



CANCER

Stuff We Don't Talk About
(But Probably Should) – Part 3
Senior Pastor Keith Stewart
May 14, 2023

Perhaps no other word in the English language is as feared as the word Cancer. When we hear the word cancer, immediately we associate it with other words like pain, suffering, disfigurement, and perhaps even death. Just how likely is it that you or someone you love will face a cancer diagnosis? Statistics tell us 1 in 3 people in this country will be diagnosed with some sort of cancer in their lifetime. Which means the likelihood that you or someone you love will be given a cancer diagnosis is extremely high. What do you do when that statistic is you? How do you support friends and loved ones through this process? And where is God in all of this? This Sunday, we discover the answer to those questions and many more.

"Cancer is as individual as the person who has it." –
Dr. Joyce Ohm, Department of Cancer Genetics and
Genomics at Roswell Park



“We beat cancer here every day. Every day patients survive who would not have survived even five years ago. Every day patients are being cured with new advances that are coming along the line.” – Dr. Joyce Ohm, Department of Cancer Genetics and Genomics at Roswell Park

Cancer is not a death sentence. It's an illness.

1 out of 3 people listening to me right now will be diagnosed with some type of cancer in their lifetime.

1. THE BIG “C” AND WHAT IT BRINGS

❑ Loss of friends

“When you find people who not only tolerate your quirks but celebrate them with glad cries of ‘Me, too!’ be sure to cherish them. Because those weirdoes are your tribe.” - Pinterest

“Treat them as a person with an illness, not an ill person.” - Sheehan D. Fisher, PhD

❑ Loss of control

“God grant me the serenity
To accept the things that I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.
Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time,
Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace,



Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is and not as I would have it.

Trusting that you will make all things right
If I surrender to Your will,
So that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
And supremely happy with You forever,
in the next. Amen.”

❑ Loss of certainty

“When we are no longer able to change a situation -
we are challenged to change ourselves.”
- Viktor Frankl

“Mom stopped washing her hair, brushing her teeth,
shaving her legs. It was as though Mom crawled into
bed and never came out again. After about a year,
my father left my mom, and everything in my life
changed forever.” – Christine Clifford

“My family allowed humor to come back into my life.
And I picked it up and ran with it!” - Christine Clifford

“When people hear you have cancer, their reaction is
to pull away. Because they don't know what to say—
and they don't want to say the wrong thing—they
end up saying nothing. But the humor of my
cartoons put people at ease and opened the door to
the relationships I so desperately needed.”
- Christine Clifford

❑ Loss of resources



She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had... Mark 5:26

"Health care costs are the #1 cause of bankruptcy for America's families." – American Bankruptcy Institute

"62% of the two million personal bankruptcies filed each year are the result of medical debt." – American Bankruptcy Institute

8.9% of these people could not afford to pay anything towards the medical debts.

11 million ran up high interest credit card debt to pay their medical debts.

90% of those who had homes took out a second mortgage on their homes to pay their medical debt.

2. SURVIVOR SECRETS

- Live in reality.
- Keep hope alive.

There is a hope that does not disappoint.
Romans 5:5

Learned Optimism by Dr. Martin Seligman



“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, ‘I will try again tomorrow.’” -Mary Anne Radmacher

Psalm 6, 10, 13, 31, 32, 77, 88, 119

❑ Be proactive, not passive.

Love, Medicine, and Miracles by Dr. Bernie Siegel

“My patients say that being handed a death sentence forced them to learn how to live. I learned that no matter how much time we think we have, what we do with it is all that matters.”

- Dr. Bernie Siegel, Love, Medicine, and Miracles

❑ Find something to live for.

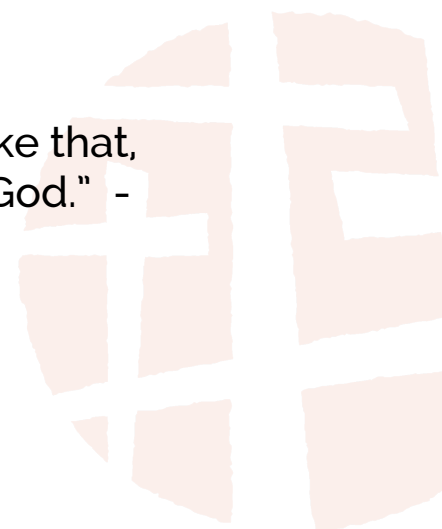
“I choose to have a positive attitude through this and continue to live a normal, active life.” – Amy Kuelbs

Cancer: 50 Essential Things to Do by Greg Anderson

3. WHERE IS GOD IN ALL OF THIS?

❑ A faith that struggles

“When you start reaching for puny answers like that, it dehumanizes those who suffer and insults God.” - Pastor Jim Conway



"I couldn't explain why Becki had to lose her leg, but I knew the answers being given weren't right." –
Pastor Jim Conway

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.
John 14.9

...bent over and was unable to stand up straight.
Luke 13.11

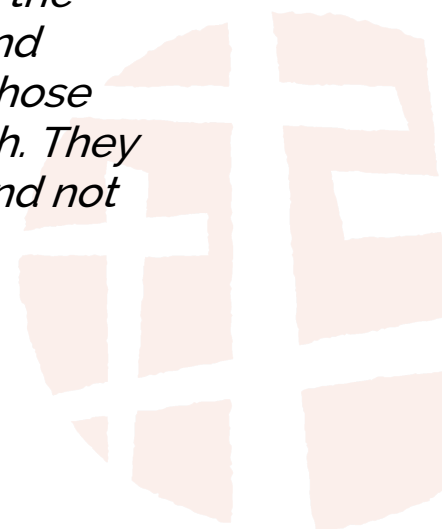
...healing all who were oppressed by the devil.
Acts 10.38

...to destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3.8

As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." John 9.1-3

❑ A faith that keeps on walking

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary and young men stumble and fall, but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.
Isaiah 40.29-31



“There are three stages of life. Sometimes we mount up with wings as an eagle and fly. We’re on top of the world. Sometimes we run, and we don’t grow weary. We just go through the routine. Sometimes it’s all we can do to walk and not faint, and I need your prayers and your encouragement.”
– Dr. John Claypool

CANCER RESOURCES

WEBSITES

www.acor.org

Association of Cancer Online Resources

www.gildasclub.org

Great place in Dallas for anyone with cancer or a family member.

www.candlelighters.org

www.wish.org

For kids with a life-threatening illness (does not have to be terminal-I say this because the make a wish foundation used to be for kids who were dying).

BOOKS FOR KIDS OR PARENTS OF KIDS WITH CANCER

Can order these through Candlelighters and if you have a child with Cancer, they will send them to you for free, just call them.



- Chemo, Crazyness and Comfort - My Book About Childhood Cancer, Nancy Keene and Trevor Romain (6 and older)
- The Amazing Hannah (2 and older)
- I Had a Tumor It Wasn't a Rumor (4 and older)
- Childhood Cancer - A Parent's Guide to Solid Tumors, Janes-Hodder and Keene
- I Want to Grow Hair, I Want to Grow Up, I Want to Go to Boise, Erma Bombeck

BOOKS FOR ADULTS WITH CANCER

- Surviving Cancer by Dee Simmons
- When Your Friend Gets Cancer by Amy Harwell
- Is God to Blame? Beyond Pat Answers to the Problem of Suffering by Gregory A. Boyd
- Love, Medicine, and Miracles by Dr. Bernie Siegel
- Peace, Love and Healing by Dr. Bernie Siegel
- How to Live Between Office Visits by Dr. Bernie Siegel
- Cancer: 50 Essential Things to Do by Greg Anderson



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When people don't know what to say, they often withdraw in silence rather than say the wrong thing. This tends to feed the sense of alienation in the person who is suffering. What are some things you could say to someone just diagnosed with cancer or during treatment? What are some things you should never say? Have you ever had someone say something to you in the midst of a health, family or personal crisis that was hurtful, insensitive, or just wrong? Describe what that experience was like? What do you wish would have happened instead?

2. As Pastor Keith shared in the first part of the message, a diagnosis and protracted battle with cancer brings some other unexpected losses. It's important for us to talk about them or else they can catch us off-guard and unprepared. If you or someone you love has walked this path, which of the following did you experience? How did it affect you? What advice would you give to others facing these losses?

- Loss of friends
- Loss of control
- Loss of certainty
- Loss of resources

3. When we learn from the experience of others, we find there are some essential survival skills that can help us regardless of whether we're dealing with cancer, chronic illness, or some other disease. Here are the four essentials the message addressed:



- Live in reality
- Keep hope alive
- Be proactive, not passive
- Find something to live for

What did you find most helpful? What would be or has been your biggest struggle and why? What other helpful attitudes or behaviors have you noticed in those who were suffering that served them well?

4. Sometimes, whether we mean to imply it or not, God gets blamed for giving people cancer. Pastor Keith pointed out how this conclusion is not supported in Scripture, yet the thinking persists even to this day. Have you ever encountered this kind of thinking? When people wonder why this is happening to them, what would you say?

5. Without a doubt, the final Bible passage from Isaiah 40.29-31 is one that Pastor Keith has addressed and explained before, but it has powerful implications for those who are suffering. We so often pray for deliverance and healing, which is our right to ask. But sometimes the miracle we receive is the supernatural ability to endure which is a powerful form of supernatural enablement. It's hard to keep on walking when everything within us would like to give up. But far more people experience this sort of miracle than the type that is instantaneous deliverance. Have you ever experienced God's provision to keep on walking through something truly challenging, heartbreaking, or painful? What was that experience like? How would you encourage others going through something similar?

