

My Journey Through Cancer: A Story of Faith, Strength, and Healing

By: TA

My health journey has been anything but ordinary. From testing positive for tuberculosis, being bitten by a snake, diagnosed with pre- endometriosis, a spastic bladder, and severe UTIs to facing two separate cancer diagnoses—Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma in 1994 and Triple Negative Breast Cancer in 2021—my path has been filled with adversity. But it has also been overflowing with grace, love, and miracles.

Today, I stand in *complete, optimal health*. I don’t say that lightly. I say it with deep reverence and profound gratitude to the *Great Physician*, Jesus Christ. Only through His healing power am I here to tell you, my story.

Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma (1994)

I was just 28—climbing the corporate ladder in banking, recently relocated for a promotion, and raising two beautiful little girls with my husband, when I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma. A large tumor was found on the left side of my neck. I already had a gut feeling it was cancer. When two doctors walked into the room, I knew for sure.

That same day, I began chemotherapy. My doctor at Scott & White in Temple, Texas called MD Anderson—right there in front of us—to confirm the treatment plan. That gave us trust and confidence. We followed their aggressive regimen exactly.

Chemotherapy was brutal. I was hospitalized many times. My body was breaking down: my hair fell out, my skin was dry and itchy, my mouth and throat covered in sores, and the headaches from spinal taps were intense. I couldn’t help but think, *is this what life will look like without me?* Watching my husband cook for the girls, bathe them and tuck them in, it felt like I was peeking into a life I might not be part of. It was a very long year.

I was angry with God. *Why me?* I screamed, cried, cussed, questioned everything. I had surrendered my life to Him, but I wasn’t truly living for Him. I wanted to be a successful woman, a great mom, a loving wife—I didn’t want cancer.

Then one day, a friend gave me a gospel cassette by Sandi Patty. I played it nonstop. Letters, cards, and even money started showing up in the mail. My husband would come in and say, “You’ve got fan mail!” I had no idea so many people cared. It softened my heart.

Our church stepped up with meals and donations. My family came and cleaned, watched the girls, sat with me—sometimes in silence. Just being present. That love changed me.

One afternoon, I tried to read through the survival statistics for my cancer (this was before WebMD). As I sat on the floor, papers spread out everywhere, with my pen and a

highlighter, tears began to flow. My husband saw what I was doing, scooped up the papers, handed me my Bible and said, “*Read this instead.*” I did. That moment—on that couch with my Bible—I encountered Jesus like never before. His peace washed over me. He reminded me to focus on Him, to trust Him completely. It was like an out of body experience. A visit with Jesus!

From that day forward, Jesus became not just my Savior, but my *obsession*. My King. My Healer. My Protector. I no longer needed control, I needed *faith*.

That long, hard season taught me that my success doesn’t lie in a title or paycheck. It’s in being a mother, a wife, a woman of God. It was in that valley I truly met Jesus—and I wouldn’t trade this season for anything.

Triple Negative Breast Cancer (2021)

2021 started like any other year—full of hopes and plans. But God had another valley to walk me through. I’m learning to walk in His shadow. Completely enamored!

In February, I noticed a faint pink discoloration on my left breast. After examining it more closely, I felt a small lump. I knew what it was. Having already survived cancer once, I know my body. But with a doctor’s appointment already scheduled for March, and a family trip to Montana coming up, I waited.

When I finally saw my primary care physician, he asked, “Anything else bothering you?” I almost didn’t mention the lump—but at the last moment, I did. That honesty led to a mammogram, an ultrasound, a biopsy and the waiting game again. On June 14, Flag Day, I received the call: *Invasive Mammary Carcinoma. Triple Negative Breast Cancer.*

I was stunned. “How can I not even stay well, well?” I thought. But once again, my husband looked at me with fierce determination and said, “*We will get through this together. We got this.*” *He held me tight!*

Treatment and Grit

Chemotherapy began in July 2021 and lasted nine long months. It was isolating—thanks to COVID, no visitors were allowed. FaceTime and Zoom calls became my lifeline. The treatments were physically devastating. I experienced severe bone pain, fatigue, nausea, no appetite, complete hair loss, neuropathy, terrible mood swings, heart palpitations, low blood pressure, memory loss, and depression. But every side effect was a sign that I was *fighting*. I remember at Thanksgiving my fingernails had become so loose they oozed and bled, something I hadn’t experienced before. The skin on my feet peeled away and it all became too much. Most days I sat in my chair curled up in a ball. But always knew God never left my side. He was fighting for me, singing and praying over me.

In January 2022, I underwent a lumpectomy. The surgeon at Scott & White couldn't believe that the tumor was gone on scans. I told him I knew it would be I asked God to completely remove it and He did. I wanted that surgeon's mind to be blown and it was. You should have seen the look on his face. I asked him, "Do I still need surgery, if there's nothing there?" He removed any residual tumor and surrounding cells with precision and care. Recovery wasn't easy. Some days I just wanted to quit. But my daughter and husband held me up when I couldn't stand on my own. I am grateful for both.

Next came 20 rounds of radiation. I had to learn to hold my breath for 20 seconds during each session so the radiation wouldn't harm my heart any more than the chemo already had. March 11, 2022, marked my final treatment—an emotional milestone that brought renewed hope.

Faith, Family, and Finding Purpose

Through it all, God continued revealing His strength within me. He drew me into a deeper love for His Word and reminded me that real joy—eternal joy—is found only in Him. He showed me how to *be still* again. How to receive help from others, and more importantly, how to give love when others need it most. Learning to love others as Jesus does.

My family, friends, church, and care team became the hands and feet of Jesus to me. Every call, every meal, every ride to treatment reminded me that I was not alone. God used them to meet every single need.

Now, four years after my diagnosis, I continue to pray for no recurrence. I thank God every single day for my life and health. I'm grateful for the incredible doctors at Scott & White, the support of my loved ones, and the medical advancements that made treatment possible.

Why I Share My Story

I've created this space to share stories of hope because I know what it feels like to be in the fight of your life. I know the fear. The pain. The questions. But I also know the healing, the joy, the *peace that surpasses understanding*.

If you've been diagnosed with cancer, Non-Hodgkin's, breast, or any other—please know this: You are not alone. We serve a big God. A loving God. A healing God. He will never leave you. Invite Him into your heart. He's ready to carry you through your valley, too.

I am living proof.

He is bigger than cancer.

He is *always* good.