

Crisis Prayers

Desperate for Divine Intervention

By Rob Griepentrog

It was 5:00 a.m. when Ruth woke me up, complaining of a sharp pain in her lower-right side. My first thought was, *Oh no, her appendix! Of all the times for this to happen!*

It was December 23. She had given birth to our fourth child, Selah Grace, just 17 days prior. My elderly dad was visiting, and additional family members were on their way from out of state to celebrate Christmas and Selah's birth later that day.

Already exhausted from the disjointed sleep that marks the early days of having a newborn, I took Ruth to the hospital for testing. To our surprise, tests showed that she had developed a blood clot in her right ovarian vein (next to her appendix). She was admitted for observation and was administered blood thinners to dissolve the clot.

Later that day, Ruth developed a persistent fever. Doctors weren't sure why she had a fever, but they continued to observe her health and treat the clot.

On Christmas Eve, her fever worsened. Overwhelmed with her condition, with extended family in for Christmas and Ruth's inability to nurture and snuggle our newest baby at home, I became numb. I was overwhelmed beyond anything I had ever experienced. I kept asking myself, *What do I do?* in a vain attempt to help and be productive in my exhausted and overwhelmed state.

That night, Ruth's pain suddenly dropped, and she began to feel a whole lot better. Some hope began to emerge, but it didn't last for more than a couple of hours. The pain rapidly

returned, and with even greater intensity.

Christmas Day was a slow day at the hospital. As Ruth's fever and pain relentlessly wore her down, we asked doctors if her appendix could be involved in any way. Already having a clear diagnosis that she had a clot (which can be quite painful), that question of the appendix was dismissed. We were told they would continue to concentrate on treating the clot. But things continued to worsen.

Two more days passed as Ruth's health worsened. As our friends joined us in prayer, doctors refused to budge from their initial diagnosis. We received word that the hospital was considering discharging Ruth to send her home (still with a raging fever). Bewildered, beyond confused and exhausted, and more than frustrated, we pleaded once more for another scan of her lower-right side. Doctors finally agreed.

Following the scan, Ruth's doctor entered the room with her head hanging low.

"I have some news. The scan revealed that your appendix is ruptured, and the infection is throughout all your abdominal cavity. Usually, we would take you back in for emergency surgery. But you have so many affected organs that would need to be removed and cleaned, it would be as though a bomb went off in your body, and you would have a 50/50 chance of even coming back out of the OR. However, because you are on blood thinners for the clot, we can't do that surgery today, even if we wanted to do so. We will need to take you off the blood thinners for 24 hours and then reevaluate the situation. I'm so very, very sorry."

Jehoshaphat's Cry for Help

In 2 Chronicles 20, King Jehoshaphat, facing an impossible, overwhelming situation, called on the people of Judah to fast and pray. As they gathered and prayed, Jehoshaphat worshiped

the Lord and reminded Him (as well as the people of Judah) of how He had promised and led the people of Judah to that land. He also recounted how the Lord had prevented their enemies from attacking them, but that they were now seeking again to destroy Judah.

Then in verse 12, Jehoshaphat humbly sums up their need and only solution:

“Our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”

I hear many people say, “I’ll do my best, and then let God do the rest.”

No. That wasn’t Jehoshaphat’s understanding. He wasn’t about to try to do his or his army’s best, and then call upon God! There was only One who could save and deliver them from impossible circumstances!

Jehoshaphat humbled himself, asked others to do so as well, and prayed.

God Intervenes

I prayed similarly to King Jehoshaphat, and the answer I received was James 5:14:

“Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.”

That’s exactly what we did. A group from our church came to the hospital and prayed over Ruth that evening. After praying, Ruth shared with the group that earlier in the day she declined fever-reducing medications and asked if she could monitor her own temperature every 30 minutes. Several hours before the prayer group came, the fever seemed to be slowly,

but steadily, coming down. By morning, the fever was completely gone.

As the doctors tried to determine their next course of action the following day, a repeat scan revealed the Lord had pooled most of the infection into one place. A tube was inserted to drain away the remaining infection, and 48 hours later, Ruth was discharged and returned home to our family, including our newborn!

Repeat Prayer

We have prayed Jehoshaphat's prayer often since that time. God healed the ovary, the vein, the clot, and the appendix, allowing us to conceive again.

Nineteen months later, we learned that our preborn daughter Mireille had a heart defect and other anomalies. Through a challenging pregnancy and birth, numerous surgeries, months in the hospital, difficult decisions, and overwhelming situations, the Lord opened ways where there appeared to be none when we humbled ourselves and prayerfully admitted: *We do not know what to do, but we look to You.*

Jehoshaphat's prayer is an incredibly powerful and life-changing model for prayer. The next time you find yourself in a place where you're overwhelmed and struggling to know what to do or where to go—or your circumstances lead you toward despair—remember Jehoshaphat's humble plea.

You may not know what to do, but the Lord does!

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