

FINDING GOD IN UNEXPECTED WAYS

5 SURPRISING PLACES

GOD MAY BE FOUND

TARI ATCHISON

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This book is dedicated with honor and pride to my beloved children: Brittany, Eric, Christine, sons-in-law Ryan and Dan, and daughter-in-law Lindsey.

They are my steadfast inspiration and the driving force that has brought this book into existence.

I love these words that speak truth!

1

How Many Questions Can I Ask?

~ The Angel ~

What just happened? Where did that come from? Out of nowhere, while I lay in a hospital bed, an angel suddenly appeared, sitting on my bed beside me. It caught me off guard. The angel leaned over and rested its head on my chest, and I felt the gentle pressure on my chest. At the same time that I felt pressure on my chest, its hand wrapped around one side of my waist, and I felt the angel's hand holding me securely. I recognized the familiar sensation of a person's head on my chest or a hand around my waist, but this time, it was different—it was an angel.

After holding me for what felt like a long time, the angel disappeared—as quickly as it appeared. It was the day after I arrived at the hospital, having been diagnosed with acute leukemia. The day before, I had received the news and was admitted to the hospital to promptly begin chemotherapy. My family, who had been in the room with me, stepped out for a few minutes. During their absence, the angel appeared, sitting on my bed beside me. My children, aged three, five, and six, were with me just weeks before, while ice skating together. I was healthy and robust. And now, cancer cells were rapidly multiplying throughout my blood at an uncontrollable rate of nearly 4,000 cells per day.

Here I was, the day after my diagnosis, lying motionless in a hospital bed, looking down toward my chest while contemplating the air above my chest instead of the angelic presence I was experiencing just moments ago. My mouth was ajar, my heart felt stunned, and I couldn't help but wonder... What. Just. Happened?

~ The Chaplain ~

As I pondered that question, the door to my room swung open, and my second visitor walked in. She introduced herself as the hospital chaplain. As she approached my bed, I had to share with her what I experienced just moments before. I exclaimed, "You won't believe what just happened to me!" After telling her what happened, she calmly responded, "That doesn't surprise me." *What?* I was surprised. Why wasn't she surprised? *Does she know exactly what I'm talking about? How can she not be surprised? Does God send angels to visit hospitals frequently? Or maybe to Minnesota hospitals?*

She explained, “I was actually coming to your room to read you Psalm 91 from the Bible.” At that time, I wasn’t familiar with Psalm 91. As she read, my emotions overwhelmed me when she reached the part that said, “God will give His angels charge concerning you; they will bear you up with their hands.” These words carried power. Enough power to cause an eruption inside my heart. Through tears, I exclaimed, “That’s exactly what the angel did! That’s what just happened! The angel wrapped its hand around my waist and laid its head on my chest. I felt the angel’s hand holding me for a long time—before it vanished.”

Little did any of us know that, during my family’s brief absence to get coffee, two visitors would enter my room. Each of them would become the reason for unexpected conversations I would share with my family upon their return.

***“For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard
you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands.”***

—Psalm 91:11-12a

~ My Child ~

That evening, my three children visited me in the hospital. My six-year-old daughter gave me a drawing she had made at home before coming. She said, “Mommy, I drew an angel for you.” I was surprised because she had never drawn an angel before. Curious, I asked why she chose to draw an angel, and she simply replied, “Oh, I just wanted to.”

As she stood by my bed holding her drawing, my heart and words seemed frozen. After handing me the picture, she said, “I also made up a song for you today, Mommy. I want to sing it for you. The name of my song is ‘Angels.’” As she sang with her angelic six-year-old voice, tears flowed down my cheeks uncontrollably. Her song went like this: “My angels are my friends forever / And my love will never vanish / I love my angels / My love will last forever. Amen.”

Her sweet voice echoed through the air, making it the most beautiful sound I had ever heard. Was it the sweetness of a child’s voice or the words of her song? No, it was more than that. Did God inspire my daughter’s idea? Does God prompt a child’s heart? After she finished singing, I embraced her for a long time, tears still streaming down my face.

As I was embracing my daughter, I was being embraced by God—even through tears and bewilderment. My thoughts were rapidly recounting the sequence of events: first, the angel; second, the chaplain reading Psalm 91; third, my daughter and her drawing; and then, my daughter's song. Truly, God was speaking to me through all these events—one after another. After wiping away my tears, and with love swelling in my heart, I looked at all three of my precious children standing next to me by my bed and said, "I love all of you so much. Let me tell you what happened to Mommy today."

~ The Call ~

Later that night, a family friend called me from Colorado. He often engaged in prayer for me during this time. He said, "Something really strange happened today while I was praying for you...I had a vision." Hearing this surprised me; visions weren't something he talked about. "You had a what?" I asked. He explained, "Yes, as I was praying for you, all of a sudden, I had a vision. I saw a messenger from heaven come to you, and the angel poured oil over you, from the top of your head to the tip of your toes."

After hearing the words he shared, I felt a piercing in my heart that I had never felt before. Within our few brief moments of phone silence, I was still trying to understand the incredible events of the day. It was hard to believe, and even more difficult to understand. Then I broke the silence and said, "You won't believe what happened to me today." I began to share my experience, starting with the presence of an angel in my room and then expanding to the stories of others.

This whole encounter made me think about the presence of God, the power of prayer, and the tangible reality of angels. I already believed in angels, but now I had not only seen but also felt the touch of their presence—on my body. It became clear to me how God repeatedly affirms the reality of His actions. This experience was not just about me; it also involved others who heard God's prompting and messages—before sharing them with me. Did God show up in a prayer? In a vision? In a hospital room? In a visitor? In a song? Did I see? Did I believe?

Not on that day, but much later, I found myself pondering—*What occurred first? The prayer and vision our friend witnessed, or the angel I encountered? But does it truly matter? Why do I seek*

validation? Human logic. Reason. Answers. Would the story be any different, regardless of the sequence of events? But what if you're pragmatic and need to figure things out? I always want to, and need to, figure things out. Does God need to be proved? Does God validate Himself? Does it really matter "who's first"?

~ The Night ~

After talking with my friend that night, I lay in bed moments before drifting off to sleep, reflecting on the conversation we had over the phone. Recalling his words, I repeated to myself the exact message he conveyed from his vision: "The angel poured oil from the top of your head to the tip of your toes." As I uttered the word "toes," I felt a peculiar sensation—two gentle taps on my toes. Initially, I presumed it might be the nurse rousing me for my sleeping pill, as she had done the night before. However, upon opening my eyes, I discovered no one in the room. I am familiar with the sensation of touch on my body, and my toes distinctly experienced two taps. Although I cannot definitively confirm it was an angel, I can affirm that my toes were indeed tapped.

~ Reflection ~

God doesn't need to be proved.

God validates Himself.

Where do these things come from? I mean, all these occurrences—uncommon things and common things. Simple things, and things I don't understand—like an angel's embrace, a picture, a song, a Bible verse, a phone call, a vision, a jar of oil, or a simple toe-tap. All on the same day. Why would these things carry any meaning, beyond what they are on the surface? Who or what imparts meaning to them? Is it the timing, the place, the company you're with, or the actual situation? Or is it God? Does God impart the meaning? Until now, I had only experienced a few occurrences like this. I'm referring to genuine encounters with God—moments that defy explanation. Undeniably "God-things." I have always labeled them as my "God-stories." Read on for more...

2

Whose Hand Was That?

~ Aspirin or Candy ~

Do angels descend from heaven to gently tap on toes, rousing us from slumber? Could it be that my mother, on one fateful morning, felt the soft touch of an angelic toe-tapper urging her to awaken? My mom shared this story with me, an incident from long ago when I was just twenty-two months old. In the early morning hours, I, in my toddler's curiosity, somehow managed to climb to the highest shelf in a kitchen cupboard. My goal? What I believed to be a treasure trove of candy.

Unknown to me, it was a bottle of St. Joseph's baby aspirin. The night before, my mom said she had given me a single tablet from the brand-new bottle. Somehow, after claiming the unreachable bottle while she was blissfully unaware, I devoured the entire contents of the delightful candy jar and then casually discarded the empty aspirin bottle in the kitchen trash can.

As my mother recounts the story, she describes being abruptly roused from her sleep that morning. She walked straight to the kitchen for reasons unknown, her gaze falling directly upon the trash can. There, she discovered the empty aspirin bottle. A bottle that had been tucked safely out of reach on the topmost shelf of a kitchen cupboard. To her surprise, she found me sitting on the counter with a chair pulled up to the counter's edge. Connecting the dots, she asked if I had eaten the aspirin, to which my innocent reply was that I had eaten all the candy. In a swift moment, my mother scooped me off the counter and ran out the front door, cradling me in her arms as she ran to the hospital merely two blocks away. At the hospital, my stomach was promptly emptied of its contents, and an entire bottle's worth of baby aspirin was revealed.

Reflecting on the incident, my mother expressed her belief that a guardian angel must have stirred her from sleep that morning. Without that divine intervention, my nap that afternoon might have been eternal...

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