

Miracle in the Park

Charlie Burke

07/01/24

My wife Pam and I had a very special experience Saturday evening during the 5:30 service. I haven't been to a Saturday night service in a very long time. We knew that our former Pastor Bill Shields and Lisa would be there, and we were excited to see them. I felt a sense of peace during the service, maybe because I'm usually focused on worship team activity and all that goes into that. It's hard to feel peace when your guitar is out of tune and the sound system is misbehaving. Without the usual distractions, I was able to participate on a level that I am not accustomed to.

The special experience occurred during communion. I wasn't used to kneeling at the alter rail to receive the communion wafer. The Sunday morning service has us standing. As I knelt, I became aware of the presence of the Holy Spirit. It wasn't earthshattering, I didn't get knocked off a horse or see a miraculous vision of heaven. It was a quiet, blessed assurance, that the Spirit of God was at my side. The feeling of peace was wonderful. As I received the wafer, it was difficult to maintain my composure. Unbeknownst to me, Pam was having the same experience as she knelt there as well.

I need to insert some background here. Several weeks ago, I had an episode on a golf course involving shortness of breath and an irregular heart rhythm. I eventually ended up in the Emergency Room. Since that time, my heart rhythm has stabilized, but I have had this lingering shortness of breath that is very distressing and borderline debilitating! Climbing stairs became brutal and even walking left me winded. I was a little short of breath Saturday night as I walked the short distance from the car to the church.

After church, Pam and I went to Lehman Park to hear some live music. I was a bit anxious about all that walking and how it would probably make breathing difficult, but I was willing to give it a try. We walked about 250 yards down to the lake front and sat for a while, before walking the 250 yards back. As we approached the street it suddenly occurred to me that I had walked all that way without any breathing difficulty! I turned to Pam and said "Hey look....I'm walking and breathing"! I got so excited that I started to jump and dance in the street, giving God the glory for this wonderful feeling of joy. As I turned to Pam, I noticed she was crying. "What's wrong honey"? She looked at me with tears in her eyes and said: "During communion, I asked God to restore your body and I just watched Him do it"! I wrapped my arms around her, and we felt God's presence all over us. What a sight it must have been for anybody passing by, to see this old couple embracing in public, one laughing and one crying, in the middle of downtown Lake Villa.

Some may say I experienced a "spontaneous recovery". Pam and I know better. God reached down from heaven and touched our lives at that moment. It was His way of letting us know He heard the simple prayer of a loving wife kneeling at an alter during a communion service and showered us with His love. It is my prayer that all of you reading this may experience that same love as you go through this week. Be assured that our Father is always ready to reveal His love for you, sometimes in church, sometimes in the park, and sometimes when you least expect it.

