**OFFERING - PROVISION IN THE UNEXPECTED**

I have a bit of a story so may be a little longer than usual but I really feel led to share.

***Ephesians 2:10 For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.***

We have been reminded of this truth. And God has prepared for us to receive in advance too.

Have you experienced times when you may be in a place in your life which isn’t that great and it may even be blocking you from feeling God’s presence and how He continues to provide what you need. Sometimes we can be so consumed with what’s happening that we can’t see God. But He is there and I believe He sends His angels in the form of friends to be there for us.

I want to share with you something happening in our family at the moment.

As a number of you know that in September our son married his partner of 14 years because the laws changed to allow marriage equality and the Uniting Church decided to perform such marriages. As elders in their church, they have been keeping it going while they had no ministers. The new ones started January. So our son Curtis and David were married in a beautiful God honouring, happy and joyous ceremony.

We went and spent Christmas with them and our daughter Elyse. So it was a lovely time. Just after New Years we got news that David had been diagnosed with testicular cancer. This news was most unwelcome and Considering the family has been dealing with my cancer journey, this was just a bit overwhelming particularly for my son. But interestingly he felt my experience had prepared him a little.

David had surgery then a week later started his 9 weeks of chemo. Curtis job which he started a few months ago, is only 10 minutes walk from the hospital. He finishes at 1pm so he is there in the afternoon for David.

David thought he only had 2 weeks sick leave but found out he had 11 weeks. Curtis also has an evening job for 3 nights. They gave him a week off for David’s surgery. Curtis had decided he was going to leave the job. He is close to 10 years so he would get long service leave which would be helpful and allow him to be home to care for David while dealing with chemo. But they came to him and said they were giving him 10 weeks paid careers leave. He is a good worker and I don’t think they want to lose him. God is providing. Gets finances and keeps job.

Another extra blessing is they won a bedroom makeover by IKEA. They live in a share house and have done for quite a few years. Thankfully rent is low. They have a unit they are renting out so will continue to do that for a while to come. They were going to move in March but have put that off for now. So another blessing how that’s worked out. They’ve never had new furniture. Usually keep things from people who leave things when they go. So this will give them a lovely room for David to recuperate in.

Others ways God is showing His provision.

They are part of a wonderful church family who immediately stepped up to support them. One set up a web site for people to log on and register for providing meals. Very handy. They are currently booked up to end of February. How amazing. They have friends who come to go for a walk with David in the afternoons when a bit cooler. When in hospital some friends came to play board games to help pass the time.

In the midst of all that is going on they can see God caring for them. These are a couple who are very caring and aware of others. They often go out of their way for others. They are faithful to God in their church, community, family and friends and God hasn’t left them. God is providing for their individual, unique needs. I shared a while ago about God blessing a young boy with a toy he was after. He realised God blesses us where we are and how we need.

We can rely on God. God invites us along in the blessing of others. He gives opportunities to us to bless others and in return be blessed.

Trusting God by putting Him first creates a heart to be in fellowship with Him. That’s putting Him first in all things including our finances. Don’t live in fear but live in freedom knowing when we seek His will in our lives He also gives us wisdom in making decisions. He also blesses us by providing the basics of life and sometimes more.

***“And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.”***

As we bring our tithes and offerings to God this morning, I’m going to give thanks for how God is profit my family. You may choose to do the same.

And as we sing we will be reminded dead that God is unchanging. His promises remain today as they always have.