

Dear Friends, far and near,

Where is Julie Collins? She has been gone a long time.

God has taken me through a difficult time of testing which has kept me in the hospital...two stays which amounted to almost three weeks.

He has brought me through these days and I can only praise Him for His protection and the strength I have left. I am very weak and will be limited in my activities.

During my first hospital stay, after first doing a blood transfusion, they did an endoscopy to determine why my hemoglobin was so very low. They found four large ulcers, not bleeding at the time of the procedure. A colonoscopy was out of the question due to the bleeding issues, heart issues, and my 92 years. They thought they had me on the mend and sent me home.

Once home, we thought I would begin to gain strength, but it was soon apparent I was getting weaker and my breathing was becoming so difficult. At my daughter's insistence, we left for the hospital where I was admitted when I arrived.

I was again very anemic, so was given another transfusion before doing anything else. Obviously there was a continuing problem. They began giving me iron infusions to help my body build red blood cells.

I thought I was doing quite well when I had a heart attack while eating breakfast. I could never have imagined such pain. Relief only came with the addition of morphine. They were unable to do a heart Cath due to my fragile condition and low blood counts. They would have had to give long term blood thinners and that would have been lethal.

After two echocardiograms, they learned the amount of damage that had been done. The damage was moderate, but it obviously weakened me. Lying around for so many weeks has not helped my energy levels. There are some areas of the heart that might improve with time, but no guarantees. Pray that if it would please Him, that would happen. Otherwise, there is nothing that can help. "Rest, don't overdo, try not to become exhausted, but keep moving!!"

We are finally home now and you know where I have been. Not sure if I will get that story of Bob's and my lives recounted to you. I probably won't be writing many letters, at least for now.

Your prayers have sustained me and our Sovereign God has been conforming me to the image of His Son. Romans 8:28-29 is that oft quoted verse to others when they are going through tough times. I am learning its truths over and over again as God weaves the "good" and the "bad" in my own life for my good and His glory. My daughter shared with me something she read this morning about God's Sovereignty. Many of us have no problem believing He is Sovereign. But, is He good? Yes, and yes. He is good. Always good...And always our sufferings are for His great glory.

Maranatha! Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

In His care,

Julie