

## **Weekly Update from Pastor Jim – Weekend of September 10-11, 2016**

Dear Members of St. John,

This week I started my third round of chemo. I have requested that I be permitted to put encouraging messages around **their** little bottles of water for the chemo patients. It has to get approved by the “higher ups,” so I have not received the Okay yet. When I mentioned what St. John people are doing for me with the water bottles, my social worker was surprised and thought that would be a great idea for the chemo patients. I will let you know what happens.

I received some tests results last week that are quite positive, because it measures the M protein in my system. A normal person has between 1-24 of those M proteins and I had 743. Cancer multiplies good cells to the point of causing a problem. Now you might think that’s bad, but just wait, the same test given at the end of June showed I had 1,750 M proteins in my system. So the last two round of chemo has killed off more than half. Hopefully the next two rounds will do the same thing, so that I can enter transplant in as good a shape as possible.

Also last week, Andrea and I went to the Social Security Administration Office in Lakewood to get a bunch of questions answered. After the gentleman finished with our questions, he asked me if I read the Bible. I said, “Yes.” He then went on to give me two very good web sites on studying the Bible. I have checked them out. I then asked him how he could talk about the Bible while working in a government office. He said he has to do on the sly. I then shared with him that I am a Pastor and that his secret is safe with me. Both Andrea and I were blown away as to how God works and that He even gets His Word out in governmental offices. What an amazing God we have. By the way the web sites are LSM.org and BFA.org. Check them out.

Please hear the great appreciation I have for all your cards, well-wishes, encouraging messages on water bottles and especially your continued prayers. God is continually reminding me that He is in charge and that all these procedures will work for my good. Remember, you can call me at 216-299-4869 any time. If I am laying down, I turn my phone off, so don’t worry about any interruptions.

Love and miss you all very much, Pastor Jim

## **Weekly Update from Pastor Jim – Weekend of September 17-18, 2016**

Dear Members of St. John,

This week I continue with Chemo, round three, my second injection of three. So far the side effects have been minimal for which I give thanks to our Lord. I also give thanks for your many prayers and well-wishes. You may not fully understand how important those prayers of yours really are. But let me tell you, they mean the world to me and they are the reason I am proceeding through these Chemo treatments so well. Thank you very, very much.

In my devotions this week, I was reminded that when we commit a problem or difficulty to the Lord in prayer, we have released that problem or difficulty into the Lord’s hands, to handle it on our behalf. I know it is difficult to release our concerns to the Lord, without again picking them up after our prayer time. But if we truly give them to the Lord, and since He can handle them so much better than us, we have to continually remind ourselves when we again think about that problem or difficulty, that it is in the Lord’s hands and we don’t have to worry or stew over that.

That’s why Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. My peace I give you, not the kind of peace that the world gives” (John 14:27). Back when I started this new round of chemo, I prayed that if the Lord would grant me little side effects, I would know that He was directing my affairs. Well, guess what? The Lord is directing all these treatments to bring about the best for me. I have released those concerns into the Lord’s hands and He is taking good care of it all. What peace I have from our Lord Jesus! We must always remember that we are creature, He is Creator; we are the sheep but He is the Shepherd; we are the subject and He is the King; we are the clay, while He is the Potter. Letting God have His way with us and our lives, but God has promised that whatever comes in our lives, it is GOOD. We can have the real PEACE that only Jesus can give.

Peace be with each and every one of you!

Loving and missing you, Pastor Jim

## **Weekly Update from Pastor Jim – Weekend of September 24-25, 2016**

Dear Members of St. John,

This week I finished round three of chemo with my third injection on Tuesday. So far, I have tolerated this chemo drug well. Praise the Lord. I believe the reason for that is because of all the prayers that the people of St. John have lifted up on my behalf. The Lord has been very gracious and in the process, my faith has grown. I will enjoy a week off and then begin my final round of chemo. This process has been long and draining, but through it all, God continually reminds me of His presence and His blessings.

I was sent a cute joke that was included in one of the get well cards I received. It goes like this... During a bank robbery, the robber's mask falls off. He puts it back on, turns to the man next to him and asks, "Did you see my face?" The customer says, "Yes, I did." The robber shoots him. He then turns to a woman and asked, "How about you?" She says, "No, but my husband did." I have learned that during the trials of one's life, humor is a very important part of dealing with life. Fortunately, I have not lost my humor and I thank God that many of you have not either.

While I don't have specific details yet, I do know that after my final round of chemo, I will have to go downtown to the Cleveland Clinic where they will harvest my stem cells. After they have enough, they clean them up and fortify them somehow and then freeze them. After that they will schedule me for transplant. According to the doctors, I will be in the Cleveland Clinic for 3-4 weeks. I will get a massive dose of chemo to kill all the cancer and my bone marrow. I will lose my hair and may be pretty sick for a couple of days. When they deem the right time, they will give me my own stem cells back to grow new and hopefully healthy and cancer free bone marrow. So as you can see I have several hurdles to cross yet. But with your prayers and support and God's direction things will work for my good.

God is continually reminding me that He is in charge and that all these procedures will work for my good. Remember, you can call me at 216-299-4869 any time. If I am laying down, I turn my phone off, so don't worry about any interruptions.

Love and miss you all very much, Pastor Jim

## **Weekly Update from Pastor Jim – Weekend of October 1-2, 2016**

Dear Members of St. John,

I went to my support group meeting the other night. Tom, a member of the group who also had gone through the treatment of myeloma, brought in his booklets and schedule of what all he had to do before, during and after transplant. While I have one more chemo round to go, this being my week off, Tom told me that the first thing I will have to go through is lots of tests, blood tests of course, but also heart, lung, kidney and a full body X-ray to see what condition my bones are in. My doctor told me not to be surprised if some of my bones look like Swiss cheese, with several holes in them. I will also have to undergo another bone marrow test, where they drill into my hip bone. The first time I had that, it was so painful, that I said the next time they will have to put me out for that test.

After the week long testing, they will schedule me to harvest my stem cells. They will insert a port where they will both draw out blood, separate the stem cells from the blood and then return the other portion of blood back into me. There may be several days of this harvesting depending on how fast they can collect the stem cells. After the harvesting is complete, they will schedule me for transplant. I will be in the Cleveland Clinic for 3-4 weeks. They will give me a massive dose of chemo to kill everything, cancer cells, bone marrow and hair. Hopefully I will not be terribly sick after that, but that is a possibility. After that is complete, they will infuse my stem cells back into me to hopefully grow new, healthy and cancer free bone marrow. The length of stay in the clinic will depend on how fast I grow the new bone marrow.

I would ask each of you to begin **"praying me up"** for this next big procedure. I have several hurdles to get over and with your support, and especially prayer, I am positive the Lord will direct this next procedure for my good. Thank you again for your continued support and encouragement. You are really the reason I have fared so well along with the blessings and support of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Love you all very much and miss you even more. Pastor Jim

