

The Descent and Answered Prayer

And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. (Isaiah 65:24)

Perhaps if we prayed with simple faith more like children, we would experience more answered prayer.

I have told this story many times since it happened, because of its uniqueness and direct answer. I do not know of a time before or since where the act of kneeling in prayer, was indeed the answer to prayer.

This incident took place during our mission term in Russia in about 2006–2007. At the time we were living on the fifth or sixth floor of an old soviet apartment building in the city of Samara. The apartment was really nice and comfortable, albeit on the small side for our American way of life. However, it was perfectly suited for our little family, and we enjoyed our time there. We had two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen and bathroom, all very nice; we needed nothing more. The rumble of the trams under the window would signal the beginning of the day, while the young people socializing in the courtyard and the old men with their game of dominoes were a common sight at the end. To get to the bottom of the apartment we had a slightly less than trustworthy elevator that rattled and bumped, as well as a good solid set of stairs next to it. When our friends were over, we would often race to see if the ones going down the stairs would beat the ones riding the elevator; which wasn't too difficult if all went well and you did not stumble. Accidents were not even considered a possibility in the exhilaration of the race. The design of the stairs made it possible to run, skipping steps, hit the landing, swing around by holding the handrail for the next descent. When you got to the next landing you would repeat the grab, swing, changing directions heading for the next landing. By skipping two to three steps on each run of stairs it did not take long to descend the three meters between each floor.

One Saturday night my wife was preparing to have company over on Sunday and needed something from the store. So, at a few minutes before eleven she asked if I could go to the little store around the corner from our apartment to get something for the meal. This was not a problem, or really unusual, the store was open till midnight. I donned my winter boots and coat and headed out the door. For some reason, the stair dash seemed more favorable than the little elevator, so I began my descent. For some reason for which I have no recollection, I chose to use the racing method, and why at that hour, I will never know. The first and second flight of stairs went without a hitch. However, winter boots are not the best racing shoes in the world, and on one of the lower landings, the heel of my boot caught the last step instead of landing firmly on the landing as it was supposed to. I ended up in a heap, with a searing pain in my ankle. I stood up, or attempted to at least, but I could not put any weight on my left foot. I pushed the button on the elevator and rode it back up to our apartment. My wife was alarmed at the white-faced husband who rang the doorbell so soon after his departure. For the time being, the need from the grocery store was of little importance; it could wait till the next day. For now, what were we to do with my ankle. Was it fractured, or dislocated? We did not know. If I did not put weight on it, the pain was manageable so we decided to see what the next day would bring. Neither of us wanted to go to a doctor, neither did we know where to go.

Thinking of it now, it seems rather foolish, and careless to run that set of stairs, especially at that time of the day. But, I was younger back then, and perhaps a little more agile. The next morning, a call to our translator, provided the promise of an old set of her husband's crutches to hobble around on. I remember sitting there in our Sunday morning church service with my leg stretched out on a chair in front of me; the newly acquired crutches leaning against the wall in the back of the room.

I remember little of what happened the rest of that morning, or what we did for dinner that day. My painful ankle had rerouted the original plans a little and the question still remained what I was to do with it. I had

a fear of the hospitals and doctors in that country, mostly because I was unsure about how the system worked and where to go.

I am sure we had already been praying about it, but I decided I would ask the Lord to heal me. I when to the little bathroom there to pray all alone. I knelt there by the hot water towel rack and began to pray. Sometime during my prayer, I relaxed and sat down on the heels of my feet. As I did so, there was a sudden pop in my ankle, as it slipped back into place. Now I do not remember finishing my prayer, but I got up and the pain was gone and I could walk. It remained tender for a time, but the Lord had healed my foot through the act of kneeling in prayer! It was a miracle!

I have never discussed this with a medical professional, but I imagine when I twisted it, it somehow slipped out of joint. By placing my weight on my heel, while the top of my foot was parallel with the floor, it slipped back in place. Perhaps if I had gone to the doctor, he would have performed a similar procedure, albeit without kneeling in prayer.

We thanked the Lord for His amazing healing! I have never forgotten this, and I don't believe I ever will, how the act of kneeling in prayer was an answer to the prayer I prayed.

The Unlikely Writer

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