

My Faith Story Neva Beasley

I am sharing my faith story today not to ask for sympathy but to tell how my faith got me through a tough spot in my life. Also, I am sharing it because a certain pastor asked me to. I will tell the story of what happened and then share how my faith helped me deal with the situation. Some of you know this story and if you do please zone out for a few minutes and I try to make this brief

This event happened on the Tuesday after Labor Day. I was outside working in the yard and passed out. Mike was inside taking a shower. He came to look for me because our dog was barking furiously. I was taken to the ER at Huntsville Hospital. I underwent a number of tests that morning including an MRI, EKG and blood work. The ER doctor said he couldn't find anything that explained why I had passed out but did see some benign cavernomas on the MRI and wanted me to follow up with a neurologist.

A few days later I met with the neurologist, who thought one of the cavernomas, had leaked or cracked and caused a bleed. He wanted a different MRI one with contrast and an EEG. More tests. I returned to the neurologist in about two weeks for results. The doctor said the MRI results showed that I had a condition called Cerebral Amyloid Angiopathy, CAA. I had never heard of this condition and asked for an explanation. It is a degenerative mental disorder similar to Alzheimer's. It is rare and usually appears later in life. There is no treatment for this condition. I was told to go home and live my life, eat healthy, exercise, and keep my blood pressure under control. (that day it was 113/68) The neurologist also prescribed an anti-seizure medication because I might get a bleed from the benign cavernomas. I was then given a memory test which I did well on considering I was in shock. Anyway

when I went to fill the prescription I was alarmed at the two pages of side effects this medication had. I decided I needed some advice and went to see my family doctor. She told me this was too serious a diagnosis to not seek a second opinion. She didn't know of anyone in Huntsville who specialized in the condition.

She would have her nurse call UAB and Vanderbilt to find out if they had someone studying the condition. She also told me to have Heather look at University of Utah to find out if they had someone. It turned out that Heather found someone at her medical school who was studying amyloids and he had been at UAB before going to Utah. He recommended some doctors at UAB. That doctor asked Heather some questions and then asked if he could see a copy of my MRIs. I had to wait for the appointment at UAB, which was frustrating. The doctor at Utah looked at my data the week before my appointment at UAB. His opinion was I had benign cavernomas but no amyloid deposits. He recommended that I keep the appointment with the doctor at UAB and see if he concurred. The doctor at UAB had a neuro radiologist look at my data and they agreed with the doctor at Utah. So even though those conclusions were not perfect they were much better than CAA. I have a new neurologist in Huntsville and am now under his care.

This time was a drawn out process of tests and wait. I would have had a hard time enduring if it had not been for my husband, faith, family, church and friends. When I was given the diagnosis of CAA, what I refer to as my black cloud diagnosis, I started praying for strength and peace. As I started to process what was happening, the words from Paul kept coming to me. In this world we will have troubles and trials. In all situations, to be at peace. Cast your burdens on Jesus. One of my Beth Moore devotionals at the time said if the Lord leads you to a

situation he will lead you through it. Pastor Rosemary sent me devotionals on patience and others from the church sent uplifting ones. I was on the Thursday morning prayer list. I had family and friends praying for me. The emails, phone calls and cards from the people here at church provided comfort, support, hope and strength. I knew I had folks I could depend on.

I listened to a lot of Christian music to keep from worrying. The radio in my car was tuned to WAAY FM and at home to WJIA. If you could have crawled inside my head you would have heard If the Healing Doesn't Come, Amazing Grace, How Great Thou Art and What a Friend We Have in Jesus.

One of the side effects of the medication was sleep disruption. I was awake from 1am to 4am most nights. My way of dealing with those time were to say the 23rd Psalm and the Lord's Prayer over and over again. I found that if I did I could go back to sleep without worrying about who was going to take care of my family and if I was going to be a burden.

The final diagnosis from the medical doctors is that I have 7 benign cavernomas, which are abnormalities of the blood vessels in the brain. I have to remain on the anti-seizure medication, which I really dislike. I need to exercise, eat healthy, keep my blood pressure low, no aspirin, no anti-inflammatories, no blood thinners and no alcohol.

My prescription for times when something unexpected comes at you from out of the blue: Pray, let God handle the problem, when it is over be thankful and praise his name. Live your life. I thank you for being my church family, my friends and for listening to this story.