

## **The Story You'll Tell: When God Doesn't Answer the Way You Expected**

*In response to Nightbirde's song "The Story I'll Tell"*

**January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

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If you haven't heard of Jane Marczewski - known as Nightbirde - let me tell you about someone who understood what it means to sing praise while your body is dying.

In 2021, Jane auditioned for America's Got Talent with her original song "It's Okay." She told the judges she had a 2% chance of survival from her cancer. Judge Simon Cowell asked how she could stand there and sing like that. Her answer?

**"It's important that everyone knows I'm so much more than the bad things that happen to me."**

She got the Golden Buzzer. America fell in love with her. And then, just months later, her cancer progressed too far to continue competing.

On February 19, 2022, at age 31, Jane passed away.

I know something about watching cancer win. My father battled prostate cancer - went into remission after we all prayed, gave us hope, made us believe God had said "yes." Then it came back. Worse than before. And this time, there was no remission.

Just like Jane, my dad didn't understand why. But like Jane, he praised the Lord anyway.

Before she died, Jane wrote a song that captures what my father lived and what so many of you are struggling with right now: How do you testify to God's faithfulness when He didn't give you the miracle you prayed for?

The song is called "The Story I'll Tell."

[https://youtu.be/mX\\_Mb-jsb7c?si=yZcRBgrmLYeTxilI](https://youtu.be/mX_Mb-jsb7c?si=yZcRBgrmLYeTxilI)

### **When the Hour Is Dark and It's Hard to See**

Jane understood what it's like to sit in the ruins - in the hospital room, in the bathroom floor moment, in the diagnosis you didn't want - and wonder what God is doing.

The song opens with brutal honesty: *"The hour is dark and it's hard to see what You are doing here in the ruins."*

That's not weak faith, it's real faith. The kind that admits: I can't see the plan. I don't understand the purpose. This looks like destruction, not redemption.

The night I found out my dad's cancer had returned, I felt betrayed by God. We'd prayed. We'd believed. God had given us hope - my dad went into remission. And then He took it away. What kind of cruel hope was that?

I was reading my Bible that night - not because I wanted to (I didn't), but because it was my routine and He told me to – that night I was on Psalm 61:

*“Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”*

I was overwhelmed! The cancer was back! I felt betrayed! And I couldn't see what God was doing in these ruins.

If you're there right now - in the ruins of a relationship, a diagnosis, a loss, a dream that died - you're not alone. And you're not unfaithful for admitting you can't see what God is doing.

Jane couldn't see it either. My dad couldn't see it. Her cancer kept spreading. His cancer kept spreading. The 2% became 0%. The remission became terminal.

But they both kept singing.

**“My God Did Not Fail”**

*“Oh, my God did not fail... it's the story I'll tell.”*

Wait. What?

Jane died at 31. My dad died at 72. The cancer won both times. How is that not failure?

This is what your generation is asking. This is why Allison Eide sings “why why why”. This is why you're on the bathroom floor sobbing while everyone at church talks about breakthrough and victory.

Because from where you're standing, it looks like God failed.

**But here's what both Jane and my father understood that most of us miss: God's faithfulness isn't measured by whether He gives you the outcome you want. It's measured by whether He's present in the process.**

Jane's testimony wasn't “God healed my cancer.”

My dad's testimony wasn't “God gave me the miracle.”

Their testimony was: **“In the darkest hour, when I couldn't see what He was doing, He was still there. And even though I'm dying, my God did not fail me.”**

My father praised God through the pain. Not because it made sense. Not because he understood why the cancer came back. But because he'd learned something Jane would sing about years later: God's presence in the ruins is enough.

It's not denial. It's not positive thinking. It's faith that has learned to see differently.

**The Battles God Won (That Don't Look Like Victories)**

The song talks about testifying to “the battles You won” and “the seas that we've crossed.”

But what battles did God win for Jane? What battles did He win for my dad?

He didn't win the battle against their cancer (at least here on this earth). He didn't give Jane the long life she deserved or my dad more years as father and grandfather. He didn't give either of them the happy ending we were all praying for.

So what did He win?

**He won the battle for their souls.** The cancer tried to make them bitter - they chose worship.

**He won the battle for their voices.** The diagnosis tried to silence them - they sang louder. My dad praised God from the quiet of his room. Jane praised God on a national stage.

**He won the battle for their testimonies.** The suffering tried to make them doubt - they proclaimed His faithfulness anyway.

**He won the battle for their legacies.** Jane died at 31, but her songs are still reaching people who are drowning in their own ruins. My dad died at 72, but his praise in the midst of pain taught me more about faith than any sermon ever could and that's why I can write about it now.

Those aren't the victories we pray for. But they're the ones that echo in eternity.

### **“Believing Gets Hard When Options Are Few”**

If you're reading this and you're sick - physically, mentally, emotionally - and you've run out of options, Jane's words are for you. My dad's example is for you:

*“Believing gets hard when options are few, when I can't see what You're doing, I know that You're proving... You're the God that comes through.”*

Notice she doesn't say “You're the God who heals every disease” or “You're the God who always gives the miracle.”

She says **“You're the God that comes through.”**

Comes through how?

Sometimes through healing. Sometimes through strength to endure. Sometimes through peace that doesn't make sense. Sometimes through a song that outlives your body. Sometimes through a father's praise that teaches his son what real faith looks like.

God came through for Jane. God came through for my dad. Just not the way any of us wanted.

But He came through.

### **What This Means for Your Castle**

In my book, I talk about The Assault in Chapter 11. The unexpected attacks that test whether your renovation is real.

Cancer. Death. Loss. Betrayal. The moments when your castle is under siege and you wonder if God is even on the wall with you.

Jane's cancer was her assault. My dad's cancer was his. And here's what they both discovered: **The castle can crumble completely and God still doesn't fail.**

Because God was never the castle. He's the Rock the castle was supposed to be built on.

When Jane's body failed, when my dad's body failed, when medicine failed, when the 2% became 0%, when remission became terminal - the Rock held.

And from that Rock, they both sang: "My God did not fail."

My father didn't get to see my children grow, to really be their grandpa. He didn't get the years we prayed for.

But in his final days, he praised God anyway.

Just like Jane would years later.

### **The Story You'll Tell**

Jane sang about looking back years later and seeing God's hand in the ruins.

She didn't get years. She got months.

My dad didn't get the remission we prayed for. He got terminal.

But even in those final months, they could both already see it: God had been there. In the darkest hour. In the ruins. In the impossible diagnosis. In the decision to keep praising when quitting would have made more sense.

I watched my father die praising God. It was hard to understand it then. How he could worship the God who was letting him die?

But now, years later, I look back on that moment and I see God's hand on it. I see what my father was teaching me: that faith isn't about getting the outcome you want. It's about trusting the Rock when everything else crumbles.

### **Your story isn't over yet.**

You might be in the ruins right now. The hour might be dark. Options might be few. And you might not be able to see what God is doing.

But one day - maybe years from now, maybe on the other side of eternity - you'll look back on this moment and see His hand on it.

Not because He gave you the outcome you begged for.

But because He was present in the pain. He was your portion when there wasn't enough. He walked you across waters you didn't think you'd survive.

And you'll testify: "My God did not fail."

### **For Those Who Didn't Get the Miracle**

If you're reading this and you're angry because you prayed for healing and didn't get it, because you begged God to save someone you love and they died anyway, because you trusted Him and watched hope slip away -

I'm not going to tell you "everything happens for a reason" or "you just need to have more faith" or any of the Christian platitudes that make grief worse.

What I will tell you is this: **God's "no" to your request wasn't "no" to you.**

Jane wanted to live. God said no.

My dad wanted to be healed. God said no.

You wanted \_\_\_\_\_. God said no.

And now you're standing in the rubble wondering how to sing "my God did not fail" when it feels like He absolutely did.

Here's what I've learned from watching my father die and from hearing Jane's final song: The testimony isn't about the outcome. It's about the Presence.

Was God there in my dad's hospice room? Yes.

Was God there when Jane's cancer spread? Yes.

Was God there when you got the news you dreaded? Yes.

Even when we couldn't feel Him. Even when we were angry at Him. Even when we doubted He was listening.

He was the Rock when everything else crumbled.

### **"All That Is Left Is Highest Praises"**

The bridge of Jane's song is stunning in its simplicity:

*"All that is left is highest praises, sing hallelujah to the Rock of Ages."*

When everything else is stripped away - health, dreams, plans, miracles, happy endings - what's left?

Praise.

Not because everything worked out. But because the Rock of Ages held when nothing else did.

Jane lost her health, her future, her life. My father lost his strength, his remission, his years. All that was left was praise.

And from that place - dying at 31, cancer winning, miracle denied - Jane sang: **"My God did not fail."**

From his hospice bed, my father said the same thing. Not with a song on a stage, but with worship in a room that would soon see his death.

That's the story they both told. With their final breaths. With their final moments.

### **The Story You'll Tell**

Your story isn't Jane's story. It isn't my dad's story. Your assault isn't their assault. Your ruins aren't their ruins.

But the Rock is the same.

And one day, when you look back on this dark hour - whether from years down the road or from eternity - you'll see His hand on it.

You'll testify to the battles He won that didn't look like victories.

You'll testify to the seas He helped you cross that you thought would drown you.

You'll testify that even when He said “no” to what you wanted, He never said “no” to you.

And you'll sing - maybe through tears, maybe through confusion, maybe through pain - “My God did not fail.”

Because He was there. In the ruins. In the dark. In the 2%. In the 0%. In the hospital room. In the terminal diagnosis. In the moment when hope seemed cruel.

The Rock of Ages held.

My father knew it. Jane knew it. And one day, you'll know it too.

That's the story you'll tell.

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### **Jane Marczewski (Nightbirde)**

*December 29, 1990 - February 19, 2022*

*“You can't wait until life isn't hard anymore before you decide to be happy.”*

### **Jerry Meyer**

*August 10, 1932 – July 31, 2005*

*“Each of my children is the crown of my life.”*

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### **If you're in crisis:**

- Christian Faith-Based Resources: <https://mentalhealthhotline.org/christian-faith-resources/> or call 1-866-903-3787 (24/7)
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 988 (call or text)
- International Association for Suicide Prevention: [https://www.iasp.info/resources/Crisis\\_Centres/](https://www.iasp.info/resources/Crisis_Centres/)

**You matter. Your life matters. Please stay.**

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*William James Meyer is the author of "Do You Live in a Castle? Breaking Free from the Walls That Hold You Hostage." He writes from a Christian perspective as someone who watched his father praise God through terminal cancer and is still learning to sing "my God did not fail" when the miracles don't come.*