

Tibor & Anita Namenyi



THE PERFECT GIFT

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow,
The sun forbear to shine;
But God, who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.



Kyra 2 years old

THE PERFECT GIFT

**OUR DAUGHTER KYRA'S JOURNEY
FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN**

TIBOR & ANITA NAMENYI

Kyra 2 years old





♦ Kyra 3 years old

♦ Kyra 18 months old

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Namenyi



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
KYRA DEBORAH NAMENYI
OCTOBER 12, 2008 – MARCH 12, 2014

We dedicate this book to our daughters Elise and Brielle and to our other children whom God may bless us with in the future. Our goal for your lives is to know Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Friend. Follow Him in His footsteps, and learn from Him. When you are in great tribulation and feel alone, read this book about your dear sister, who went through so much suffering, but even at such a young age she chose to love God. She was and is our sweet angel, who is “safe in the arms of Jesus.” She promised that she will pray for all of us, so we could go there too. She was so happy to go to Heaven, and she asked us not to cry when she left. She was so close to Jesus, we can all learn from her. She had that “childlike faith” that all of us need. Remember her with love and with joy for she is already there, where we all long to be. The greatest goal for all of us should be to get to Heaven. Do not follow your earthly desires, but “take up your cross” daily and follow Him, Who promised to lead us into eternal life. And there, we will see all our loved ones that passed on before us, who died in the Lord. We love you, and are praying for you,

your parents

“And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in
the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you,
Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye
shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

(Matthew 18:2-3)



Kyra 3 years old



Kyra 4 years old

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FOREWORD

As my wife Anita and I were writing this book in pain and tears, we talked about the title of the book. We had a few different ideas, but, “The Perfect Gift” seemed the best choice for us. We hope that nobody will misunderstand the title. It does not mean that Kyra was the perfect gift, as none of us are perfect. But rather, it means that God always knows exactly what we need at all times, and that’s what he gives us as “perfect gifts”. These trials that we went through may have seemed unbearable at times, but God was always with us, helping us through every day and every moment. Looking back, we can only say that we are thankful for these times, as they led us closer to our Creator.

“...we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts...” (*Romans 5:3-5*)

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (*Romans 8:18*)

This trial was indeed “The Perfect Gift” from God!

Tibi Namenyi

July 2014, San Diego, California

CHAPTER ONE

OUR FAMILY



“...as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”
(*Joshua 24:15*).

We are a Christian family. I met my wife, Anita, in our church when we were teenagers. We became good friends, but I never would have thought that she would later become my wife. She is a pretty girl and I didn’t think she would even consider marrying someone like me. But one day, as we were thousands of miles apart, I felt that I should propose

Our family, Christmas, 2012



marriage to her. I didn't even have a picture of her and God only knows how it all happened, but I felt the Holy Spirit showing me His will. I was baptized less than a year earlier and felt I still had time before I would get married. But I asked God if He would show me who I should marry and when. He soon showed me but, as typical, Satan was right there trying to make me doubt. What if she says no? What if...? To make a long story short, we got married on a beautiful Sunday in May 2007 in San Diego, California. A year and a half later, in October 2008, God blessed us with our firstborn daughter, Kyra. Two and a half years later, in April 2011, God blessed us with our second daughter, Elise, who was born on my birthday. It was the best birthday gift ever.

Sometime toward the end of 2012, Anita was reading the newspaper. One of the articles was about a five year old boy, who recently passed away due to brain cancer. As she shared the story with me, she told me:

- I would not survive if it happened to us. Poor parents!

- I didn't know that such a young child could even have cancer.

In February 2013, we shared with our children that Mommy is expecting again. Kyra answered:

- I hope it's a boy!

She was so cute and excited. Later, when the doctor told us it's a girl again, Kyra was really sad. She even cried, but later she accepted the idea of having another sister. As we were expecting, Anita was sick for the next few months. She

KYRA'S JOURNEY

THE PERFECT GIFT

usually becomes really sick during the first trimester of her pregnancy. As time went on, she got better and so we started to plan our summer trip to Ohio where my brother would get married in June. We decided to drive there, so we could stop in Colorado and Indiana to visit some relatives and friends. It is a long drive (about 5000 miles roundtrip) but, we love traveling and we had already done it a few years back. A few weeks before we left, the choir in our church had a presentation. Anita sang in the choir this time as we try to share these opportunities since one of us needs to watch the children. One of the songs they sang is based on Romans 8:28.

*“And we know that all things work together
for good to them that love God”*

Kyra & Elise in Colorado, June, 2013



At the time I didn't know why, but it touched me. I didn't know that soon my faith would be tested on if I really believe that all things work together for good for us.

In early June we left San Diego and drove to Colorado. We stayed there for a few days, and Kyra started to complain of a

Kyra in Colorado



headache. We thought it must be the high altitude; we had mild headaches as well. Then, we drove off all the way to Ohio. She complained sometimes, but it wasn't too bad. We visited Amish Country with a few relatives and friends and had a lot of fun. At my brother's wedding, Kyra was really sick. She was just crying and crying. Later that afternoon, we drove to Indiana to my sister's house and the next day I became really sick too. It was the stomach flu, so we thought she must have that too. We spent a few days in Indiana and the

kids had a lot of fun with their cousins, but each night Kyra was miserable. She had fever a few times and was really tired and didn't eat as much as she normally would. One time she woke up in the middle of the night and was screaming due to the pain. On the way home she complained about pain in the right side of her face.

- It must be the air-conditioning! – we thought. Then she said:

- I can't keep my eyes open!

- Then sleep a little bit! – maybe she is tired, we thought. But things started to look weird. In Missouri at a gas station our car wouldn't start after filling up. I realized that most likely it was the battery, so I started to ask around for a jumper cable. I always have one in my car, but since we already had too much stuff to pack, I decided to leave it at home. There were only a few other cars at the station, and nobody had a jumper cable. Then, Anita saw a lady who was washing the windshield on the other side of the gas station.

- Go ask her! She might have one!

- I don't think so. She doesn't look like she would have one.

But I didn't really have another choice, so I walked there and asked her.

- Do you, by any chance, have a jumper cable?

- Yes, I do! Let me just finish washing my windshield and I'll pull up next to you.

So I walked back humbled and thankful. When she pulled up next to our car, she asked me:

- You know that God sent me, right?

- What?

- Yes! I didn't even need gas, I'm just traveling through town and God told me to stop at this gas station. I didn't know why until you walked up to me.

I was shocked. What just happened? Then, she helped me start my car and drove off. We got a new battery at the closest auto parts store and continued on our trip. A few hundred miles and a good night sleep later; our car broke down again in the middle of nowhere in Kansas on I-70. We were able to get to the closest mechanic (about an hour drive off the freeway) and they fixed it, but it took them the whole day. So that day, we only got closer to home by about a hundred miles. We were all tired and exhausted, especially because Kyra kept on complaining.

In the coming days and week - after we arrived home with the Lord's help - I went to work, Anita stayed home with the kids, and we tried to get back to normal life. Kyra kept on complaining every day, and we became really worried. What is going on with her? She was never sick before and now this flu (or whatever it is) is taking forever to go away. She has never been to the doctor, but we started to talk about going since she was sick for so long. We talked to some friends and their kids had similar symptoms, so we didn't worry too much about it. She wanted to take a nap every day, even though she hadn't take one since she was two. On Friday, Anita took the kids to the playground, but this time, Kyra wanted to go home soon after they got there. Now things started to get worse.

On Saturday, we were invited to a wedding here in San Diego and Kyra didn't want to go. She always wanted to go anywhere, especially if there was a special event at church. Church was her favorite place to go to and for that reason Sunday was her favorite day. We went anyway. I worked in

the morning and went straight to the wedding, but was a little bit late. During the service, Anita came out and told me:

- Look at her eye. Doesn't it look weird?

She was really worried. She looked at Kyra while in the sanctuary and got really scared. Her right eye stopped moving! She didn't know what it is, but deep inside, she felt it is something serious. She thought she has seen it before somewhere! It reminded her of a really severe illness. She has a mother's instinct.

But I could not see anything different. It looked totally fine at that time. At the reception while we were waiting for the supper, we were watching her and then, I saw it too! Her right eye didn't move together with her left eye! We went home early and wanted to take her to an eye doctor, but it was Saturday afternoon, so everything was closed. She was so tired and fell asleep, so we decided to wait. We had to cry whenever we looked at her.

We searched online and found out that it could be from a virus, but could be more serious, like cancer. Of course, we hoped that it was just a virus.



*Kyra shortly before
diagnosed with cancer*



CHAPTER TWO

RAGING STORM



On Sunday morning, she was a little bit better, but Anita stayed home with her so she could rest. For the afternoon service, I stayed home. It started at 3 PM and at 3:45 I sent a text to Anita

“Please come home! We have to take her to the urgent care! She is getting worse”

Kyra was miserable. We took her to the urgent care, where we had a really grumpy doctor (maybe she just had a hard day). She didn’t even look at her or listen to us. First she advised us to go to the Emergency Room, but then she told us to get a blood test the next day. So we went home and I took Kyra to the community health center for a blood test early morning on Monday, June 24th. Anita had an appointment with her OB/GYN doctor, so she couldn’t come with us. She took Elise with her. Kyra had never been to the doctor before, so everything was new. She was scared. They took blood, and then, the Pediatrician came in to check her. I told him what has happened and saw his face get serious. He asked if we would be willing to see an eye doctor right away. Why wouldn’t we? But, it turned out that the eye doctor was not in that day, so he sent a nurse with us into one of the rooms where they could check her vision. She started with the left eye, and everything seemed fine. Then, she covered Kyra’s left eye, so she would read with the right and I was shocked.

- Don't cover my eye! – she started to cry and pushed the nurse's hand away. – It's dark and I can't see anything!

I froze in disbelief! It can't be true! Did she become blind in her right eye? What is going on? She is only four years old! No, it cannot be true! It's just a nightmare! We walked back to the Pediatrician, and the nurse shared the results with him. He told me to go home and they will make an appointment for us at an eye specialist at San Diego Rady Children's Hospital. On the way home, I called Anita and told her the situation. It is about a 5 minute drive. I was turning into our driveway when my phone rang.

- We have made an appointment for you for 1 PM today!

Wow! It must be serious if they would make us return so soon. We only had about 30 minutes to eat lunch, make a few quick phone calls to family and leave. We dropped off Elise at my brother's house and drove to the hospital anxiously. The eye specialist checked her eye. He told us that the third nerve in her brain had stopped working, which is the nerve that is responsible for the right eye. He said it was probably not caused by a virus, and we needed some tests immediately to figure out what has caused this. He ordered an MRI and told us that we have to be admitted to the hospital right away. Kyra started to cry.

- I don't want to stay here. I want to go home!

We were crying with her. She had never been to the doctor, and was scared of everything. She was also really tired. We got a room around 5 PM. Without a break many doctors came in to check her. They asked many questions, as they

were trying to figure out what was wrong with her. We didn't have a quiet moment. At 8 PM, they sedated her and took her in for an MRI. It was extremely hard to see her when they were giving her anesthesia. She was screaming, and then, she just fell asleep, lifeless.

When she woke up, they took us back to our room, and all kinds of doctors kept coming in to check her. This is when we met our Hematology/Oncology doctor. They already knew what was going on, but couldn't tell us until the results came back. She told us to go to sleep, and they will tell us the results in the morning. Try to sleep? Well, we tried, but of course, it didn't happen.

Shortly before midnight, the door opened and many doctors came in and woke us up. They asked us to go to another room with them, so we wouldn't bother Kyra. Our hearts at that moment could have won the running championship if they had one for hearts. Why would they wake us up in the middle of the night, if they told us to sleep peacefully and they will give us the results in the morning?

Then, they told us the shocking results: our beautiful firstborn 4 year old daughter Kyra has a tumor in her head! It was most likely a cancerous tumor, but we needed a lot more tests to figure that out. The tumor was under her right eye, and spreading behind her eye up towards her brain and was already on the surface of her brain, but not inside. It was around the third nerve, squeezing it, and that was why her eye had stopped working. At once, it became clear why she had complained during the trip that she couldn't keep her eye open, even though it was open. That's why she had all the

other symptoms, as well. But who would have thought? The doctors were crying with us.

Why her? She was only four, and she always wanted to eat healthy. Every Sunday, after Sunday school, she brought the candy to us because she didn't want to eat it all (her sisters should learn from her ☺), even though she loved everything sweet.

They started to give her strong steroids right away in order to try to save her eye. It was supposed to help shrink the tumor and lessen the pressure, so the eye might be able to start working again. There was only a really small chance that her eye would recover.

On Tuesday, June 25th, they sedated her again and did a CT scan, heart scan and chest scan. Shortly after she woke up, they gave us the results of the scans: she has sarcoma cancer, but, they needed further testing to figure out which kind. Thank God, it didn't spread to her chest, or heart area. They also shared with us that they would put her to sleep again on Wednesday and take out a biopsy of the tumor through her nose.

In the afternoon, I had to go home to get some clothes, etc. Since we didn't know if we would stay in the hospital and didn't have time to pack anything anyway, I had to go home. My brother brought us some stuff, but now the doctors told us that we would have to stay for a while, so we needed more things. It was about a forty minute drive and I was crying all the way home. I tried not to cry in front of Kyra, so she wouldn't get too scared, but now I was alone. At least, I

thought I was. I cried out to God many times for strength. I was crushed.

- God! Please help me! I can't do this anymore! Why did this happen? Please don't take her away from us!

Then I heard a still, small, sweet voice:

- I am with you my son!

I think my heart skipped a beat. As I was driving on the freeway, I wanted to pull over, but couldn't because I was driving in the middle lane and there was a lot of traffic. I had to keep on driving as I was crying even harder than before, but now with tears of joy and peace! I don't deserve this! God is so merciful to me!

On the way back, I visited Elise at my brother's house. She didn't want to see me or even say hi to me! I have to admit that it hurt a little bit, but I was also glad to see that she had fun with her cousins. She has always been close to us and she has a shy personality. She never wanted to leave us before and we were worried about her when we had to go to the hospital. God didn't let her understand what was going on and she was fine. My brother shared with me that they will have a prayer meeting that evening at their house for Kyra. They invited relatives and friends over.

CHAPTER THREE

SURGERY



When I got back to the hospital, Anita told me that our doctor and the surgeon came in and told her that they changed their plan. Instead of just taking a biopsy of the tumor through her nose, they needed to open her head and try to remove as much of the tumor as they can, especially from around her eye and the third nerve. This was the only way they had a chance to save her eye. Even this way, there was only a small chance that her eye would start working again.

That night, the Elder Brothers from our church came to visit us in the hospital to pray together for Kyra and for the family. Kyra was sleeping when they got there. After the prayer, we talked with them for a while. One of them shared with me that he feels Kyra will be healed, she will be fine. We shared with them the plan for the next few days.

On Wednesday morning, June 26th, the nurse woke us up at 6AM so we could give Kyra a bath before the surgery. After the bath, we were waiting for the transportation to take us down to the pre-operating room to prepare for the surgery. We prayed together and asked Kyra which songs she wants to sing. She chose her two favorite songs:

“Jesus loves me this I know,
for the Bible tells me so,
little ones to Him belong,
they are weak, but He is strong!

Yes, Jesus loves me, yes, Jesus loves me.
Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so!”

“Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me,
I once was lost, but now am found,
was blind, but now I see!”

When we got to the last line of “Amazing Grace”, we couldn’t finish it. We were all crying and sobbing. We were worried, we were crushed. We had a peaceful, blessed life and now all the sudden everything was falling apart. How are we going to make it? Will she survive? How long will her therapies take? Will I be able to work to provide for the family? This is the worst timing for expecting a baby. Anita shouldn’t go through such a high level of stress when she is pregnant. What does tomorrow hold for us? We looked at our sweet little daughter, obviously in pain and fear. Why her? Why can’t I go through this for her? We didn’t want to see her suffer. It all happened so fast.

Transportation came around 7:30. They took us down to the pre-operating room where the surgeons, doctors and nurses were already waiting for us. We talked to some of the doctors, and they described the details of their plan. They will open her head and remove part of her skull and move parts of her brain so they can get down to the back of her eye. They will try to remove as much of the tumor as they can from around the eye. Then, they will put everything back together. The surgery will take about 4 hours. There will be many doctors, surgeons and nurses to help out. It is a serious operation and we had to sign a bunch of papers. As I was reading the papers, I was crying. I had to sign that I

understand that the operation could result in all kinds of serious complications, including death. Did I have another choice? This was the hardest time in my life to sign a document.

After I signed, they took her into the operating room, and only one of us was allowed to go in with her until they put her to sleep. So Anita dressed up in the green sterile clothing, and went in with her. A few minutes later she came out and we were just crying together. It was about 8 o'clock. Two of our brothers walked in a few moments later to encourage us. God sent them. Most times we were able to encourage each other, but this time we were both down. We needed help and He sent them for us in the moment we needed it. Rady Children's Hospital is a huge multi-building campus where you can easily get lost. I still don't understand how they found us and in the exact moment we needed them the most.

It was a long wait. It felt like eternity. We were crying, waiting, worrying. We were sitting outside on a bench, when we saw a lady walking with a huge teddy bear. She was obviously looking for somebody. Anita told me:

- Look at that teddy bear! Kyra would be so glad to get one like that!

When she walked closer we realized that it is one of our friends from church. She brought that teddy bear for Kyra and she shared her experience with us:

- I woke up at 4:30 am and felt a presence in the room. I sat up and rubbed my eyes, I thought I was dreaming, but I saw a huge shadow in front of my bed and heard a voice

from the shadow say "Go be a rock"! I thought to myself, how can I be a rock when they have such a huge family? Who am I? Then I heard the voice say again "Go". I got frightened and got up. I called the hospital right away to find out if there was a Kyra admitted. They told me she will be prepped for surgery at 8AM. I got ready right away to go do what I was instructed.

She stayed with us for about 6 hours to encourage us. Around noon, we walked up to the information counter to ask about Kyra. Finally the four hours passed. It felt much longer.

- The surgery was supposed to be over by now. Do you know how is she doing?

- The charge nurse told me that she is still in the operating room and will be in there for longer. Come back in about two hours, we should be able to give you more information then.

Two more hours? What is going on? Is she ok? Is the tumor much bigger? Is she doing even worse than we thought? Why does it need to take longer? More and more questions popped up in our minds. We were really worried and cried a lot. Thank God that our friend was there to help us. Later some more friends and family members came to visit us. At 2 o'clock we asked again.

- She is still in the operating room. Don't worry! She is doing fine. We don't know how much longer it will take, but the doctors want to remove as much of the tumor as they can. It takes time.

Don't worry?! How easy it is to say. How could we not worry? Time slowed down even more. We asked many times, but the answer was always the same. Wait some more. Around 5 o'clock they called for us finally. They led us into a small room where a doctor was waiting for us.

- The operation is finally done. Kyra is doing ok, we were able to remove about a third of the tumor, much more than we planned. The area around her eye and the third nerve is now clean. Instead of 4 hours, she was in the operating room for almost 9 hours. This was a major operation. When we do a heart transplant, it is about 5 hours. This was almost 9. We also took samples of her bone, bone-marrow and spinal fluid for testing. The operation was successful, without any major complications. It is really rare to have such a big surgery without complications. It's a miracle. She is in the recovery room, and we will let you in shortly.

We went out to the waiting room. A little later, they called for us again, but only one person could go in at a time, so I let Anita go in first. Kyra was still sleeping. It was really hard for Anita to see Kyra. Her hair was put up into two pony tails, one in the front and one in the back. In between them, from ear to ear her head was shaved and cut. This was where they opened it for the operation. A few minutes later, Kyra opened her eyes and this is the first thing she said:

- Mommy! Now I know that I have cancer and if you didn't bring me here to the hospital, I would've died!

How did she know? We never talked with her about it. (A few days later we asked, and she told us that God told it to her.) A little later we traded, so I was able to go in. I was



This picture was actually made about a week after the surgery, but you can see where they opened her head.

fearful. They just operated on her head and brain. What if they didn't put everything back in its place? What if something got damaged? When I stepped next to her bed, her

eyes were closed. I didn't know if she was awake or sleeping, but I talked to her.

- I love you Kyra! You are such a brave little girl! Not even little anymore. You are a brave big girl! I love you so much!

Than to my surprise she opened her mouth.

- But Daddy! Rosie and Joshua are always telling me that I am a little girl!

Rosie and Joshua are her cousins. I was so glad to hear that she made sense. Her brain was working properly. She was so cute. She was in the recovery room for two hours. Due to the surgery we had to get a new room, they moved us to the Intermediate Care Unit where we stayed for two nights. Even the nurses were surprised that we didn't have to go to the Intensive Care Unit. After such a surgery, she was doing much better than expected. Thank God for it.



Kyra in her hospital bed

CHAPTER FOUR

RECOVERY



On Thursday, June 27th, the doctors gave her “nuclear medicine” at noon through the IV, and put her to sleep at 1 o’clock. She had a bone scan (that’s why she needed the nuclear medicine), and also had another MRI to see what changed due to the surgery. Anita was really weak - and the doctor advised her not to be close to Kyra due to the nuclear medicine, to protect our baby - so she stayed in the room. Some of her friends came in to give her a massage and support. She was 5 months pregnant. We were worried for the baby. Will she be ok? It’s really not a good time to be expecting, – we thought, but God knew better. I stayed with Kyra, and after the recovery room, they took us back to our room. These were the last tests for now, so she could start to recover from the surgery.

On Friday morning, June 28th, the doctors came in.

- Most of the results came back. It looks like the cancer didn’t spread anywhere else in her body, but we are still waiting for the bone-marrow test results. Now we know exactly what type of cancer she has. Her diagnosis is “stage 2, embrional rhabdomyosarcoma cancer.” It is a rare and aggressive childhood cancer. She will have another surgery next Wednesday, to build a port into her chest, so we can give her the chemo through that. We will share more details of the planned treatments later. For now she needs to recover from the surgery so we can continue with the next surgery, and then, chemotherapy treatments. Today we will move you

to another room that is on our floor where we treat cancer patients. You will stay for at least one more week. Kyra's head will swell and grow to be like a balloon in the next few days - as you can already see - due to the surgery. She might not even be able to open her eyes for a while. Don't worry, it's totally normal and it will get better by the middle of next week.

Her head did get really big. It was so hard to see her like that. In the coming days, we had many visitors from church, friends and family. Our room was filled with gifts, cards, toys and love. The hardest week so far in our life was behind us. If someone had told us, just a few weeks before what will happen, we would have thought that we wouldn't make it. It's just too much. But with God's help, all things are possible. We felt that He was there with us. He never left us alone! He talked to us directly and showed His love through many people. We felt that our church, family, friends and even strangers have lifted us up in prayers to our Heavenly Father.

Smiling no matter what

Later on Friday, they shared with us that the last test results came back and the cancer didn't spread anywhere in her body. They also shared the treatment plan:

- The surgeons will build in the port on Wednesday, as you already know. She will get the first chemo treatment on Wednesday afternoon and hopefully you can go home on



Friday, depending on how Kyra will be doing. She will get chemo every week but every third week she will be admitted to the hospital for stronger kinds of chemo treatments, so we can monitor her body. The other times she will go to our outpatient clinic for blood tests and chemo. She will get three kinds of chemo: Vincristine, Dactinomycin and Cyclophosphamide. She will also get different kinds of medicines associated with the chemotherapy, to protect her body parts. Also, it will cause her blood to change rapidly, so she will need to have blood tests quite often, and you will have to give shots into her leg almost every day at home. She will also need blood and platelet transfusions when a blood test indicates. She will get a total of 30 chemotherapy treatments, once a week, but with short breaks, so it will take about 10 months total. She will also get radiation treatment, but that will be done at UCSD (University of California, San Diego), and they will give you more information later.

They gave us lots of materials and books so we could read more about it. It was a lot of information; we learned a lot of things that we never heard about before. They also told us that Kyra was recovering faster than average. We knew that it was God's providence.

Later in the afternoon, Anita told me that she really wants to eat some chicken soup. A little later, my sister-in-law called me that she would like to come to visit and if she should bring anything. I asked her for chicken soup. Then I walked over to the Ronald McDonald House, right across from the hospital, and guess what. They had chicken soup for dinner. So I called my sister-in-law not to make it. It was such a blessing to be able to go and eat for free at the McDonald

KYRA'S JOURNEY

THE PERFECT GIFT

house. They served breakfast, lunch and dinner every day for us.

- We should buy a balloon for Kyra!

- That's a good idea. She would love it. I'll go and get one after I finish my meal so by the time she wakes up it'll be here.

A few minutes later the door opened and a lady from the gift shop came in with a little plush dog and a balloon attached to it. A family from our church sent it to Kyra! Our God is an awesome God! He is strengthening us through all these miracles.

On Saturday, June 29th, Elise visited us for the first time. My sister brought her in. Kyra was really happy to see her sister.

Kyra & Elise





Kyra & Elise playing in the hospital room

She brought joy into the hospital room. Kyra was finally smiling. Later, her cousin also came in to visit her. They had a lot of fun. We even walked around with them in the foyer with Kyra in a wheelchair.

On Wednesday, July 3rd, she had the planned surgery; they built a port into her chest. Later in the afternoon, she got the first chemo. It was so hard to see when that chemical, poison, or whatever you want to call it, was flowing into her body.

Now I need to make something clear! Many people told us not to let them give her poison. Some even said that if it was their child they wouldn't let her get chemo or radiation. First of all, here in California, we didn't have a choice. If we would have rejected the chemo or radiation treatment, the

state has the power to remove Kyra from us and put her under CPS (Child Protection Services), until the end of her treatment. But even more important was that we felt peace from God to follow their plan.

We know that there are doctors and medical professionals who are corrupt and they care more about their money than help other people, but there are also many that do everything they can to help as much as possible. We had a really good experience in both Rady Children's and UCSD. We're not saying that we agreed with everything they said, but they obviously care about the children they treat. They truly did an excellent job, and we are really thankful for them. We also knew that we are in God's hand, and if He wants to heal Kyra, He will do it, regardless of the type of treatment. If He chooses not to heal her, then we can try whatever we want, she won't be healed. God makes the final decisions. If we chose not to follow the doctor's orders and she dies, we would've felt guilty.

It is also a fact that whatever knowledge the doctors have is from God, and if they use it according to His will, it will be a blessing. If we are healthy or have only a mild sickness, we wouldn't go to a doctor. We would try to heal it naturally. But when a major thing happens, then why not use a professional service that is built on knowledge from God? We had peace to follow the treatment plan, but it was still hard to see the poison going into her body. What will it do to her? Will it damage something? We have to do this, because she has cancer. We have to kill the cancer cells, but it will also kill healthy cells?

CHAPTER FIVE

LIFE IS LIKE A ROLLER COASTER



On Thursday, July 4th, she had nausea and vomiting due to the chemo. She slept a lot during the day, and when she woke up, she threw up and didn't feel good. It continued on throughout the night and even on Friday morning, so we couldn't leave the hospital.

The doctors and nurses started to prepare us for going home. Even though we would be able to go home soon, our life would be completely changed. We will have to be admitted to the hospital many times. At least once a week we need to

*Kyra & Mommy in the
Hospitals's yard*



go to the outpatient clinic for blood tests and more chemo. We will have to be very careful with her. Due to the treatment, her immune system will fluctuate; at times, it will be dangerously low. Depending on the blood test results we may have to stay at the hospital for longer periods of time for her protection. We have to make sure that everything is sterile at home. She needs clean clothes, clean pajamas, clean bedding, etc. every day! The hardest thing for Kyra was

that she couldn't play outside in the dirt or on the beach due to the bacteria. She was really sad. She loved to play outside. They also told us that her hair will fall out soon.

- I don't want to look like a boy! – she said crying.

When she had the surgery, they put some sticky solution on her hair, so it would stay sterile for the operation. Now it was all gross and we couldn't untangle it. A volunteer hairdresser from the McDonald House came over to help us. She cut her hair to about her neckline. It was painful to see it. Kyra had a beautiful long hair. After it was cut, Kyra told us:

- Now we can give my hair to children with cancer, who lost their hair.

She didn't realize yet, that she will lose her hair within weeks. Her aunt donated her hair just a few months earlier, and Kyra talked about it ever since. She wanted to grow her hair a little more and then donate it.

On Saturday, July 6th we were able to go home. Kyra was so happy. After two long, hard weeks, she was at home again. At the door, a lot of packages were waiting for us. Toys, coloring books, plush animals, etc... Our mail box was full with cards, checks and letters from all around the world. Relatives, friends and even strangers sent us their love through various forms from all over the US, Canada, Europe,

Ready to go home



Australia, Latin America. Our children got so many toys that we won't need to buy any for them for many years. We got so much financial support that even though I couldn't work much in the coming year, we didn't need to worry about our financial status at all. These packages and letters kept flowing in during the coming months. I had a lot of e-mails in my inbox. It took me days to go through it and open all the packages and letters. We never realized what a great church family God blessed us with.

In the coming days, we had to adjust to this new era of life. Kyra was really sad; she didn't want to play with anything. She just sat on the sofa all day, looking at us sadly. She hardly ever smiled. It was like this for several weeks. I started to work again, but it was really painful to leave my family at home. I knew that it will be especially hard on my wife. She was pregnant and needed to take care of our two daughters in this hard trial. The ladies from our church made a schedule to help us with food. Three times a week they brought us food, so Anita didn't have to cook for a while. They also took Elise for a sleep-over many times.

The doctors prescribed many different kinds of medications for Kyra. Many times we forgot which kinds she was to take that time, but she always knew and reminded us if we forgot. She even knew the names of all the medications. Many times we were struggling because she didn't want to take any meds, especially if the doctors prescribed something new.

We also changed our diet. We ate pretty healthy even before, but now we ate even more raw and organic food, without any added sugar. She also started to drink some herbal teas that are designed to heal cancer. They tasted gross, but she never

complained. Anita also started to use some essential oils on her, and massaged her several times a day. Many times, Elise asked me if I could massage her when Mommy massages Kyra. They were so cute. Due to the steroid, she gained a lot of weight, but after two months we stopped giving her the steroid and she lost a lot of weight (she was about 40lbs in September and about 23lbs in March). Headaches, nausea, vomiting, constipation, etc. were her everyday companions.

Within a few weeks after the first chemo, her hair started to fall out. We cut it shorter and shorter, but it just got unbearable. Her pillow was full of her hair; our home looked like we had a few pets shedding. When she was eating, her food was full of hair.

- Kyra! We will have to shave your head. It is getting worse and worse.

- I don't want you to shave my head! I don't want to look like a boy!

- I have an idea! I will shave my head, and will shave it every week until your hair grows back.

- Ok, but wait a few more days.

A few days later I brought it up again, but she didn't want to talk about it. Anita went to church with Elise, so we were at home alone.

- Why don't we surprise Mommy?

- Sounds good! – she got excited.



Kyra & Daddy

So we surprised Mommy! I shaved her head and called one of my brothers if he could come over and cut mine too. The next day he came and shaved my head and I shaved his. Later that day my brothers organized a “brother’s night” at a local resort. When I got there everybody greeted me and my other bald brother with a smile and a question:

- Why didn’t you tell us? We would have cut it too!

So we all went to one of my brother’s house and shaved each other’s head. Eight of us brothers became bald that day, plus Kyra. In the next days a few more friends also shaved their heads to support her. She was so happy. It made it so much easier for her. After this, I shaved my head every Saturday night. If I didn’t, Kyra reminded me on Sunday morning.

- Daddy! You forgot to shave! – while showing with her fingers. She was so thankful that I was bald with her.

CHAPTER SIX

SUFFERING



Three weeks after we went home, we were admitted to the hospital again for chemo. They told us that she will need to start the radiation treatment soon. Since we were in the hospital they would take us over to UCSD (University of California, San Diego) with an ambulance. When we got there, they sedated her to do some more tests, then we met the radiation doctor.

- We will start the radiation treatment next week, she will get 27 treatments. You will need to come here every weekday morning at 7:30 AM so we can start the radiation by 8 o'clock. She cannot eat or drink anything in the morning before the treatment, so we can give her anesthesia. It will take about 6 weeks. Mom should not come with her, due to the radiation, since she is pregnant. Whenever you are admitted to the Children's Hospital, you will come here with an ambulance.

The next month and a half I was not able to work at all. Every morning, I drove 50 minutes to UCSD with Kyra. They sedated her and then I had to leave. In the first few weeks she was ok, but it got worse. There were days when she couldn't wake up after the treatment. I had to take her home while she was still sleeping, and she only woke up after several hours.

Every day as we were waiting for anesthesia, I tried to make her smile. She was scared. I allowed her to put some stickers

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KYRA'S JOURNEY

on my forehead that she got from the nurses. She laughed at me. She also brought her plush monkey with her every day, and put stickers on her. She called her Pinky. One day, after she fell asleep, I walked to the cafeteria to get breakfast. (I didn't eat earlier to support Kyra) I ordered coffee and a



*Kyra & "Pinky" early morning,
leaving for radiation treatment*

sandwich. When I got it, I walked back to the waiting room. I realized that people were looking at me much more than usual. About 40 minutes later, they called for me because Kyra was waking up. When I walked into her room, I realized that I still had the sticker on my forehead that Kyra has put on me! I must have looked weird. A fat, bald guy with a princess sticker on his forehead!

Due to the radiation, she got really aggressive. Also due to radiation, she got mouth sores.

It spread all the way down her throat and stomach. It was painful for her even to eat or drink. On top of that, due to the chemo, everything tastes gross, metallic. The doctors told us:

- If you want to know what everything tastes like for her, start chewing on a piece of aluminum foil.

In September our church and the Vista Farmers' Market organized a fundraiser for Kyra and our family. It was very

humbling to see so many of our friends, relatives and strangers get together and put a lot of effort and love into helping us. God showered us with His love through His children.

For almost two months, she could not eat or drink anything. In mid-September Anita's Mom came to help us for three months (the grandparents from both sides live thousands of miles away). A day after she got here, we had to take Kyra to the hospital for dehydration. We had to stay in for two weeks.

Her birthday was in mid-October and she asked me to make her a special worm-shaped cottage cheese cake that tastes like "Turorudi", which is a special kind of dessert from Hungary. I made it, but she didn't even try it, due to the mouth sores. We felt so sorry for her. She just watched us eating her cake. Both of us felt that it will be her last birthday. I decorated our dining room with "strawberry shortcake" themed decoration. She was very happy.

We were in the hospital many times to get her hydrated and to



◆ *Kyra in the hospital*

◆ *Kyra's birthdaycake*



give her food through the IV. One of these times as we were in the hospital, Anita called me that she thinks the baby will come soon. It was late October and we had a few days left before her due date. We agreed that she would come to Rady's and be with us, and if the labor starts, I would take her to Poway Pomerado Hospital, which is about a 30 minute drive from Rady Children's. At 2 AM, we had to leave, and called my sister-in-law to be with Kyra.

Kyra was really excited! She made us promise that we will send a picture of her newborn sister as soon as she is born.



Kyra meets Brielle

There were complications with the labor. Nothing worked the way it was supposed to, due to the stress. Anita had a really hard time. When the doctor came in at 9 AM, still nothing changed, so he ordered a medication that would help to speed up the labor. At 11:30, our third daughter, Brielle was born, healthy, without any problems.

A few weeks before Brielle was born, I told Anita, that I think she will be born on a Sunday, since both Kyra and Elise were born on

Sunday mornings. Kyra told me that she thinks she will be born on a Thursday. She was right, and told me many times:

- I was right Daddy! She was born on Thursday just like I told you!



Kyra & Elise & Brielle

God knew that we needed Brielle. She brought so much joy into our home. At least for a short time, we could forget the trial we were in.

In the coming months, Kyra had better days, but had some really bad days and weeks, as well. Many times she was weak and pale. She needed blood and platelet transfusions more and more often. One time, she got four transfusions within a 48 hour period. We lost count how many times she had transfusions.

I also had to give her shots on a daily basis. I am the type of person that passes out if I see blood. When I was a small child and needed a blood test I had to lie down on a bed before they poked me so I wouldn't pass out. Now I had to poke my daughter every day. It wasn't easy, but God gave me strength to do it. She was happy that I did it instead of a nurse. We also bought some special princess Band-Aids for her. It made it easier. She prayed a lot for better blood results.



After a chemo treatment, she slept a lot

One time we got home from the hospital early afternoon. At night, I was getting ready to give Kyra a bath. As she was taking off her clothes, I realized that she was bleeding from her chest area. I couldn't make it stop, so I called the hospital. They told me to take her in immediately. This was the first time she was bleeding due to low platelet amount in her blood. It happened many times after. One time it started late at night after an exhausting day, even though she just received a platelet transfusion that morning. It took us two hours to stop the bleeding.

Many times, I went to work early morning, only to rush back home a few hours later and take her to the hospital for different reasons. One time she woke me up in the middle of the night to help her use the bathroom. When I touched her, she was hot. She had a high fever. I had to take her in at 3 AM. We were admitted many more times and for much longer than we expected. After a few months, we had to start taking her to the clinic for blood tests two-three times a week.

She suffered a lot because of her eye. Sometimes it was too dry, other times it was too wet. Sometimes it was itchy, sometimes it was rheumy. We had to use eye drops, and the eye doctor prescribed glasses for her to protect her working left eye.



with her new glasses

CHAPTER SEVEN

KYRA'S WISH



God kept sending us miracles. One day, Kyra asked if she could get a pair of warm winter socks, just like Mommy has. The same afternoon we got a package from my aunt from Florida. She sent the same kind of socks for Kyra as she wished. One time we got a package from Australia, from someone who we have never met. She heard about us, and sent us this package. It contained a huge teddy bear, some other toys and a letter:

“Dear Kyra and family! A few weeks ago somebody called me from our local children’s hospital, if I would be willing to help children with cancer. I’ve sent them a check, and in exchange they sent me this teddy bear. I didn’t know what to do with it until I heard about you. Please accept it as it is from God. I am praying for you!”

At Christmas time, she got a present from the hospital. It was a toy computer. She had been asking us to buy one for her for the past year. At the clinic, whenever she had a blood test, she was allowed to choose a toy from the treasure box. As I already said, she had blood tests several times every week. Many times she decided to give the toys to her sister or cousins or friends. Also when she had doctor’s appointments, she always got some stickers and she gave a lot of these away too.

Shortly after she was diagnosed with cancer, Make-a-Wish foundation contacted us. They wanted to fulfill Kyra's greatest wish. A few weeks later two of their representatives came to our house.

- Kyra, what is your greatest wish? You can ask for anything. You can go to Disneyland, you can go on a trip anywhere in the world, you can go on a shopping spree, you can get something you want, you can meet your favorite famous person, or anything that you can think of. We will try to fulfill your dream.

- I would like to get a harp! A big one, so I could play in the orchestra at church.

Every year, our church organizes an orchestra, where we have musicians from far and near. It's a really uplifting event, Anita is usually a part of it, since she plays the flute. About two years earlier, we had a harp player from Europe. As soon as Kyra heard and saw the harp, she told me:

- Daddy, I want to learn to play on a harp. Could you buy one for me?

- I know that the harp is beautiful, but you should choose another kind of instrument, because I can't afford a harp. It's too expensive.

- But I want a harp. You know what? I will start collecting money, so when I grow up I will buy one!

And that's what she did. She started to collect her money for a harp in her piggy bank. And now she realized that it is her greatest wish, so she asked for it. They told us that they've



- ◆ *At the first harp lesson*
- ◆ *Ready for a harp lesson*



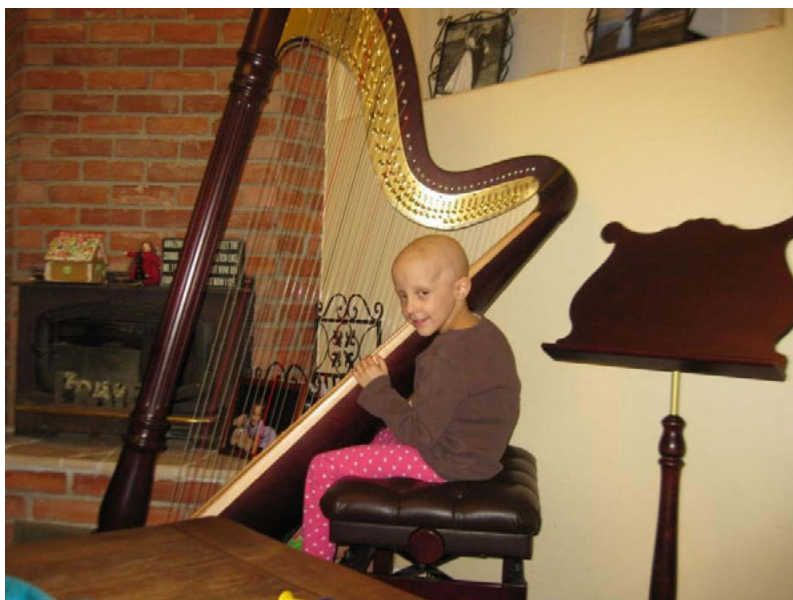
never had such a wish, but will try to grant it. A few months later, she had her first harp lesson. She enjoyed it so much; I took her once a week to the teacher. Kyra was looking forward to the lessons all the time. But many times she couldn't go, because we had to take her to the hospital unexpectedly. These times she was really sad.

Make-a-Wish offered us two options. She could get a new harp, and she could get it around April, or she could get a used one within a month. First we chose the new one, but later we realized and felt that the used would be better because she would get it sooner, so she could play on it at home whenever she wants. The harp is therapeutic and would help her heal. So the used harp was ordered, and a few days before Christmas, I received a call that it will be delivered within days. We were at the hospital at the time and I kept it a secret. The next day we got home and

about twenty minutes later, they arrived with her harp. She was so happy.

- Daddy and Mommy! From now on you don't need to listen to cd-s, because I will play for you on the harp whenever you want me to.

Whenever she was home, she played a lot on the harp. Even when she was in pain, she just sat down and played on it. She was like an angel. But she had to be admitted to the hospital more and more often. In the first three weeks of December, she didn't get chemo, due to her white-, red-blood cells, platelets, hemoglobin and ANC levels being too low in her blood.



Kyra enjoys her new harp



Kyra & her big harp



she played on the harp many times

"Praise the LORD with harp..." (Psalms 33:2)

"Sing unto the LORD with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm." (Psalms 98:5)

"Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God" (Psalms 147:7)

CHAPTER EIGHT

NIGHTMARE



She was bored of eating the same kind of food all the time at the hospital. Although they had many different kinds that we could choose from, after a while they all were boring. When I asked if she wants me to order something for her, she told me:

- They should hire Grandma as a chef. She knows how to cook much better. Then I would order all the time.

Grandma left in mid-December, she was here to help for three months. Right before Christmas, Kyra started to receive chemo again. In January, the doctor ordered an MRI to see how things look in her head. The next day, we were informed that they saw something on the top, right, back part of her head that might be another tumor, or something else. We need further testing to figure out what is it.

- You will need to go up to UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) for a PET-Scan. That's the closest place where they do this scan for children.

I made an appointment for the next week. We stayed at my aunt's house in Los Angeles for the night before. They did the PET-Scan, and then we drove back to San Diego. We were anxiously waiting for the results. Both I and Anita felt that Kyra is going to die soon. I can't describe that feeling, but I believe the Holy Spirit made us feel it. We even talked

KYRA'S JOURNEY

about it with Kyra. We wanted to be open and honest with her.

- We don't know what God's plan is, but He may want to take you to Heaven soon.

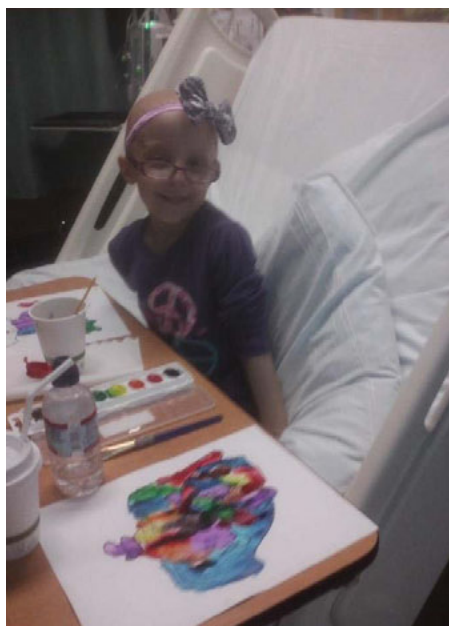
- I wouldn't mind! At least over there I won't have pain anymore, and I won't be sick, and I will have nice long hair again. You know, over there I won't cry anymore, I will see with both of my eyes and I will be healed.

She wasn't scared. After this, she talked more and more about Heaven. One day, as Anita was crying, she said:

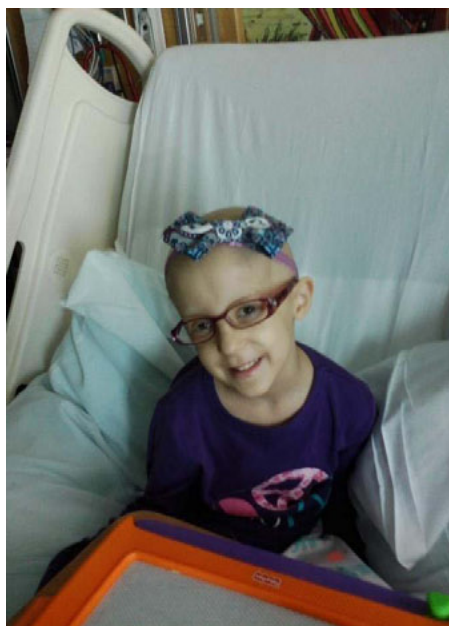
- Don't cry Mommy! At least Elise and Brielle will stay here with you! Do you think I will still grow up to be an adult in Heaven?

For the results we had to wait for 3 weeks. UCLA has a strict privacy policy. Even though our doctor from the Children's Hospital ordered the test, they refused to release the results to

THE PERFECT GIFT



◆♥ In the hospital



her. They can only release the results to the parents. I was on the phone for two days – and I'm sure they got tired of talking with me - when they finally agreed to release Kyra's test results to our doctor. The wait was terrible, we were really scared. We couldn't sleep for these three weeks. We trusted God, but still had to cry all the time. We were suffering. Finally the results came in!

- She doesn't have cancer there; it was just blurry due to the radiation treatment! The tumor has shrunk from eight centimeters in diameter to about two centimeters.

We were so joyful. It felt like a stone fell off of our hearts. Kyra was hugging Anita and said:

- Mommy, this is the best news ever!

In the coming weeks and months she looked much better. She was happy, played a lot with her sisters, and did much better overall. One afternoon I told her that I would like to have special time with her, and we will go wherever she wants to.

- I want to go to the Creation Museum!

- Why there?

- Because they show us the truth how God created all the animals, plants, us, and everything. They show how beautiful His creation is.

She referred to the Creation and Earth History Museum in Santee. It was one of her favorite places to go to.

She kept on talking about Heaven, and told us many times that it would be better if she could go there.

- Mommy, make sure you record this on your camera and take pictures, so it will be for remembrance when I'm gone. – she told us many times.

She has a little plush sheep that could play “Jesus loves me.” She told us that when we hear it play, think of her playing on the harp in Heaven.

We realized around February, that she was scared of snakes, dinosaurs, and stuff like that. She has never been scared of them unless, of course, if it was a live snake which we have some in our area. One time in the hospital, I bought a toy snake for her in the gift shop and she was really happy for it, played a lot with it, but now she was scared.

- Why are you scared of the snake? – Anita asked her.

- Because it can kill you! I don't know what death is like! Does it hurt? What will happen when I die?

- I think you will just go to sleep and wake up in Heaven. I don't think it hurts.

- Thank you Mommy! Thank you for telling me this.

Around the middle of February she was doing really well. We thought that the cancer must be gone! Anita's sister stayed with us for a month to help. They went to the playground, walked on the beach (not in the sand to protect Kyra from germs) and had a really good time. She played on her harp a lot, she really learned a lot from the teacher. I took her every week for her lessons, she enjoyed them.



♦ *At the clinic for blood test*
♦ *Mommy visited us*



Every time we sat down to eat and before going to bed she wanted to pray loud. She prayed like an adult. She even told Elise:

- Don't pray that child prayer, instead, pray from your heart!

One day I talked with my brother through Skype. He lives in Ukraine and I asked him how they are doing in this hard time as their country gets deeper and deeper into this political upheaval and civil war. After talking with him, we sat down to eat. Again, she wanted to pray.

- Dear Father! Please help your people in Ukraine! Help them that they would be ok and they wouldn't suffer!

She would play like she was getting married. She dressed up like a bride, and told us that she is getting married to one of her friends. A little later she walked

KYRA'S JOURNEY

THE PERFECT GIFT

out with a pillow under her shirt.

- Look! I am expecting!

A little later she came again, now with a little baby doll.

- Now I have a newborn and I'm breastfeeding!

Again a little later with a bigger doll:

- My baby can already sit up and I can feed her with spoon!

- Look Mommy! She can even walk now! – she was bringing out bigger and bigger dolls from her room.

She asked us many times:

- What did you do when you were 5? What did you do when you were 10? 15? 20? 12? ...etc.

Of course most of the time, we didn't even know what to answer. Unless something big happened in our life when we were that age, we couldn't answer. Probably she was trying to figure out what was the reason of our life, why we are here.

Kyra at home





◆ Kyra & Elise



◆ Kyra at home



◆ ◆ three sisters



◆ Kyra dressed up as a bride. When we asked her "who is the groom?" she answered: Daddy!

◆ Kyra & Elise at home



KYRA'S JOURNEY



THE PERFECT GIFT



♦Kyra loved her little sister so much

♦Kyra & Elise. Even though she was sick, they had so much fun with each other

♦Kyra at home

♦Kyra & Brielle



CHAPTER NINE

SHE WILL GO TO HEAVEN



Every night she prayed many times:

- Dear Father! Please help me to sleep well. Help me, so I wouldn't have bad dreams!

At the end of February, things turned for the worse again. When I had to take her to the hospital, it became a rampage. She was screaming, angry, she unbuckled herself from the car seat. Multiple times it took me half an hour to calm her down. I was sure that our neighbors would call the cops to check on us. We were worried again. Why is she acting like this? We asked the doctor to check her and they thought that she had an allergic reaction to one of the medications.

One night everybody was sleeping, except Mommy. She couldn't sleep and was thinking about the future. How will things go? Kyra is getting worse again for the past week and she doesn't look good. It was really dark in the room and dead silence. She got really scared and she trembled. She felt that somebody is in the room. Then she heard a voice telling her Isaiah 43:1.

“Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.”

It was not a question who talked to her. It was a wondrous experience. At this point, she felt even more strongly that Kyra will go soon.

On Wednesday, February 26th, Kyra was screaming at home. She was in a lot of pain. The next moment she fell asleep so deep, that we couldn't wake her up. We called the hospital, but by the time we got a hold of the doctor, she was up again. This happened a few more times in the next days. She was tired again, complaining of a headache, just like before she was diagnosed with cancer.

On Sunday, March 2nd, she was Skyping with the Sunday school. They were learning about David when he played on the harp for King Saul. Kyra was really weak, but she played on her harp for the kids.

On Monday, March 3rd, she was really weak, acting strange, throwing up, sleepy and tired.

On Tuesday early afternoon, March 4th, I decided to take her to the hospital for a checkup. I told the doctor all the details of the previous days.

- She will need to be admitted to the hospital, so we can keep an eye on her. I will also order an MRI for tonight. Things are not looking good so far. We will give you a room shortly. Make sure she won't eat anything from now on, so we can sedate her for the MRI.

A little later we got a room. I called Anita with the news; she left home shortly to be with us. Anita got to the hospital the moment they were taking us down to the MRI. We met on the foyer. Kyra was praying:

THE PERFECT GIFT

KYRA'S JOURNEY

- Dear God! Please help Mommy, so her milk would not stop and she could continue breastfeeding Brielle.

She knew that Anita didn't come to the hospital because she was nursing. We couldn't bring Brielle in the hospital due to flu season.

She got sedated shortly before 5 PM. When she woke up after the MRI in the recovery room, Anita was in there with her. She was obviously happy, and told her joyously:

- Jesus told me that my cancer has grown and He will take me to Heaven soon!

A little later I was allowed to go in as well. Anita shared with me:

- She had a dream and Jesus told her that He will take her to Heaven soon. Her cancer has grown.

♦When she woke up after the MRI, she was so joyful♦

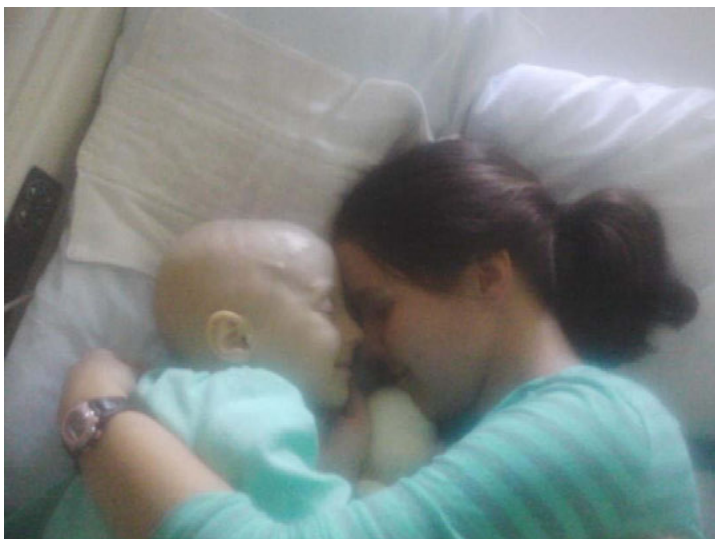


- Mommy, I wasn't dreaming! He told it to me in my heart!

She wanted to tell it to everybody! Doctors, nurses, whoever came into our room. She wanted to call the grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and friends. She was so joyful. Usually she was more like a shy person, but now she shared it with everybody! She will go to Heaven!

About an hour later the doctor called me.

- I'm not in the hospital, but had to call you! I just received the results of the MRI. The tumor has grown significantly, it looks like it exploded. They will transfer you to the ICU within minutes. I'll come in tomorrow morning and we'll figure out the future together. Please don't give her anything to eat or drink after midnight, just in case we will need to sedate her for surgery in the morning.



Kyra & Mommy in the ICU

Kyra hated the ICU. She was already used to the floor where they treat cancer patients, where we were many times, but this was different. Here they had much more tubes and machines attached to her.

She was so mad at us that we didn't let her eat after midnight. We couldn't sleep at all. We talked for a long time with our nurse. We shared with her that we already felt, and now we know that Kyra will die soon. We don't want to fight it. It will be much better for her to go. She supported us, and shared with us that many parents choose to fight till the last minutes, even though they know their child will die. They want to prolong the life, but they don't realize that they are only prolonging the suffering. She told us that if we don't want any more treatments or surgeries, we don't have to. So we allowed Kyra to eat and drink. She was so happy. Mommy was next to her all night; Kyra was hugging her and kissing her many times. Early morning she said:

- I would like to eat some bread with Nutella.

Of course they didn't have any Nutella at the hospital, so I called my sister-in-law to bring some in in the morning when she comes in to pick up breast milk for Brielle. When she got there the doctors came in also. She stayed with Kyra until we went to another room with the doctors.

- The tumor has grown significantly, it pushes back her brain, she has a lot of pressure in her head, that's why she is complaining of a headache. We could do more surgeries and treatment, but it will only help for a short time.

- We know that she will go soon. We don't want to fight against God's plan. We don't want her to suffer more, to get any more treatments or surgery. We are really thankful for your service so far, but now we would like to take her home and enjoy the short time God will grant us with her still.

- We support your decision. We know that even if we did a surgery, it would only give her a few more weeks of suffering, it won't save her life.

- How much time do you think she has left?

- It's hard to say, but I think up to a few months. Our plan for now is to help her with the pain. Believe me, she had much more pain than what she told you.

After this conversation they transferred us back to the floor where we've usually been. We knew many nurses and others on this floor. Many came to say farewell to us. They prepared us for the next days and weeks, gave us many kinds of pain medications to help Kyra. Anita and I both felt that she will die much sooner than a few months. Our doctor came in again.

- More doctors have reviewed Kyra's test results and we concluded that she probably only has up to a few weeks left, possibly only a few days.

- We both felt this, and we are at peace with it.

- I always prepare for the worst when I have to share these types of things with you, but every time you already know it!

THE PERFECT GIFT

KYRA'S JOURNEY

Around 4 PM our doctor came into the room again and started to cry.

- Everything is ready for you to leave the hospital. I wish I could have done more for Kyra, but God's plan was different.

They truly did everything they could. We are so thankful for their service. It was obvious that they care a lot for the children they treat. It's their life. May our Heavenly Father bless them richly for their love, care, and service.



Kyra & Brielle after we got home from the hospital the last time

CHAPTER TEN

FAREWELL



On the way home, Kyra wanted to stop at Cold Stone. We bought some ice-cream and went home.

- I would like to go to church tonight!

It was Wednesday, and we have a song service at 7:30 PM. We were really tired, but wanted to make her happy. She hadn't been to church for a long time to protect her from germs and viruses. I sent a text to family and friends:

"We will try to go to church tonight with Kyra. It might be her last opportunity. If you want to say farewell to her, come to the song service!"

Church was packed that night. It turned out that somebody sent out an e-mail and posted our plan for the night on social media. We sang her favorite songs. We were crying a lot. She was in a lot of pain, but tried to cover it. She didn't want to go home. We had to take her out due to the pain and gave her medications. Then she got better, so we stayed for the entire evening. After singing, everybody came to say farewell. It was a heartbreaking experience when some older ones came to her. Who would have thought that a five year old will go before a 70 or 80 year old? She hugged and gave kisses to everybody. She was smiling. She said bye to her friends too. On the way home she told us:

- How nice this evening was. Everybody loves us so much. It is so wonderful!

THE PERFECT GIFT

KYRA'S JOURNEY

When we got home we told her that from now on she can sleep in between us in our bed.

- All the way 'till I die?

She wanted to sleep in between us for a long time, so now she was really happy. On Thursday, March 6th, she was drawing for Mommy even though she was in a lot of pain. Her drawings didn't turn out the way she wanted due to the pain, so she got really mad at times. She drew many smiling faces. She also wrote on one of her drawings: "make a smile!"

- If you are looking at my drawings, remember your sweet little Kyra!

Kyra & Mommy on Thursday, March 6th 2014



We talked with her many times about Heaven in the past few months, and read about it from the Bible. She believed completely what she heard from us but more importantly from the Word of God. Now she was comforting us. When we were crying she told us:

- Why are you crying? I am going to a much better place, where I will see again, I won't have any more pain and suffering, I will have a nice long hair again and I will not cry anymore! I don't want you to cry!

She was in a lot of pain all day long. We asked my sisters-in-law to take Elise and Brielle and take care of them. She was screaming when they took them. She wanted them to stay, but we didn't have a choice.

We didn't want them to see how their sister was frantic and suffering. Early that afternoon, we called the hospital because the pain meds didn't seem to work. An hour later the first hospice nurse arrived, but couldn't help much. A little later a few more nurses and a doctor came as well. Kyra was crying.

- This is the worst day of my life! I have had enough! I don't want to be here anymore! I just want to go to Heaven!



Kyra & Mommy

She prayed many times:

- Dear Father! Please take me home!

They put a needle in her leg and gave her stronger pain medications. Later that evening, she fell into coma. There were times when she didn't breathe for up to five minutes straight. The hospice nurse told us that she thinks Kyra only has a few hours left. All of our siblings that are in the San Diego area, and some of our friends came to our house. We prayed and sang her favorite songs together. To our surprise, she woke up early morning, on Friday, March 7th.

- Where did all these people sleep? – she asked, surprised.

Again she was in a lot of pain and now she was also itchy all over her body, but especially her face. It was hard to see her suffer. I prayed:

- Dear Father! You gave us a precious gift five years ago. Now you are asking us to give her back to you. We know that she will be going to a much better place than we could ever imagine. Please take her soon, so she wouldn't suffer any more!

- Daddy! I'm not going yet! I have a few more days here with you!

She drew again for Mommy and different loved ones. She had put all the drawings into a gift bag and told Anita to open it only when she will be gone. She wanted to talk to her grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins over Skype. She shared her experience:

- Jesus told me that He will take me to Heaven soon!
Isn't it wonderful?

- What did He sound like?

- He had a sweet voice – she was thinking for a moment
– you will know when He talks to you!

She played on the harp for us for the last time on this earth. That morning her harp teacher came to play for us for about an hour. Later, when Anita played ‘Amazing Grace’, Kyra sang for the last time. She was so weak that she could hardly finish it. She told us the reason she asked for a harp from Make-a-Wish foundation:

- I chose a harp, so I can leave it here for you! You can praise God with it. I will get a golden harp in Heaven when I get there.

She wanted to eat a “Turorudi”. Of course we didn't have any at home, but my brother overheard us talking about it, so he called his wife. Half an hour later they brought it for her. They had it in their freezer!

- God is taking such good care of us! I wished to eat “Turorudi” and He sent us some! – Kyra said.

Early that afternoon I was talking with my brother.

- I forgot that I am on a diet and now I ate something I was not supposed to. I can't even think clearly anymore.

- Don't worry about it. You have a lot of things going on.

- But I have to. I look like a cow. I gained a lot of weight since Kyra got sick due to the stress.

Kyra was drawing (and obviously listening) next to us.

- Daddy! Your job now is to be a cow!

Later in the afternoon she fell into a coma, never to wake up in this life again. The next few days were extremely difficult. Nobody knew how much longer she will be here. They had to continue to administer the highest doses of pain medication for her to make sure she is not in pain. For this reason, hospice nurses were in our home day and night, all the way until she died.

On Sunday, Elise came home for a short time to say farewell to her sister. Kyra couldn't respond and Elise was obviously sad. She didn't understand what was going on. She was just looking at her sister, who didn't even move. It was so heartbreaking.

On Tuesday night, both sets of grandparents arrived. They came to our house straight from the airport. When they stepped in the room and started to talk to Kyra, she responded by moving her lips and eyes and making some noise. She didn't respond at all in the previous 2-3 days.

That night, she started to sound weird. The way she breathed made a loud noise. At 5:45 AM, I woke up and realized that she was quiet. The same moment the hospice nurse came into the room for the same reason. I woke Anita up. She is going! She stopped breathing and her heart rate was falling quickly. She was pronounced dead shortly after 6 AM. She lived on this earth just a few hours short of 5 years and 5 months. Her

body died, but we know that the angels took her soul up to Heaven. It was Wednesday morning, March 12th, 2014. Her new, Heavenly birthday.

“...the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” (*Job 1:21*)



**“The homeland in Heaven draws me from this earth,
The homeland in Heaven alone has true worth.
Naught here stills my longing, naught can me inspire,
To dwell there forever is what I desire;
To dwell there forever is what I desire.**

**Farewell then, O earth, I am only thy guest,
Farewell to thy joys, from thy burdens I rest!
Thy hills and thy valleys, though wondrously fair,
Cannot with the Heavenly glories compare!
Cannot with the Heavenly glories compare!”**

from the Apostolic Christian Hymnal #331, verses 1 & 4

CHAPTER ELEVEN

FUNERAL



We dressed her up in her favorite dress and the hearse came at 10 o'clock. Anita wanted to give her a last kiss, but felt really weird. It wasn't her. She was not here anymore. It was just her body, but not her. We took her out together, her body became like a wooden stick. Lifeless, stiff, but still beautiful. As you can imagine, we were crying a lot. It was really hard to "lose" her, even though we have hope to see her again, when it will be our time to go. We wish it would come soon. Even as I'm writing this, I can't stop my tears.

The next few days we organized the funeral. We wanted to have it as soon as possible, so we didn't have to think about it for too long. We were able to schedule it for Saturday.

On March 15th, at 10 AM we had her funeral in Oceanside at Eternal Hills Mortuary. There were hundreds of people. Not even half could fit inside the chapel, so they set up loudspeakers outside. It was a beautiful service by our Elder Brothers. Our entire congregation was there, many relatives and friends from far and near, and even strangers, we have never met. Before the service, Kyra's harp teacher played on the harp for half an hour. For the entire day, Anita was really weak. We are still not sure if she also had a virus or it was just due the stress, but she was miserable. She had a hard time even to walk.

At the gravesite, we sang her favorite song, "Amazing Grace". After the service, the Elder Brother that told me 9

months ago that he feels Kyra will be healed, walked up to me.

- Do you remember what I told you when we were praying for Kyra in the hospital?

- Yes, I remember! You told me that you feel that Kyra will be healed. And you know what? You were right! She is healed indeed. She was healed the moment she died. Not the way we would have thought, but a much better way. She is healed and is in Heaven right now with Jesus, where she is not sick anymore, she is not suffering, not crying and has no more pain.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes;
and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor
crying, neither shall there be any more pain...”

(Revelation 21:4)

Sometimes things don't work out the way we think they should, but much better! Would it be better for her to be healed temporarily on this earth, or forever in Heaven? Of course we miss her, but for her it couldn't have turned out any better. Could God have healed her here? Yes, He could have even spared her of this sickness, but He chose not to. After the funeral one of my uncles opened the Bible for me and asked me:

- Did you know that Kyra is in the Bible?

- What do you mean?

- I just happened to read it recently:

“And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”

(Revelation 14:1-5)

Do you see Kyra in these verses?

- Redeemed from the earth, from among men (not angels, but humans)
- Virgins (most likely children)
- Firstfruits (first born children)
- In their mouth was found no guile, they are without fault (do you think anybody could be like that other than an innocent child?)
- Harpers harping with their harps

Of course we don't know exactly how it will be in Heaven, but we do know that it will be much more amazing than we can ever imagine.

A few days after the funeral, we've received a letter from the International Star Registry. They named a star after Kyra. If you want, you can look it up. They renamed the star Ursa Major RA 8h 44m 46s D 46⁰ 58' to "KYRA" We even received a star-map so we can see which star is now named after her.



Kyra's gravesite

**“When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.”**
(last verse of Amazing Grace)

CHAPTER TWELVE

GRIEVING



As you can imagine, we are having rough times. We miss Kyra a lot! Elise asks many times:

- Where is Kyra? When is she coming back? I want to play with her! Can I go there too? I want her to come back so we can play together! Does Jesus have princess toys for her? Is there a playground in Heaven? Is there a beach up there? Does Jesus have a car? Is there church in Heaven?

She asks these and similar questions. She doesn't remember when Kyra still had hair. When we are looking at older pictures, she is always surprised that Kyra had beautiful, long hair. She also thought that I was sick too, because I was bald. We had to tell her numerous times that daddy is not sick. She talks a lot about Kyra and about Heaven.

- Do you remember when we did this with Kyra? Mommy! Do you remember when Kyra was here with us in this park? What is she doing now? I want to go to Heaven too and I want to play with her!

- We want to go too, but we have to wait for God's timing.

- Mommy! Now I'm sitting in your lap and Kyra is sitting in Jesus' lap!

Some of our days are fine, but we also have some really hard ones. Sometimes we just want to cry and cry. Whenever we

think about her it feels like somebody ripped out our hearts. We know she is in a really good place, waiting for us, but we still miss her. It's never easy. We feel like the grieving process will never end except for when we'll die.

We are trying to get back to our normal lives. I went back to work. We are keeping ourselves busy, so we don't have time to think about her. Many times, it may seem to the people around us as if we are over the grieving, but we are not. We may try to look okay, but it's not that simple.

Sometimes it seems like others don't want to bring up Kyra in our conversation, thinking that it just hurts us, but honestly, we want to talk about her as much as we can. It hurts more if it seems like people already forgot her.

Sometimes it may seem like we only want to talk about her and we bring her up every time we meet. We feel sorry for our siblings and friends especially, but please understand that we are still in the grieving process. We need time to heal. This is the reason why we are writing this book. It helps us heal.

It may also seem weird to some, that our home is full of pictures of Kyra. This is the only way for us to see her now. We miss her a lot. Please remember us in your prayers.

Whatever we do, wherever we go, everything reminds us of her. If we did something with her then we say:

- Remember when we were here with her? Remember we did this with Kyra? Remember what she said? Remember how much she enjoyed this place, how she smiled?

If we have never been to the place with her:

- How much she would enjoy this place! I wish she was here to play with her siblings! She would be so happy.

Of course we know that she is much happier now. She wouldn't want to come back here. She is safe in the arms of Jesus.

What happened to us completely changed our life and our thinking. The things that we used to dream of (house, new car, etc...) seem irrelevant. She left here everything she had, just like we will. We can only take with us the treasures that are Heavenly if we collected any. Whatever material things we have on this earth are not ours, but God's. He gave them to us to use it for His glory and honor. If we use them like that, then He will bless us with Heavenly things.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

DEATHLY SICKNESS



Kyra was very sick, she had cancer. Cancer is a deadly sickness, many people die from it. There are many other sicknesses that can be deathly also. We need to remember, that there are also spiritual sicknesses that can kill us. Our God is the only one that can heal us from these spiritual sicknesses. Come to Him and He will heal you! He loves you and cares for you! He will wash away all your sins, if you believe! How do we know? He saved us too! Us, the lowliest worms! Don't wait! Tomorrow is not yours!

What can we Christians learn? We need to be careful how we walk in this life, because our children and even others that are around us will look at our life as an example of a Christian. Are we walking as a Christ-like man/woman? We also need to pray for each other and even for those that don't know Christ as their personal Savior. We can learn a lot from those men that brought their friend to Jesus:

“And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick

of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.” (*Mark 2:1-12*)

(also see Matthew 9:2-8 & Luke 5:17-26)

Jesus healed him because of their faith. Let us remember our fellow men in our prayers!

You may ask: couldn't He have healed Kyra too? We believe He could, but He had a better plan for her. We miss Kyra, but at the same time we know that she is in Heaven. What better could we desire for her? And we know that this is our Creator's desire for all of us.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (*John 3:16*)

Many times we pray if He would spare us and our loved ones from all suffering and pain. But is this what we should be praying for? Sometimes God lets us go through hard times, because He wants us to learn something important. And although death may seem a bad thing - and from a human perspective it is - but if we live as spiritual men, death is not the end but rather is the beginning of eternal life, without suffering, pain and everything associated with the physical life that we experience here on this earth.

Naturally, since we have “lost” Kyra, we’ve talked with many people about death, suffering, sicknesses, trials and tribulations. One mother told us that she is praying if God would have her children go through hardship, tribulation, and trials, so they could get closer to God. They are rebellious, as every child is, and won’t accept their parents’ advice to follow Jesus Christ. Listening to it at first seemed a little strange. But if we are honest, that is the real love a parent can have for their children.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God” (*Romans 8:28*)

The reader may also ask, as many have asked us, why would God allow such a small child to suffer? If there was a good God there would be no suffering. If he really cares, why is there so much pain? Did He create pain and sickness as well? And why would he allow especially those that serve Him to suffer? Does He even exist?

We need to clarify a few things. Sicknesses, suffering, pain and death are direct consequences of sin. The first few

chapters of Genesis teach us how God created everything in 6 days.

“And God saw everything that he had made, and,
behold, it was very good.” (*Genesis 1:31*)

Anything that is bad - like sickness, suffering, pain and death - could not be a part of “very good”. So why do we have bad things on this earth? Shortly after creation, men chose to disobey God. They became proud and wanted to be like God. They were not satisfied with knowing the good; they also desired to know the bad. So instead of obeying their Creator, they ate from the fruit of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” As a consequence of this sin - just as God warned them, that if they eat from the fruit of that tree, they will surely die – death, suffering and pain entered this earth. Not just humans, but all animals, and the entire universe are cursed.

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth
in pain together” (*Romans 8:22*)

Before the curse there was no death, not even animal death. You may think that we are suffering the results of Adam and Eve's sins. But do you think we would have done it differently? A better question would be: are we doing it differently? When a child is born to this earth, he or she is innocent. As the child grows, each chooses the path he/she would take. I don't think there ever was a child (except for Jesus) that was satisfied with knowing good. We all did the same thing Adam and Eve did. We were proud enough to start trusting ourselves rather than our parents and more importantly, our Creator.

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one”

(Romans 3:10)

Most people, even some Christians, question if the first 11 chapters of Genesis are accurate. They would rather believe in anything, but God's word. It's not surprising that Satan attacks these chapters, as they are fundamental to the Gospels. If you don't believe them, how could you trust the rest of the scriptures? If they are not accurate and evolution is true instead, then we are talking about billions of years of history, that had to include death and decay before man came into existence. If death is not a result of man's sin, than why did Jesus come to die in our place? We will need to die then, just as anything and everything for billions of years did, so what is the point of His death? While there is much more that we could say about this topic - this is not the theme of this book - we need to make sure to believe God's word literally, from the first verse to the last.

We can also learn another lesson from the above story. God is our Creator! Since sicknesses, suffering and death are direct consequences of sin, and He can heal the sick, raise the dead, He can also forgive our sins. Your sins too!

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

INVITATION



Now you may think, what's the point of our lives then? We will have to die sooner or later, and we cannot change this fact. There is good news! Jesus, God's son came to this earth about 2000 years ago to save us. He died on the cross for you and for me, so we wouldn't need to die. Although physical death will still be our earthly life's end, it will be the start of our eternal life as well. Our bodies will decay, but our spiritual life doesn't end there. We either go to Heaven, or Hell, depending on if we lived for Him or not.

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is.” (*Jeremiah 17:7*)

If you want to go to Heaven, there is a way, and only one way. This way leads through Jesus Christ. He invites you today, give your life to Him, repent from your sins, be born again and get baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Live a holy life, serving Him who saved us by His blood, fulfilling His plans in our lives even if it leads through suffering and even unto death. If we live according to His plans for our lives, the Holy Spirit will help us every step of the way.

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit... Ye must be born again.” (*John 3:5-7*)

Why would He lead us through suffering? He wants to make us ready for Heaven. Only the holy will be able to enter His holy city, because He is Holy. You may say that it is impossible to live a holy life, and for a human it is indeed, but that's the reason Jesus came to save us. Through His grace, everything is possible.

“And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.” (*Mark 10:27*)

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (*Romans 12:1-2*)

I have heard a story many years ago. Two sailors were going back to their ship after dinner. The ship was anchored about a mile from shore and they had a small boat to take them back to the ship. They sat in the boat and started to paddle with the oars. They paddled for a while, but the ship didn't get closer. It was dark, but they could still see the light coming from the ship. They didn't know what was going on, just kept on paddling, faster and harder. They had put all their effort and all their strength into it, but they still didn't reach their goal. When the sun started to give its first beams in the early morning, they realized that they were still in the same spot where they started the night before. Their boat was still anchored down to the earth!

Likewise, if our boat is still anchored to this earth, we cannot get closer to God. Anything that would be more important for us on this earth than God, we must put behind us and follow Jesus all the days of our lives.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also... But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (*Matthew 6:19-21, 33*)

He wants all of us to go to Heaven, but He is not going to force us. It is up to us to choose. There are only two ways we can choose. We either serve Satan or we serve God. There is no third way, and we cannot serve both at the same time.

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (*Matthew 6:24*)

What will you choose? Maybe you feel that you don't have faith? Ask God to give you faith and search the scriptures!

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (*Matthew 7:7*)

CONCLUSION

Some may question if the things we wrote down in this book are true or fiction, especially the parts where our Creator talked to us. An adult could imagine things like this, but do you think a 5 year old could come up with something that Kyra told us? We talked a lot about Heaven with her in the last months of her life, including that there will be no more sickness, suffering, pain or crying. We told her that there will be harps in Heaven - possibly golden harps - as we know it from the Word of God. She could've learned these things from us, but when she woke up after the MRI, she was so joyful and she told us right away what Jesus revealed to her. Just over a week later she passed away. It cannot be a coincidence. It was obviously and clearly a supernatural intervention. Whether or not you believe in God is your personal choice, but you will be held accountable for your decisions.

So many miracles happened to us, not because we were special, but God knew what we needed. We are just ordinary human beings and God showed His mercy and power through the lowliest of His creation.

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (*Isaiah 40:31*)

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“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” (*Jeremiah 29:11*)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our thankfulness first of all to our Heavenly Father, who loves us so much, that He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus, so we could have eternal life. Jesus came to save us, He died on the cross, but resurrected on the third day, and ascended to Heaven, where He is interceding on our behalf. He took Kyra to Himself, to Heavenly Jerusalem, to live with Him forever.

We are thankful for our family, friends and our beloved church family (Apostolic Christian Church (Nazarean) of San Diego, California). Thank you all for your love, support and prayers that followed us throughout this journey of our life. We couldn't have made it without you. We know that God will not forget the things you have done for us.

We also would like to thank all the doctors, nurses and all medical professionals for their care and service that they did for us. May God bless you continually for your love when you help those sick children who are in your care in the hospital.

We would like to thank the Make-a-Wish foundation for the service they do. It is so beautiful how they help these children with deathly diseases. We also thank the Vista Farmers Market for organizing the fundraiser for us in September, 2013.

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Tibi & Anita Namenyi

TIMELINE OF KYRA'S LIFE:

Kyra is born	9:30 AM, October 12 th , 2008
Kyra's sister Elise is born	April, 2011
Kyra is taken to the hospital	June 24 th , 2013
Kyra has a nine hour surgery	June 26 th , 2013
Kyra is diagnosed with cancer	June 28 th , 2013
Kyra's First chemo	July 3 rd , 2013
Kyra's First radiation treatment	end of July, 2013
Kyra's Last radiation treatment	beginning of September, 2013
Kyra's sister Brielle is born	October, 2013
MRI, they think there is new growth	beginning of January, 2014
Pet scan in Los Angeles	mid-January, 2014
Results of the Pet-scan: no new cancer, previous cancer has shrunk	end of January, 2014
MRI, "Jesus will take me to Heaven soon"	March 4 th , 2014
Kyra's last time at church	Wednesday, March 5 th , 2014
Kyra's first time in coma	late afternoon, March 6 th , 2014
Kyra falls into coma, never to wake up again in this life	afternoon, March 7 th , 2014
Kyra's body is pronounced dead, she enters Heaven	6:05 AM, March 12 th , 2014
Kyra's funeral	10 AM, March 15 th , 2014
The Perfect Gift is written	July, 2014

THE PERFECT GIFT

Tibor & Anita Namenyi

KYRA'S JOURNEY FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN

"The Perfect Gift" is a heartbreaking, true story of a sweet little girl, Kyra, who was diagnosed with cancer at age four. Follow her and her family's journey, suffering and many miracles in this book, written by her parents. After nine months fighting this deadly disease, during an MRI-scan, she had a special encounter with Jesus:

- Jesus told me that He will take me to Heaven soon! Isn't it wonderful?
- What did He sound like?
- He had a sweet voice – she was thinking for a moment – you will know when He talks to you!

She had such a "childlike" faith in God that all of us could be jealous of. God gave her 5 years and 5 months on this earth, then took her home to Heaven to enjoy eternal life. She is "safe in the arms of Jesus".