had very little effect on my Leukemia. The blasts in my blood have remained nearly the same as before the treatments. The doctors conferred and decided that the "best" option was to do another round of more aggressive chemo. I highlight "best" because they acknowledge that with the results of my first treatments. and with my underlying MDS (Myelodysplastic Syndrome) there really were no good options. The doctors have made it clear that with or without treatment my life expectancy is about two more months. In the full light of the reality of our options we have decided to forego any further treatments at this time and attack this disease head on by building up my body rather than tearing it down and through lots and lots of prayer! 'Before I go any further, there are a few things that I need to clarify:

1. Upon completing the 7+3 chemo treatments, which is considered the gold standard for treating AML, to get these results was certainly hard news to swallow. I, my family, and many of you have been praying that the results would be much better than this. To go through this again, with so little hope at the end of the treatments, just does not seem like a good choice.
2. I am not afraid of death. 25 years ago I faced death square in the face when I was involved in a knife accident while on a fishing trip. As the thought of dying entered my mind, I had a very real calm, with a tinge of excitement. 1 John 5:11-12 says, “And this is the testimony, God has given us eternal life and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life, he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." I KNEW at that time and I KNOW now that I will spend

eternity with Jesus Christ in heaven! I have no doubt! Not because of anything I have done, but because of the saving grace of my lord and Savior Jesus Christ who loved me enough to die for me and save me from my sins. (John 3:16)

3. For those of you that know me, I am not going to give up. In no way, am I saying that I am done here on earth! I am making the road to recovery decision based upon what I feel gives me the best chance to not only survive this disease, but to beat it! I am not entering into it with the thought of having a good couple of last months, but rather with the wholehearted enthusiasm of "When the going gets tough, the tough get going fl" I firmly believe that through the power of prayer and the strength that He provides us each and every day that no matter what happens, His name will be glorified!!! PTL!"

You have probably noticed a dichotomy in what I was saying: "I am ready to die" and "I am going to fight the fight". The apostle Paul puts it this way in Philippians 1:21, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

DIFFICULT FOR ME / KATHY'S LOVE –Jay - In my efforts to share this intensely personal journey with you, I need to be transparent at this point -especially at this point. This was not an easy decision-in fact it was very emotional and didn't come stress-free. The advice I received from my oncologist was that the best option for me was to do the next set of chemotherapy. As I mentioned before, this was not a good option.

I despised the way I was feeling after the last treatment, but I had survived barely! As I lay in bed thinking about it, I desperately wanted something to hold onto. Soon Kathy came to the hospital and I shared with her what I had learned. She looked at me and said: **"I don't think we should do any more chemo. It is killing you! We need to PRAY!! We need to call family, friends, and churches to join in prayer! I think we should build your body up with a healthy diet, supplements and whatever else your body needs to fight this cancer! I don't think we should kill the good cells in your body."**

As weak and emotional as I was, my immediate reaction was **"You mean just go home and die in two months ... "** Her immediate tear filled response was, **"Not at all! I want you to live! I think we can do it by building you up and continuing in prayer. The last thing in the world that I want is for you to die! I won't and can't accept that as an option. I want you well, and I don't think chemo can do that!"**

Jay - Kathy's love, her dedication to finding a better alternative, and her desire to have me live, truly saved my life!

Since my platelets were descending to a rock bottom number of 5 (150-450 is normal) I was fully anticipating another transfusion in the morning. I had already received platelet and red blood cell transfusions. I was thankful for them, since that is what had been keeping me

alive for the past week, and it looked like this was to be my way of life for the few weeks I had left.

KATHY - Not knowing how God would work in this situation of Jay's, we were going to trust that he would supply all our needs according to his riches. We would pray for healing and ask for guidance to making Jay strong and able to fight this battle of Leukemia.

Jay - Sunday, January 10th was the hardest day for me and most of the family. I was in my hospital bed holding my 7 month old grandson, Levi Jay in my arms.

Tears were streaming down my face at the realization that I probably was not going to get to watch my grandchildren grow up. There were tears amongst the whole family as we faced this together But even then, in the darkest and loneliest of hours --as I held tightly to the Lord, to my family, and to Levi, -It became very evident "I am not alone!"

JOY COMES IN THE MORNING -- **Kathy** - Psalm 30, verse 5, says, "Tears may flow in the night, but JOY comes in the morning," On that Sunday night, January 10th, the tears were flowing, as Jay said. Our hearts were broken! Our family was faced with this devastating news! We could not imagine life without Jay, Dad, Opa (which means Grandpa).

Every one of us was planning to make the most of the days we had together. Our oldest son, Peter, was not going to coach and took Fridays off from teaching. His wife, Megan, was busy making our Christmas so very extra special! Their boys, Noah who was four at the time, and Ben who was two, were busy making special cards they called "messages". Our oldest daughter Hannah, was taking time off from work so her and her husband Joe could spend more time with Jay. Abby made the decision to quit her jobs in St. Paul and move home to help. And Nathan wanted to go back to the Neuro and Physical Rehab in Chicago to get better, so Dad wouldn't have to worry about him.

I had been praying, crying out to God for Jay's healing, crying out to God for His help, asking for His leading, to guide us to natural alternatives that would kill the cancer and not Jay. God clearly answered my prayers!

While I was praying I would read or listen to God's Word and claim His many promises.

"Father, in the name of Jesus, I come before your throne. I believe your word concerning healing. I believe that your word will not return void. It is written that Jesus Christ Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses. By His stripes we are healed! And your Word is living and active, discerning our thoughts, our souls and spirits, even into the joints and marrow of our bones. Please remember your faithful servant Jay, like Hezekiah who was dying, yet You spared his life. Nothing is impossible to You, O God!

So later on that Sunday night, January 10th, we all tearfully departed, not knowing what the morning would bring. "Tears may flow in the night, but JOY comes in the morning."

Monday morning, Jay was very anxious for me to get to the hospital. He kept asking me, "When will you be coming? What time? Why is it taking so long? When I arrived I knew in an instant why he couldn't wait. I saw with my own eyes the amazing news on Jay's white board chart: His platelet's had DOUBLED from 5 to 10!!! Without a transfusion! What a JOYOUS moment!!

I will never forget the emotion and amazing love we shared together. The God of Heaven had surely intervened and was answering our prayers. Jay and I had lots of hugs and big smiles. I was crying tears of JOY! PTL! PTL!!, Thank you Jesus! "Joy comes in the morning!"

Tuesday morning, Jay texted me from his hospital room with the blood results. Thankfully, I was staying close to the hospital, across the street from the hospital at the Gorecki Guest House with Nathan, who was sleeping. Mornings were tough on him because of his sickness so I didn't want to wake him. That morning the text said that Jay's platelets had now gone from 10 to 32! I just had to talk to Jay!! I was so ecstatic!!! Ready to burst!!! "Thank you Jesus, Thank you Jesus!" I very quickly left our bedroom to go across the hall into the TV room to call Jay. My only problem was, I overlooked the fact that I was still in my pajamas and I also forgot my key to get back into our bedroom! Oh well "Joy comes in the morning!"

The next 3 nights I couldn't sleep! I was too excited! I would lie in bed waiting for the morning news.

Wednesday morning the platelets were at 76!

Thursday at 164!!

Friday at 252!!!

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!!

In fact, the next week they were 593!!! God's Exclamation Point!!

The JOY in our hearts we experienced that week was amazing /Incredible /spectacular /indescribable! Definitely, the mornings had taken on new meaning "Tears may flow in the night, but JOY comes in the morning!"

IN THE MIDST OF A MIRACLE -Jay - Psalm 30: 2, 11, 12 "LORD my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me. ... You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, that my heart may sing. your praises and not be silent LORD my God, I will praise you forever.

As we were leaving the hospital, 20 nurses gathered smiling, waving and blowing bubbles - yes bubbles, the head nurse said "We are in the midst of a miracle!!" Kathy and I smiled and waved saying "Praise God!"

CONFIRMATION OF HEALING --Jay - WOW! The power of PRAYER!! I hold on tightly to the promises that prayer provides: It is a way that family and friends, who in many ways feel helpless, can truly make a difference. I had a passage of scripture on my message board at the hospital that explains what a difference the prayers of believers make. Since Kathy and I clung to these verses, we would like to read them to you from *The Message*:

Kathy - We are reading 2 Corinthians 1:9-11 "It was so bad we didn't think we were going to make it. We felt like we'd been sent to death row, that it was all over for us. As it turned out, it was the best thing that could have happened.

JAY - "Instead of trusting in our own strength or wits to get out of it, we were forced to trust God totally-not a bad idea since he's the God who raises the dead! And he did it, rescued us from certain doom."

Kathy - "And he'll do it again, rescuing us as many times as we need rescuing. You and your prayers are part of the rescue operation - I don't want you in the dark about that either."

JAY - "I can see your faces even now, lifted in praise for God's deliverance of us, a rescue in which your prayers played such a crucial part."

As many friends, family, coworkers, neighbors, churches, and literally people around the world, heard about my situation, there were multitudes praying for me. We even have a pastor friend that has prayed with us on the phone almost every night since February! I cannot express my appreciation enough - It has been an incredible outpouring of love and I am humbled to have so many of you praying for me on a regular basis. God hears our prayers!

I would like to share with you some very unique ways that God answered some of your prayers. While I was in the hospital God supplied me with great encouragement through not one, not two, but five distinct confirmations of healing from family and friends all of them occurring before I started getting better! Each of these individuals shared what they had experienced and all of them KNEW that what they had been through was real. They didn't doubt at all that the promises they had heard were true! We would like to share these with you:

Jay - First, within a couple of days of my diagnosis, my Uncle Shell drove to the hospital to share this with me. (Many of you know Shell from the father/son fishing camp. Shell had started his morning prayer with praising God for who He is. Then he began to pray for me. As he was calling out to the Lord, in the midst of resting between pleas, he felt an overwhelming calm assurance that "Jay is going to be okay; Jay is going to be okay." An

amazing peace came over him! He stood up, looked out over the lake and in the sky was an eagle soaring, circling overhead, until it fell out of view due to the nearby trees. Immediately following, another bird crossed the same picture in the sky----- it was a Blue JAY!! Isaiah 40:30 declares: "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles;"

Kathy - Secondly, our sister-in-law Carol was praying for Jay and as she prayed, an overwhelming sense of peace came over her, with the words put in her mind, "Everything is going to be OK!"

Jay - Thirdly, I received a card from Jani Anderson, the leader of Women's ministries in our church. Jani wrote:

"I will never forget the day when Pastor Don walked into our staff meeting with tears in his eyes and said "They have sent Jay home on hospice, to die." Our staff sat in silence, in grief ... and we prayed. That night, as I was praying for you and your blood cells and your marrow I experienced a vision of the Lord. I only saw His smile, not his entire face. But I knew it was Him! And with that smile, I heard Him say "I will do that for Jay." It was so shocking, yet so beautiful! It was so very real, that no one can ever take that memory away from me. Your God, our God, is smiling upon your life, Jay.
With a heart of Gratitude, Jani Anderson"

Kathy - The fourth confirmation was when three girls from our Bible Instruction Class (Kara, Chloe, and Brianna) got together to pray for Jay. (He was their teacher when we received the diagnosis.) They prayed for him and as they went their separate ways a couple of very interesting conversations took place in their homes. One of the girls went to her parents and told them that even though it was a poor diagnosis, she felt sure that Jay was going to be alright! Another of the girls went home and told her parents that if God wanted a miracle to take place, she was sure it would happen for Jay, and she believed it would and it did!! Incredibly, all three girls continued to believe, even when Jay received his "two months to live" prognosis!

Jay - Lastly, it was a little boy's dream. His name is Soren Selander and he was 5 years old. His mother, Trista, and I have worked together for over 12 years at Willmar Electric. On January 5, when I was feeling pretty rotten, Trista sent me this note:

"Soren and I were talking about dreams on the way to daycare and Soren said, 'I had a dream last night. I dreamt that God came down from heaven.' Trista said, 'Oh?' and Soren said, 'He laid His hand on Jay and healed him!'" From a 5 year old!

These assurances brought incredible hope and peace to us all! In fact, they still do! God's still got plans for me!! We pray to a living and loving God!!

UPDATE - Jay - And here we are- 10 months later! As to how I am doing now-well, it is pretty amazing! In fact, my last biopsy results stated: "No evidence of residual Leukemia". Should I be surprised? Shell, Carol, Trista, Soren, Kara, Chloe, Brianna, and Jani aren't! It also showed that I no longer have any abnormal chromosomes! These results are supposed to occur after a bone marrow transplant!!

I was in to see my doctor this past Thursday. I know that he is amazed at how I am doing, and his advice with a big smile has been, "Keep doing what you are doing, and keep praying!"

My life will never be the same - I understand that there is a good chance I will always need to monitor my blood to a certain extent, but I also understand that I have been spared, and it was by the power of prayer, through Jesus Christ.. .. He supernaturally healed me and guided us to natural alternatives. I firmly believe that the power of prayer and God's healing, along with Kathy's love, and her persistence in finding how to build my body up and fight this cancer, truly saved my life and allowed me to be here today, feeling good, and sharing my testimony.

Update and Praise for Nathan - Kathy - We have experienced His amazing care over our family. Just as Jay has told his story, we have another amazing testimony involving our youngest son, Nathan, whom we have mentioned and many of you have prayed for. Nathan has experienced amazing answers to prayer concerning his 20 month mysterious illness. It really was the perfect storm traumatic brain injury, vaccinations, a compromised immune system, Lymes disease, continuous migraine, POTS, dysautonomia, dystonia, and many other neurological problems!

But praise God, through His mercy, He has been at work orchestrating Nathan's healing. He has led us to doctors and therapies and supplements that have been a perfect answer to his problems and our prayers. We just got back last Saturday from the Neuro and Physical Rehab in Chicago, our 4th visit. The doctors were so pleased with his progress! The recumbent bike they recommended in April was really a key in getting him back to health. His POTS is gone; his heart rate is normal! Some of his neurological tests are as rock solid as professional athletes! The doctors sent him home with new therapies to work on his remaining challenges. But sadly, no added progress on the headache yet. The doctors feel it will be the last to leave. Please continue to pray for total healing.

We praise the Lord for all He has done! Nathan is able to do normal life activities like school, church, and is even playing basketball!

I Praise the Lord for bringing Nathan back to life and for saving Jay's life!!!

Final Thought - Kathy - I will close my thoughts with a verse I sent in a text to Jay on that joyous Friday morning when his platelets multiplied to 252. I inserted Jay's name and disease. Isaiah 37:26 reads:

"Now, O Lord our God, deliver Jay from Leukemia, so that all may know that you alone, O Lord, are God."

Jay- IN CONCLUSION I do believe God wants me to share what has occurred ... for His glory! I LOVE THE LORD!!! In the process of being physically saved from death, I promised God that I would renew my vow to live my life for Him. Psalm 116:8,9, and 18 reads:

"For you have delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling;
'I will walk before the LORD
in the land of the living.
I will pay my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people."

I have come to this realization-The miracle of physical healing is temporary - I will still be called home one day. With this in mind, I am living each day as though God has a special purpose for me - and He does!. Romans 14:8 ESV

"For if we live, we live to the Lord, and If we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."

Who am I? Who am I that God has spared me from death with these miraculous results? That is a question that I don't have a firm answer to --- but I am working on it! Every day I wake up and bless His name. I can't begin to describe how happy I am to get out of bed each morning, feeling good and wondering what God has in store for me this day. I am in a constant search to find out why I have been spared. And in the process of finding it, I have pledged my life to Him. Honestly, we all have a reason for being alive, in this book of life - I just feel like I have been given an extra chapter!! Whatever His plans are for me - I am His, and anything I am or ever will be is for the sole purpose of bringing glory to our Heavenly Father!!

I don't know the answers to the "Why" questions

Why me?

Why not? (I know that we can all insert a very special person in the "why" questions)

I don't have the answers, but I do know this Ultimately it is not about me,
Nor is it all about you.

It is all about Jesus!!

Thank you for sharing our journey! We have tried to be as transparent as possible, because hopefully this allows you to see Christ working in us.

Our God is a God of healing - Physical, Spiritual and Emotional healing.

Psalm 147:3 reads: "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds."

Many of us are dealing with wounds of one type or another:

Our God can heal the sick;

Our God can heal the brokenhearted;

Our God can heal broken situations;

and most importantly-

Our God can heal death's grip on us as sinners!

Our God is a God of healing: He died, so that we might live!!!

We are in the hands of a LIVING GOD!

We are in the hands of a LOVING GOD!

We are in the hands of OUR GOD!

Ohhh, Our God Loves You and So Do We!!

Thank you for sharing our journey!