

## Don't Ride the Raging Seas Alone

My eleven year old daughter Kailey used to own the biggest pair of tonsils around. I'm talking about some real whoppers. She'd open her mouth and you'd swear she must be choking on a pair of pig knuckles. Sadly, those puppies are hospital property now. They were plucked out last week. I was there in the waiting room when they fired up the chainsaw up and yelled, "Timber!" I wish I would have thought to retain custody rights. The doctor's probably got those babies crated up and headed off to the 'Ripley's Believe or Not' by now.

Needless to say, my little Kailey is not feeling too spry. Poor thing- she says it even hurts to talk. While that may seem like an answer to prayer, the truth is, I feel bad for her. I remember when I got mine out. It was one of the worst experiences of my life; and my tonsils were just average size. Of course I didn't go under the knife until I was well into my twenties. They say it gets worse the longer you wait.

It was a couple of nights after my surgery that my real troubles began. I guess I hadn't been drinking enough fluids, because in the middle of the night I popped awake wondering why my mouth tasted funny, and why my pillow seemed so wet. Bolting to the bathroom I found myself covered in more blood than the cast of Pulp Fiction. My heart began beating all the more, causing me to drip double time. Finally, I grabbed a big plastic cup and sped off for the emergency room.

Now your guess is as good as mine as to what actually constitutes an emergency at one of those places. The lady at the counter scanned my pale face with a look that warned, "Honey, you bed' not bleed on my desk!" Then she handed me a clipboard full of paperwork to fill out and went back to her phone call. In desperation I shoved that 44 ounce cup of blood under her nose and gurgled, "I bleeding to death."

She crinkled her nose, and looked down it like I was just trying to break line., Reluctantly, however, she did open the gate and lead me back. "Alright Mr. Sherfield," she snipped, "Sit in there and I'll see if I can't finds you a doctor."

I emptied my cup in the sink and settled in for the wait. To my surprise a Doc appeared right off. He had a whole lot of questions- most sounding like things one might ask to prepare his defense in case of a malpractice lawsuit. Feeling as if I might pass out, I replied simply, "I had a tonsil-exit-me." Then I handed him my cup and lay back on the stretcher to die. Next thing I recall Doc was helping me back to a sitting position, and he had this funny looking tool in his hand.

"Open up," he instructed, "We're going to have to cauterize that bleeder." Unfamiliar with a lot of medical jargon, and naively thinking I had nothing to lose... I obeyed. As he was about to maneuver that tool past my teeth I thought to ask, "What does quarter-eyes mean... AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

Looking back I guess I'm glad I didn't know what it meant. Otherwise, I might not be here to tell you this story. I didn't have the Lord in my heart in those days to strengthen me, and I might've just chosen to lie back down instead.

In fact, I had to remind my daughter Kailey just last night, "Honey, I know it hurts, but you've got to drink something. You have to eat. You don't have a choice if you want to live." It really wasn't what she wanted to hear.

Have you noticed life is like that? Sometimes it just doesn't give us a lot of options? We're often put in situations where the only way out is *through* the pain.

Maybe you're facing a storm of your own right now? I want to encourage you, "Don't give up!" More importantly, don't try to navigate it alone. Reach out to Jesus. He'll be your guide and your strength. Look to Him and have faith in His promises. The Apostle Paul, who faced more than his share of tribulation, concluded, ((*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* **Philippians 4:13** KJV) Paul had learned, like the disciples, Jesus is the best one to have in the boat if you're facing raging seas.

But anyway- After I told Kailey about my tonsil experiences her eyes goggled like a Broward County chad counter. She flew down stairs and commenced slurping down a whole bowl of chicken soup. Now that really does seem like an answer to prayer.

-Guy Sheffield 7-31-07