

Update #146 – aka “V for VICTORY”

There is a song playing in my head that goes *“Country roads, take me home, To the place I belong West Virginia, mountain mamma...”* but home is not West Virginia...or even Monterey Park. My ultimate home is HEAVEN.

Why am I talking about this? Well, this past week has NOT been easy. I was admitted back to the hospital last Thursday and currently still in the hospital over at City of Hope. My health condition taken a down turn. The recent PET scan revealed more spreading in the liver area plus also in my kidneys too.

Ruby & I met with my oncologist with the next plan of action, but in the end decided it was best to just STOP with treatment all together at this point. Yes, STOP the process of going further...and trust in the LORD the rest of the way...this last portion of the journey.

Please note we are at PEACE with the decision.

Remember my first update way back in February 2015? I talked about movie sequels and how a sequel is normally not as good as the original movie, but then there are some exceptions where the sequel is way, way better than the original like “Superman 2”, “Aliens”, and “Star Wars – The Empire Strikes Back”.

Carrying this “cross” for the past couple of years has taught me many things, many spiritual insights/lessons, but one insight comes to mind...actually a particular scene from Star Wars – “The Empire Strikes Back” (best sequel ever). It will take me some time to build the story for you so bear with me.

The scene begins where Luke Skywalker is training with Master Yoda in the swamps of Dagobah. Yoda is teaching him about the Force, concentration, and focus, when Luke’s X-Wing he’d crash landed into the swamp starts sinking further into the swamp. As R2D2 “chimes & beeps”, Luke loses focus on his training and drops the stones Yoda was having him lift with the Force. Looking at his X-Wing that has sunk almost entirely beneath the surface...Luke says: “No, we’ll never get it out now!”

Yoda: “So certain are you. Always with you it cannot be done. Hear you nothing that I say?”

Luke: “Master, moving stones around is one thing, but this is totally different!”

Yoda: “No. No different! Only different in your mind. You must unlearn what you have learned”

Luke: *sighs* “Alright, I’ll give it a try.”

Yoda: “No. Try not. Do. Or do not. There is no try.”

Luke sighs in frustration, and tries to lift the X-Wing out of the swamp using the Force, and fails. He tells Yoda: “I can’t, it’s too BIG!”

Yoda: "Size matters not. Look at me; judge me by my size do you? Hmm? And well you should not. For my ally is the Force, and a powerful ally it is. Life creates it, makes it grow. It's energy, surrounds us, and binds us. Luminous beings are we! Not this crude matter. You must feel the Force around you. Between you, me, the tree, the rock, everywhere. Yes, even between land, and the ship."

Luke stands up to leave and says: "You want the impossible." As Luke walks off, Yoda closes his eyes and reaches out to the X-Wing through the Force. R2D2 starts chiming and beeping excitedly as the X-Wing, floats up out of the swamp, and to a very surprised Luke. Luke turns to Yoda saying: "I don't believe it!"

Master Yoda closes the scene and says with disappointment: "That is why you fail."

Here's the YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7YkbgvRMpW0>

Where do I even start? There are many spiritual lessons I can draw from this one scene, but I will just focus on one. Yoda says the only difference is in our mind and how we approach things. This was the lesson I learned early on. I may not be able to control the circumstance/situation, but I can control how I choose to react to it...and begin the journey to see things from God's point of view (best definition of faith ever).

When cancer resurfaced, God spoke (clearly & loudly) and reminded me to keep my eyes on Him. I admit it was not easy at times and I stumbled along the way and needed some reminders, but by God's grace I never lost sight of Christ.

When you know how the story will turn out in the end, you live your life differently. King David discovered this when he said in 2 Samuel 22:25 (MSG), "God rewrote the text of my life when I opened the book of my heart to his eye."

Allow me to say it again with another verse. Look at Ephesians 1:11-12 (MSG), it says, "It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, He had his eyes on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose He is working out in everything and everyone."

Jeremiah 17:7-8 (New Century Version)

But the person who trusts in the LORD **will be blessed**.

The LORD will show him that he **can be trusted**.

He will be strong, like a tree planted near water
that sends its roots by a stream.

It is not afraid when the days are hot;
its leaves are always green.

It does not worry in a year when no rain comes;
it always produces fruit.

This passage from Jeremiah sums up the journey quite nicely. Do you agree? Here's the best thing about this passage. This promise is not for me, but for all of us...all of us "TRUE BELIEVERS".

This sequel is certainly way better, right? Because in the end, I am much stronger in Christ (and I hope you are stronger too for coming along with me on this amazing journey).

I will leave the "cancer" in my physical body and will jump ship my "GLORIFIED BODY"...the one with the abs of steel...and where I'm at least 6 feet tall. I can't wait to taste sweets again. I got dibs on "Root Beer Floats" in Heaven!

In all seriousness, I want to see as many as you with me in HEAVEN. There is only ONE way though...you must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It must be a genuine step of FAITH on YOUR PART....and yet it is simple as the ABC's to start. You just have to say, "Yes, Lord, I believe in YOU!"

The last lesson I taught was about David in 2 Samuel where technically he had the "keys" to the Kingdom of Israel with the death of King Saul. Can you imagine if you were in David's shoes? It was a long wait...a very long wait. Do you know what David did? He sought the LORD for guidance! Amazing! David could have just stormed the castle and say, "All this is MINE!", but he sought the LORD in prayer with this next step.

I will do the same now in this next phase. I will seek the LORD.

All GLORY to God! (this is where I drop the mic)

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'TB' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

aka "fearless" amoeba