

## Life

### ... and when you are about to lose it.

Most of you know this. I am normally really weird. But my weirdness took a twist. I was feeling kind of sick for a few days and it kept getting worse. Yep, turned out to be the new C, Covid, the old C being cancer, though I've danced with that a few times. This time was a bit different. For four days I was really really sick. Something inside me told me this was the worst I'd ever felt. And I never get those kinds of feelings where I felt my body slipping away. In fact, the last day, (Not THAT last day), I was so sick it felt like it might be mine. Then, my guardian Angel whispered in my ear, call emergency.

And so I did.

Those beautiful, wonderful people who run emergency units we're at the house in less than five minutes. They could not have been more concerned or kind, reassuring me along the way constantly all the way, "We're almost there Mr. Suttman."

They found me sitting in a chair in the kitchen, gasping for breath. The only bodily movement I could do, was to try and breathe. The guys came in, took one look at me, and asked me if I if I could walk to the ambulance. I whispered "No, I can't walk". So they picked me up and put me in a special chair. If I was lucid, I'd have noticed that the ambulance backed right up to a special entrance to emergency at the hospital and they skipped all the hoopla and I found myself in an emergency room almost instantly. In minutes my landlady was by my side. Side note: No one ever has treated me with such kindness and respect than she. We got there at noon, and I finally got her to go home at one in the morning. Seeing her face the next morning convinced me again, the caretaker or the watcher has the worst job of all.

I'll skip all the rigamarole that I went through that day, mostly because I don't remember most of it. But I'll always remember what the emergency room surgeon said to me in the next morning. "Clem, If you waited another twelve hours you wouldn't be with us today."

You know throughout the whole process I did not have any fear. I had extreme confidence in two things. My Lord and my God and the marvelous people who were helping me out. (I also said four thousand six hundred and twenty one Hail Mary's or thereabouts.) I think I've told you before but I lost my fear of death somewhere in my mid-thirties when the plane I was on suddenly had to dump its fuel and make for an emergency landing at Dallas Fort Worth airport. Yeah, we had to do the old tuck and brace thing. But I knew I'd lived my life in such a way, done everything I could for my wife and my children, knew they were financially secure, but most of all I was intrenched in a deep spiritual life that began a decade before.

I remember many episodes when I could have died, should have died, but was saved by early detection by physicians who knew what they were doing. And so I learned to do what I was told, made sure I hit my every three month checkups. I don't want to say I sailed through all those waters, but I kind of did.

(over)

This one was different. I did almost die. Really. And the only thing I fear, which is absolutely nothing to fear at all but rejoice over, is my gratitude grew exponentially. So the 'fear thing' is just another moment of acknowledging and being in awe of the magnificence of our Lord and Master, and the fear of our God. The people who took care of me in the hospital we're nothing short of saints. From the guy who saved my life to all the various nurses working under extreme conditions, not paid enough, not treated very well by the institution they work for, and yet they were cheery, they were helpful, they were the best people I've ever met. Their job, and they knew it, was to care for others.

And that they did in spectacular fashion.

My Dad used to say, "An ounce of honey draws more flies than a barrel of vinegar."

Well, there sure was a lot of honey flowing through that hospital. (But no flies!)

Please know what the people in the medical profession or any service industry are going through. They are overworked, underpaid, in a land where their superiors make maybe a thousand times more than they do. Yet they save lives over and over and over. The least we can do is thank every single one of them we come in contact with. Yes, they saved my life two days ago. For this I will be forever grateful. I will make sure and tell their bosses. I will be kind, I will be grateful, but I'm also gonna slip something in there about what these people go through.

Please know too the power of prayer of all the people who prayed for me. It was every much as critical as the surgeon who saved me. It was as if those prayers became a cloud that I could lay safely on, letting my body float in peace, surrounded by my guardian angels. I think, just based on hazy recollection I must have more than one. I would've worn even one out by the age of twelve.

Life.

Yes, I still have it, the earthbound kind. And it's not like I was never grateful or gracious before. It's just in my nature and the gift given to me by my own father and by our Father and His Son and His most holy and omnipotent and omnipresent Spirit.

As time goes by I may or may not realize the seriousness of the situation I just went through. But I will be eternally grateful for all the people who helped me not just now but all along the way.

Love your God, love your neighbor.

Now that's life.

Clement

PS. Please wear a mask when in the crowds. It's back in a very mean way.