

## Human Immunodeficiency Virus

Harold was talking with a friend about how he felt weak and was losing weight for no cause. This weight loss was now about five and maybe ten pounds but clearer is that his clothes were looser. A problem he had never had before. A few days later he met a friend of his and told him the problems he was having with weight loss and fatigue. His friend was a nurse and suggested that fatigue and weight loss could be due to many different causes. Like cancers, depression, and some types of infectious diseases especially HIV. Harold told his friend he did not think that he had any depression though he did feel so bad it could be from the weight loss and fatigue would cause him to have depression. So, he was not sure as to cause and effect. He asked his friend how he could differentiate between other causes and the nurse said he should go to the doctor's office at the hospital where they can run some tests.

Harold told his nurse friend that he was discouraged, and it could be something that could cause or be caused by cancer or an infectious disease as he had heard that some of these could cause one to die. He told his friend from the time he had this fatigue and weight loss started he has had some depression, which has slowly worsened. His nurse friend asked him if he had been depressed before and Harold said not at all that he could recall and no depression he knew of with his parents or siblings. His nurse friend asked why he was concerned or depressed about these two symptoms. Harold told him he was concerned he would die as the people he had heard of who had unexpected weight loss often died soon. Not that he was an expert, but he had heard of people with unexpected weight loss who died quick often from cancer or the doctors could not find out while they died, or the person just did not go and see a doctor and they died. Harold said he was most concerned that would die and not know why and was afraid of death. Harold's friend had to go to work so he told Harold he would arrange for him to see a doctor early next week to address his weight loss and fatigue.

The next week his nurse friend took him to the hospital, and they found a doctor who addressed infectious diseases. Harold told the doctor that he was unexpectantly losing weight and having fatigue for about 4-8 weeks. The doctor asked him if he had any fever, chills or sweats or cough and Harold did not. Also, he was asked if he had nausea, vomiting or diarrhea or blood in his stools and he had none of these. The doctor asked him if he had unprotected sexual activity,

needle use himself or given bad blood and Harold was not sure if he had any of these and the doctor said that this is why people get HIV infection but there are other causes like other infections and cancer. So, the doctor did a physical exam, started ordering several tests which would hopefully show what the cause of the fatigue and weight loss would be. The doctor asked for Harold and his nurse friend to return to the next clinic to discuss the tests results.

As Harold and his nurse friend went home, he was concerned the results would show something that he could not be completely healed from. The more he was thinking about the results the more depressed and discouraged he was. His nurse friend asked why he was, and Harold really did not have an answer, but he just was afraid. His nurse friend asked him what he was afraid of and Harold said he was afraid of death. When asked why he was afraid of death Harold did not know why just that he was afraid of death as he did not know what happened to us after we die.

Harold's nurse friend told Harold that we are both a physical body and a soul and when we die both go to a different place. Harold asked his nurse friend how he knew that this happens and that we even have a soul. His nurse friend said that the Bible tells us about how we relate to God. In fact, he said that we can have a personal relationship with this God. He told Harold that the Bible says, 'For the wages of sin is death but the gift of life is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Harold asks who Jesus Christ was and what does it mean by him being our Lord. His nurse friend said that Jesus Christ was the Creator of the world and sustains the world and thus he is the Lord of the world. However, the world we lived in has rejected Jesus Christ as their Lord. Harold's nurse friend said that the day had been long, and they both needed to take a rest and go back to the doctor's office the next day for the results of the testing.

Just before Harold and his nurse friend departed for the day, Harold nurse friend gave him a small book. Harold asked what this book was, and his friend said that it was a book about Jesus entitled Mark, which is one of the books of the Bible. He asked Harold to start reading the book as it tells you about the life of the person of Jesus Christ, while he was on the earth. When Harold got home, he started reading the book of Mark as he was interested in what the book said about Jesus Christ and what he said about life, anxiousness, depression, death and what really

is the meaning of life. He thought if Jesus could create and sustain the earth, he certainly should be able to address his problems of life.

He picked up the book of Mark that night after supper and started reading and he was so interested in this person he kept reading until he had read the whole book. He thought how Jesus could do the miracles he did for those who did not even ask him about healing them. The compassion he had and why did he die on the Cross and how could he rise from the dead? All these things were amazing. He had never heard of Jesus Christ much less all the things he had done as were written in this book of Mark.

The next morning Harold's nurse friend came by to pick him and take him to the doctor for the test results. On the way to the hospital, which is thirty minutes of driving, Harold started asking a lot of questions about Jesus. First, why would he even want to help a world like this if he was so good. Harold's nurse friend answered that as creator and sustainer of this world, which primarily is related the human creations Jesus wanted to come and bring reconciliation with mankind as they have sinned and thus fell away from God. The only way to bring reconciliation was for Jesus to take the sins of man onto himself on the Cross, which is what Jesus did. However, death did not triumph over him as Jesus was resurrected from the dead.

By the time these questions were addressed they arrived at the hospital, parked, and went to see the doctor. They went through a lot of tests and the results were explained in detail. All were normal except for the tests related to HIV or the Human Immunodeficiency virus. When Harold heard about these results he was very distressed, discouraged and very depressed. This was the worst thing he could have, and he now had this disease. He asked the doctor how he could have acquired this disease. The doctor told him that the causes are sexual transmission, using bad needles or contaminated blood products. Harold told the doctor it could be any of the three for him. The doctor asked if he knew of specific people or places, he could have been infected and Harold did not know of whom or where it could be.

Harold then asked the doctor what could be done now that he had Human Immunodeficiency virus? His doctor responded that compared to when the HIV was first discovered and now there are many good treatment options. Harold

asked if there was a vaccine or cure for HIV? The doctor responded that currently there is not cure nor vaccine, but a lot of research is trying to find a cure and a vaccine to prevent infection. For now, the treatment prevents decline and makes HIV a chronic disease like hypertension and diabetes.

Harold was both upset but relieved that he knew why he was tired and losing weight and that there was treatment to help him be better and not die anytime new from this new disease. Harold asked about the treatment and the doctor said there are some expensive and some inexpensive. The doctor said if he could afford the treatment the new one would be best as it treats the HIV the best but if he cannot afford the more expensive one the less expensive treatment can be started today and soon should get benefit. Harold asked for the less expensive treatment and the doctor said that would be started and he will see Harold back in a month to see how he is doing.

As Harold and his nurse friend left the office Harold told his nurse friend, he was both discouraged and encouraged. The former as he knew he had a bad disease but did know what it was, and that treatment was available. His nurse friend said for those who believe in Jesus he said 'I will never leave you nor forsake you' whether in this world or the next. Harold knew reading the book of Mark he wanted to both believe and know Jesus as his Savior so he would be confident that he was going to have salvation whether he was alive or dead he would have salvation in Jesus Christ.

Harold asked how he could believe in Jesus and have eternal life. His nurse friend said this is what he needs to do. 'If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead you will be saved.' His nurse went on to say that 'Lord' means that Jesus is the creator, sustainer, and judge of the universe. Harold says that he believed those facts. Then his nurse friend said that 'God raising Jesus from the dead' assumes the death of Jesus on the Cross for our sins and was buried for three days and raised from the dead. Harold said that he also believed these facts.

Harold's nurse friend asked him to pray to Jesus that he did believe these things and wanted to submit his life to Jesus. Harold did this and was so happy and joyful that regardless of what happens with his HIV he will have the joy from Jesus that is greater than the worries of this life.