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Edwige Charles
Andrews University

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Can You Hear Me Now?

BY EDWIGE CHARLES

My day began like any other. As I rested on my bed, my roommate walked into the room. I greeted her; but, right then, a peculiar event happened: She was mouthing, “Good morning” back to me. Alarmed, I sat up on my bed and asked her to repeat herself.

“Hello. Are you okay?” she said in muted, mumbled tones. I turned my right ear toward the source of the sound and, again, asked her to repeat herself.

“Hellooo...,” she slowly mouthed. We both realized that, overnight, I had developed a hearing loss in my right ear.

I went to class as if nothing happened. It was difficult to follow the teacher; every time he spoke I heard nothing but muffled speech and squeaks. At times, it even became painful to hear at all. As soon as class was over, I hurried to my school’s Speech and Hearing Clinic where the audiologist tested my hearing. She gave me an audiogram (a graph that demonstrates how well a person can hear), which revealed a moderate sensorineural hearing loss. “If you were my child,” she advised, “you’d be seeing an ear-nose-throat doctor today.”

After the ENT tested my balance and hearing, and evaluated my medical history, he concluded that inflammation of my inner ear was the cause of my sudden hearing loss. “Basically,” he explained, “sound is able to effectively travel through your ear until it reaches your cochlea, which is the section of your ear that stimulates the auditory nerve to your brain. Because it is inflamed, it isn’t able to transmit the electric signals properly.” He prescribed steroids to try to reduce the inflammation so part of my hearing would return, and asked me to return so he could monitor my hearing loss. It was clear he had no real hopes of my hearing returning to normal.

I prayed to God that night, thanking Him not only for the gift of hearing for the past 20 years of my life, but for all the other senses I still possessed and took for granted. I also thanked Him for allowing my other ear to remain unaffected. Studying speech-language pathology and audiology in school, I’d heard and seen, on countless occasions, clients lose their hearing. They were all rehabilitated and moved on with the best of their abilities. I was inspired to do the same. I continued to stare at my pill bottle. My first dose was due soon; but, rather than take it, I felt compelled to skip it, and dozed off to sleep instead.



Edwige Charles

In a dream, I found myself in a crowd of people. Looking down, I quickly realized I was the woman, sick for ten years, desperately desiring healing. I glimpsed Jesus and hurried over, reaching for the hem of His garment. I grabbed on tightly, but nothing happened; Jesus just kept on walking. I grabbed at His garment again. Jesus turned around, looked at me and asked, “What do you want?”

“Jesus,” I pleaded and pointed to my ears, “please heal me.”

He gently placed His hands over my ears, and I opened my eyes.

Waking from my dream left me confused. My phone rang, and I placed it on my right ear. Rather than hearing muffled speech, it was my mother’s voice — loud and clear!

I went back to the ENT’s office where they tested my hearing again. The audiologist compared my past audiogram to my current one, then looked again and again. She called the ENT so he could examine me further.

He asked if I had taken my medication. I honestly told him, “No, Jesus healed me.” He responded that, in extremely rare cases, a complete spontaneous recovery is possible, and that had occurred. I told him that while I do not doubt it happens, I know Jesus healed me. We mutually and politely agreed to disagree. He bade me congratulations, and I have not been to an ENT clinic since.

Growing up, I frequently heard, “Always appreciate what you have before it’s too late.” The point of the message was intended to instill a level of appreciation for the things to which I believed everyone was naturally entitled. The truth is, Jesus did not have to heal me; He didn’t even have to give me hearing in the first place. But, for whatever reason, He decided to bestow His grace on me and restore my hearing anyway. I vowed to Him I would proclaim my testimony to all who would pay attention to remind others that God not only hears our worries, He listens.

Edwige Charles attends Andrews University, where she is a senior studying speech-language pathology and audiology. Edwige is from Chicago, Illinois, where she is a member of the Bethlehem French Church.