

A Hospice moment

The third in our series

What is coming next on this journey?

I have not been feeling very good lately. My appetite is off and I am tired all the time. What is wrong? Then at my last visit the doctor said that terrifying word "cancer". I cringed and shuddered. There it was, my death sentence.

My heart was racing and I felt numb. It can't be true, there must have been a mistake. My anxiety was suddenly in high gear, full speed ahead. What is going to happen, when is it going to happen, where will it happen? I was suddenly grasping at straws but they were dodging around my trembling fingers.

The word anxious means full of mental distress or uneasiness because of fear of danger or misfortune. Anxiety is the painful uneasiness of the mind that feeds on impending fears.

Anxiety causes people to feel afraid and out of control. Have you known that feeling? How are you dealing with it? Look up dear friend, things might be bad and getting worse but all is not lost, even if it feels like it is. Can anything good and positive come from the turmoil that is going on in my life and family?

Anxiety is not meant to be held onto. It's not a treasure or a keep-sake. Anxiety is not a bosom friend or a comfort toy. Anxiety is an enemy. It's an enemy to a sober mind. It's an enemy to peace. It's an enemy to faith.

Dishonest folks pretend there is no cause for anxiety in life. They "keep a stiff upper lip" and put on plastic masks. They smile and joke around but inside they're twisted into a pretzel of worry, but their dishonesty and hypocrisy keeps them from telling others.

How our anxieties lie! In a thousand voices with ten thousand sentences our anxiety whispers and yells, "You are alone; no one cares." Don't listen! No, don't listen to that lie! You are not alone! You are not abandoned! God cares about people. God cares about you!

Here is some good news for us. We may live an anxiety-free life. That however is not to say we may live a life with no suffering or hardship. Cancer, heart problems, breathing problems and one day death. But what is there that I can do to find some good news in difficult times?

First consider these words "Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. Don't spend your remaining days trying to cross bridges before you come to them. It will rob you of the joy and peace you long for.

By way of practical things to assist you let me suggest the following; "Stop reading only the gloomy sections of the newspaper.

Watch less television and start reading more books that bring a smile instead of frown. Locate a few acquaintances who will help you laugh more at life.

Have fun together. Look at old pictures and laugh together when you see the old hairdos. Laugh when you have someone say was that really you? Affirm, build up, and appreciate one another."

Spend all the time and energy you can, while you can, making memories for your family to enjoy when you are gone. That is one last wonderful gift you can share. Your family will be forever thankful to you for doing it.

Our situation and disease may not be our choice but how we play that hand is our choice. We can allow fear to make us its victims and rob us of our remaining days or we can challenge fear to work for us by driving us to a deeper dependence on God and a better relationship with family and friends.

It is an opportunity to make my last days, ones full of joy, hope and encouragement. Are you up to the challenge? If you are, don't waste another precious minute or opportunity being anxious about things.

If you have any questions, you can find out more about our program in Cortland County NY by calling Caring Community Hospice of Cortland 607-753-9105 or visiting www.cortlandhospice.org