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Back from the Gates of Insanity

“My heart couldn’t bear to watch my baby boy agonizing in pain. He looked up at me as I wept. His little hands reached up and wiped the tears away from my eyes. Then he laid his head on my shoulder and died. That same month I gave birth to a beautiful little girl. She only lived a few hours and then she too was gone.”-- Mamá Consuelo, on the deaths of her two-year old son and newborn daughter.

When I first met her, I never imagined how amazing she was. Mamá Consuelo was not put together. Her clothing consisted of a faded, mismatched skirt and blouse set. Her hem nearly hugged the ground. Only a set of weathered, dusty feet in old flipflops peeked out underneath. Quite myopic, she peered at me through the

cataracts that threatened to completely cover the surface of her eyes. I did not know it then, but I was looking into the face of one of the mightiest warriors of the Amazon.

I soon found out that this woman, together with her husband, Pedro, had already started ten churches in the few years following her salvation. She spoke five tribal languages. And when she prayed, you could almost feel the mountains trembling. The tremendous inner strength she carried had not come cheaply, I was to learn.

The Pain Was Too Much

Consuelo and Pedro had come to us because they wanted formal ministry training. Shortly after I met her, they moved onto campus at our Pastors' School.

Some months later, Mamá Consuelo and I sat together after class. Our chairs consisted of hacked off tree stumps set up in the dirt. Though a generation above me, in that moment, she was my student. That is how humble she is. She wanted me to minister to her. I was thirty-one years old. She was nearly fifty. I felt a bit like John the Baptist must have when Jesus came to him wanting to be baptized. I wanted to exclaim, "Mamá Consuelo, you should minister to me!" Instead, I held my peace and listened to her story.

Her narrative began with her earliest memories:

Little Consuelo cringed as her father raged, "You are

stupid! You are as scrawny and ugly as a chicken! You shouldn't have even been born!" This was her daily reality—blistering anger and cruelty.

The petite child grew up, scarred by deep wounds of rejection. Searching for the love she had never experienced at home, she stumbled through one broken relationship after another. She finally ended up pregnant by a drunken man named Pedro, and they began their life together.

The cycle of abuse continued. The pain became excruciating.

Pedro's alcoholism translated into daily violence. He regularly used all his masculine strength to injure his wife and children physically and emotionally. Fidelity was not among his set of values, and he continually flaunted his adulterous affairs with other women.

“She went out of her mind and began wandering the streets in a delirium.”

Consuelo's only consolation was in her children. So when her two youngest babies died within two weeks of each other, her utter desolation stole her sanity. The agony of living had become too much. She went out of her mind and began wandering the streets in a delirium. She searched for her little ones among the neighborhood children, forgetting they were no longer alive. Day and night, she cried out, expressing her desperation and confusion in a

loud voice. This went on for three years.

It looked like the end was drawing near.

Soon her emotional and spiritual reality overcame her physical frame as well. She lost her eyesight. Cancer started in her uterus and spread until it racked her body. She became so weak she could no longer walk.

Pedro glared at her contemptuously as she lay on the floor in a fetal position. He snarled, "I can no longer stand the sight of you. I am leaving. I'll be back when you are dead."

Darkness engulfed Consuelo, penetrating to the depths of her soul. Loneliness and despair clawed at her as she waited for death to finish taking her.

God Reached Down

In the midst of such torment, came a knock on the door.

Consuelo ignored the knock, but it would not go away. When she did not respond, the door swung open anyway. A neighbor named Saraí came in and knelt by her on the floor. "I have come to take you to church," she announced.

Consuelo protested weakly. She had absolutely no interest in church. She wanted Saraí to go away and let her die. But she did not have enough strength to resist. Saraí

picked her up off the ground and sustained her skeletal body, literally dragging her to church.

At first, Consuelo slumped miserably at the back of the rustic building, huddled over. Soon, however, the presence of the Lord caught her attention. She found herself drawn to the altar. Sarai carried her there. Up front, Consuelo fell down under the power of the Holy Spirit as if dead. When she finally stood up, she could walk and see! At the same instant, every last trace of cancer disappeared from her body. Then suddenly she realized, as a beautiful stream of heavenly language flowed from her lips, that she was back in her right mind.

The same God who healed her body cared deeply about her emotional suffering too. She shared with me:

“And then I saw my babies walk away with the angel, brimming over with joy.”

“Soon after that, I had a vision. An angel came to me, showing me my two children in heaven. They were so beautiful and happy! They had both grown quite a bit since they had left this earth. Jesus was caring for them wonderfully. Their faces emanated peaceful contentment.

In the vision, my daughter held up a big mirror for me to look into. When I did, I saw myself in an exquisite white gown, looking prettier than I had ever imagined. I heard the words, ‘Always remember, this is what you really look like.’ And then I saw my babies walk away with the angel,

brimming over with joy. This encounter, in one instant, healed the anguish I had been carrying inside.”

The Lord brought a profound and decisive healing to Mamá Consuelo’s soul in that moment. He completely removed the burden of grief she had been carrying. She tells me that to this day she has never again felt the pain of her children’s loss. When our Daddy God heals us, He does a thorough job!

As soon as she got home, Consuelo wrote a letter to Pedro. “I am completely healed! Jesus has even restored my sanity!” she testified with overflowing gratitude. He recognized her handwriting instantly, but could not quite bring himself to believe it was true. He decided to return home to investigate. Lo and behold, he found a beaming Consuelo waiting for him there with open arms. He listened to her story with astonishment. When she finished telling it, he immediately decided to become a follower of Jesus too.