



Newsletter – April 2010

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Blessed by Jeremiah

When I first heard about Jeremiah's conception, my heart was filled with joy for his family. So were the other member moms from our "Moms' Prayer Group".

Daphne, Jeremiah's mom, who is also my children's piano teacher, shared with me about how her husband Lionel was absolutely positive that their baby was going to be a boy. He had a name in mind for him, Jeremiah. "Couldn't it be a girl?"....I asked, knowing how much Daphne would have wanted a girl, for like me, she has 2 boys. She replied that from past experience, Lionel has been always right about the sex of their babies.

A month later, during our prayer meeting, Daphne was troubled; the doctor had detected some abnormalities in Jeremiah and she had to go for further medical tests to confirm. The tests revealed that Jeremiah had "Edward's Syndrome", a rare genetic chromosomal disorder. The moms in my prayers group, have heard of most of the special needs in children, such Down's Syndrome, ADHD, AHD, Sensory Integration Dysfunction, dyspraxia, dyslexia, dycalculia, but Edward's Syndrome is something that we are hearing of for the first time.

My son Joel came back from Daphne's house after his piano lesson and asked me if Edward's Syndrome is worse than Down's Syndrome. We have met children with Down's Syndrome.. The Down's Syndrome Association office at Bishan is directly opposite the Dyslexic Association of Singapore Bishan Centre where my eldest son goes for his program. While waiting for my son, I have often had this uncharitable relief in my heart that being dyslexic is not as bad as having Down's Syndrome. Well, depending on how one compare the illnesses, Down's Syndrome children can live for many years, often into adulthood. And I believe that they can live just as fulfilling a life as any other normal person. Edward's Syndrome kids do not survive very long outside the womb. Most died in the womb.

Joel became concerned for Jeremiah. During our nightly prayers, he started praying for Jeremiah to be healed. During our pilgrimage to France in October last year, we visited Lourdes for 3 days. We went for the Lourdes bath which was widely believed by pilgrims to have healing powers. As it was at the end of autumn, the water was cold, at around 10 degree. Joel queued up with my husband and my elder son for the bath. Despite the cold, he immersed his whole body in the water for a few seconds before emerging from it chattering from the cold. He later shared with me that he did it for Jeremiah's physical healing. He even joked that for the cold he had to endure, God had better answer his prayer. It was a childish demand, but nevertheless, we are all often very childish in our demands when we prayed to our Father. I reflected upon his light-hearted remark. I explained to Joel that as much as we

want a miracle, God has His own plans. Even if God takes Jeremiah away, it does not mean that He did not answer his (Joel's) prayer. He just answered it in a manner that He deemed best for Jeremiah and for all of us.

God did not answer Joel's prayer in the way that he had hoped for. Jeremiah died in his mother's womb on 25 January this year, at 33 weeks. When Joel came back from school, I quietly broke the news to him. Surprisingly, he was cheerful about it and remarked that at least he can stop praying for Jeremiah, now that the latter is in heaven, and that Jeremiah should be the one praying for him instead.

Jeremiah was made for a reason and for a purpose that we cannot fully comprehend. His life in the womb, to some, may have caused his family much anxieties and painful tears initially. Why did God allow a child who is incomplete to be conceived and then take away that very life which He created?

The initial anxiety for him has turned his family and the community who supports them into one of hope, of trust in God, and later on, united in acceptance of God's will. We witnessed the increase in faith in his family, in the many faith communities his parents are with.

Though we have never set our eyes on Jeremiah's face, his name has become a familiar sound on our lips. Though we have never held him in our arms, his wretched body has made us whole, as we journey with his family as a community of Christ, supporting one another with prayers, fasting, and love. His fleeting presence amongst us blessed us all. Such is the miracle we witnessed in this journey.

Here is his father's blog in this painful journey of hope and love. His last blog is touchingly beautiful, and it shows the wonders of the change in his father's life. <http://jeremiahmyman.blogspot.com>

Written Alone Beside Him 2 February

Daddy is sitting with you Jeremiah, I am beside you. I had promised that each day we would take up arms of Love for you. That was the same day some had thought it better you didn't live. We loved you from the day we knew you in Ma-Ma womb. We had been with you to the very end. You are with your true Father now. Your time with us is very special, it has blessed many lives. Daddy had asked Our Lord for a miracle but Our Lord knows us better; he has given me my deepest desire. The desire that my sons would walk the path of Jesus and their lives will be a blessing to others. I have been praying for this holiness in each of you, since the day your brother Joshua was born. You are the first in our family to receive this holiness; Our Lord has made you sinless. In your short life, His Grace has protected you and passed through you to others. You are a blessing and our joy is in this.

Mummy is a very strong woman. You can be very proud of her as I am, she had carried you with so much love and hope, every movement of yours made her excited. Daddy had been very concern about her and at times had unnecessarily worried about her. But Our Lord had taught Daddy to give everything to Him and to live with everything for Him. During this time with you, I have love and cherish your mummy even more, it is because of the way she had loved you and felt about you. Daddy loves her very deeply and she loves daddy deeply.

Your brothers were busy playing while you were busy in the womb. But that is very thing that

makes them so special; it is the way they play, with each other that bring so much joy to mummy and daddy. We had asked so many times of The Lord, to give you this time of playful joy with them. I believe then, that you would have enjoyed yourself very much with them. Your brothers have brought us a deeper love for you. It is the way they are, that has taught us, how much we can love our sons. Your brother Joshua cried when I told him what happen at the hospital. You take care of them, now that you are with Our Heavenly Father.

I have gotten you a good god-father, god-pa Francis has been with you and he has been with us, above all times, on the morning you left us. So then please also take care of him. With us are many friends who cares for the family, at your life time, they have prayed and fasted for you. We have greatly felt love from them, now it is you who is to praying for us.

It is written in the Talmud – Save one life, save the world. Daddy had sought from the Lord to save your life; amazingly it is daddy's life Our Lord had saved again. Daddy has been given a deeper love, a love that can love in sorrow. I have cried before meeting you. I was mournful before seeing you. I walk now joyful, I stand now bravely, and I sit now gratefully. – I have a Saint today with me.

We will see you soon; there is another reason, to be ready in meeting Our Lord for Eternity. Farwell and see you soon, we love you, Jeremiah, my little one.

Christian Reflection:

When we pray, do we pray for God's will to be done?

How do we discern what is God's will?

When our prayers are not answered in the way we want them to, do we feel angry with God for not listening?

Do we see the special needs people around us as a liability to society?

How do you see them?

.....by Joanna Png