

Weekly Health Update from Pastor Jim – Weekend of September 15 & 16, 2018

Dear Friends and Family:

This is my week off chemo so I am doing well. We drove to Detroit for a funeral of one of the old neighbors on Russell St. where Andrea grew up. It was good to see everyone again, just not in these circumstances. Then because there was some big conference going in Novi and Livonia, there was not a hotel room to be had, so we drove back to Cleveland. Long day, but glad to be home. Next week I do labs and the following week my doctor's appointment. No news is "good" news, right.

Hope is a powerful motivator. It's what drives us to try again. It's what keeps us from sinking under the weight of adversity. Hope keeps us positive, fuels our joy and helps us reach for our dreams with gusto. Hope matters. And while many think hope is nothing more than wishful thinking, Christian hope means *confident expectation*. It's believing in the possibility, that we have a God of the impossibles.

It takes hard-won grit and grace to hold on to hope in this world. Grit, because sometimes we'd rather give up than white-knuckle it. Aren't there moments it would just be easier to throw in the towel? Holding on to hope is just plain hard — no matter how you slice it. I had a face book chat with a friend who received word from her doctor that she will not get any better. Talk about a "hope-busting" word. Besides all that our cancer is on the inside, and people always say how good I look. I simply respond by saying, "Appearance isn't everything." I hope and pray I will attain remission, but there is a reality that I may never will. So, how do I hold on to hope.

But listen in ... if we're going to live authentic lives — lives true to who we were made to be — then we need to remember hope is already part of our DNA. Because we're created in God's image, hope is already part of our blueprint. So, while it can be challenging to grab onto hope and hold on, especially when life feels overwhelming, we can absolutely do it. *We must do it*. Friend, holding on to hope is part of what makes you, well, *you*. And it's a beautiful benefit of being a Jesus-friend.

Romans 15:13 shows us hope is a powerful force: "I pray that God, the source of all hope, will infuse your lives with an abundance of joy and peace in the midst of your faith so that your hope will overflow through the power of the Holy Spirit."

God created hope to intertwine with every part of life, which is why holding on to it makes all the difference. We may feel the weight of the battle as we face discouragements in life. Breakdown moments will come because we are humans with emotions. But God created you to be a carrier of hope. And that means you can find the grit and grace to hold onto hope when the diagnosis comes, the relationship struggles, the finances dry up or you slide into the passenger seat of life.

We all need to be warriors of hope to the world. Don't worry. It's already in you. Living my life with hope, and I hope you are too.

Pastor Jim