

THE STORY OF A LARYNGECTOMEE.*

12th April 2007.

Hello my friend, thank you for listening to me tell you my story.

I want to tell how God has helped me through a most traumatic change in my life. In February 2006, after being a Christian preacher for 40 years, I began to experience difficulties with my voice in conversation and when speaking publicly. From April onwards my local doctor and hospital ran various tests and treatments, but with no improvement in the condition.

In October 2006 the hospital consultant diagnosed carcinoma sarcoma – a life-threatening cancer – in my throat. Scans showed it had not spread anywhere else in my body. Neither chemotherapy nor radiotherapy were appropriate treatments.

To save my life on this earth Treliske hospital surgeons completely removed my voice-box, during the morning of 17th November 2006. Many people were praying. God was both recognised as sovereign and reminded of what his children wanted, in a remarkably worshipful and submissive way.

I have met many people who have great difficulty seeing the merciful God in the harsh events of their lives. My heart is moved for them. You may be one? Here is something I wrote to a newspaper in reply to someone who was questioning the existence of God because of the terrible situations he was having to face:

- *Eight days ago surgeons expertly removed my voice box because of an aggressive cancer. For a Christian preacher that was a major reversal! But I don't have any hard feelings against God. How could I?*
- *I know God is my loving Father in heaven. He always does what is best for his children. I am one of them.*
- *Unlike some, I have clearly seen the mercy of God throughout my experience.*
- *In God's mercy I am not dead. I could easily have left this world. The medical skills given to men and women are based on knowledge of God's creation. The tender care I am receiving from professionals in the English National Health Service is exemplary. My wife – though immensely challenged herself – has been a tower of strength for me, still helping me find the way forward when our eyes are full of tears.*
- *God's mercy gave me a normal human body that can mend itself remarkably well. He gave us friends who have expressed their love,*

* Laryngectomee – person who has had their larynx (voice-box) removed. The actual operation to remove the voice-box is called a laryngectomy.

care and prayers through cards, phone calls, meals, lifts and visits. I am part of a local Christian church and a green bowling club. Both have expressed practical care for Brenda and for me. I see all of this as evidence of the merciful hand of God.

- *“Mercy” in English means “the compassionate treatment of an offender”, or “patience and forbearance towards those people in one’s power”.*
- *God is mercy. He does not merely have mercy. He will never lose it! He is merciful in his very self-being. God also has very, very large amounts of mercy towards humanity. We are individually invited to receive mercy from our holy God.*

Now it is five months since God took back the voice he lent to me for 57 years. I am learning to use an implanted silicone valve – a voice prosthesis. I can speak only quietly. I can just be heard if the room is otherwise quiet.

My wife, Brenda, and I are adjusting to new levels of communication between ourselves. We still face daily changes in our roles at work, in socialising and for recreation. It is a steep learning curve. There are frequent challenges with my coughing, breathing, swallowing, and speaking! We cry together. We wonder about the future together. We enjoy making the most of the present day.

We daily thank God for his goodness to us. We discover again and again that God’s provision for our various needs is awesomely sufficient. We have enough – we do not need any more than enough.

We believe God wants me to write rather than preach! (That was not a difficult conclusion to come to!). Most of the articles presently on this site were written before my laryngectomy. I am now working on others, revisiting my filed sermon and study notes, and seeking to listen to what God wants me to make available for encouraging others in their Christian preaching and teaching.

Thank you for sharing with me. I welcome correspondence and will always try to reply in due course.



Colin Salter – April 12th 2007.