

# Shooting the Wounded

*Longview Bible Fellowship exists as a Christ-centred ministry of safety and protection to attract people of all ages.*

*This story is true but the names have been changed.*

When the phone rang in her quiet southern Ontario home at 9 o' clock in the evening, Susan had no idea how the conversation she was about to have would change her life for ever. Life was good. Her previous marriage had been an unhappy one, but since marrying Richard just a few months earlier she had begun to heal from the emotional and physical abuse.

The commute into Toronto each day was tiresome, but they both had good jobs there and could pay the bills with a bit left over. Richard, recovering from the scars of his own unhappy marriage, loved and cared for her. Life was good.

Then the phone rang.

"I'm sorry, Susan, but you need to come to my office first thing in the morning. You have cancer."

It transpired that the sinister growth had been silently spreading through her body for the past two years, and radical surgery was required. When it was over, the surgeon came to Richard with a serious look on her face. "The cancer has spread more than we thought. We took out as much as we could, but it will be a week before we know if we got it all."

The couple tried to be optimistic. Their life together was looking so good. Surely it wouldn't all be over so soon?

But when the frozen sections came back, the news was devastating. The doctors would do what they could with radiation but even so, Susan had about two more years before the cancer would take her life.

Susan and Richard had both been active in their respective churches, but over time had drifted away. Now they felt the need for the support of a church community. They went to talk to the pastor of a church a few blocks from their home, seeking help. Support. Fellowship.

The pastor's response was as unexpected as it was chilling. "You are both divorced. You aren't welcome here".

He shot the wounded couple.

Here at Longview Bible Fellowship, there are many wounded people. Perhaps we are all wounded, to one degree or another. We aren't special or different; we have all made mistakes. We all feel shame for things we have done in the past. We have failed in many areas of life. We are just like you, or worse, but we are forgiven. And **that** makes all the difference.

The Henderson Hospital in Hamilton didn't turn Susan away because she was ill. That would have been ridiculous. Nor should we turn away those who are emotionally and spiritually wounded.

That is especially true because we have good news for the wounded. There is healing at the cross. We know that because the Bible clearly teaches it. But we also know it because we have experienced that healing. We have experienced that forgiveness.

We should warn you that if you were to visit our little church, you would find some pretty messed up people. We might even be a bit less "holy than thou." But we have been to the foot of the cross and found forgiveness. Peace.

Acceptance. A joy that the world can neither give nor take away.

And you can, too.

*Rae Jamieson*

## *Footnote.*

*The doctor's prognosis for Susan was wrong. Although she still has some residual side effects from the radiation treatments, 29 years after the diagnosis she still enjoys a good quality of life as she heads into retirement.*