

## ***A Match Made in Heaven!***



We all need a miracle in our lives. Some of us even pray for one. Not everyone receives their miracle, but I did. My name is Becky Mandel and I would love to tell you my story...

I was born with a genetic disease called “PKD”, Polycystic Kidney and Liver Disease. My father died of this disease when he was 56. I was about the same age when I began to suffer from its effects. Soon after, my illness forced me to retire from a career in nursing. My medical experience provided me with a realistic view of my future...decreasing kidney function...eventual kidney dialysis...diminishing life quality...early death. By the time I was 64 years old, most of these things had become my daily reality. Now I was waiting for the very last part of this sinister sequence...then something very different started to happen.

My husband, Bob and I had been attending Strongsville Bible Fellowship for many years; a bible-believing church near Cleveland, Ohio. Our church was small, but our faith was sincere. As I began to share my need for healing, my “*forever family*” began to come alongside and stand with me in prayer. For several years they prayed, yet all the while, my health grew weaker. It was tempting to give up, but they didn’t. The years of 2015 and 2016 were my most difficult, so we all began to pray even harder. By February of 2017, I had undergone 5 surgeries trying to find a good port through which the dialysis team could clean my blood to keep me alive. My surgeon confided to my husband that “her body is not built for long-term dialysis.” It sounded ominous. It was meant to.

It was then that my husband sent out an urgent e-mail appeal for a kidney donor. Over 120 emails were sent out one night and another several thousand more besides were forwarded to the contact lists of the recipients. Soon thereafter, six wonderful souls stepped forward one at a time to offer a sacrifice of love – the gift of life through organ donation! Church friends, neighbors and a niece all began the lengthy process of testing to attempt to become donors! It was all so exciting, but, just like a thrilling ride on the roller coaster, after all of the ups and downs, you wind up out of breath and right back where you began. All six people were medically disqualified.

Our church could have concluded that healing was not God's will for me then, but they didn't. I would not have blamed them because I know that God often provides His best healings in the next world, not this one. Yet somehow, we persisted as it says to in the scriptures:

*“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7)*

Two months had now gone by since my husband had sent out his appeal. Then one day in Spring, hope bloomed again. One of the people on our e-mail list had somehow deleted our email when it first came in and only re-discovered it while going through her cyber-trash in April. When she saw who it was that was asking her for help, her heart leapt and she replied with an immediate offer to give her kidney to me. But something very strange was happening here, because this woman had never met me before! *It was then I had a feeling that my miracle had begun!*

Her name was Jody. We had gotten Jody's email through a chance meeting with her twin sister, Jen, just a few years before. It had been placed into our contacts list, but we had never really done anything with it. In 1983 she had been a shy, skinny young girl who had endured a childhood filled with abuse, pain and disappointment. Someone had felt sorry for her and had taken her to church in the hope that the Great Shepherd would show mercy to this lost and bleeding little lamb. He did and she had stayed curled up in His arms for all the years since. She had received God's love and care and much healing and she had remained thankful to God and to the man who had introduced her to her Savior and Best Friend, Jesus. That man was my husband and Jody had been in his 6<sup>th</sup> grade class.

Because she had remained in his contact list, she received the appeal. When she found his e-mail, she jumped at the chance to show her gratitude with the same gift of life which Bob had held out to her so many years before.

Jody came in to town that summer to have testing done and to meet me for the first time. She showed up at the restaurant with a bouquet of pink roses for me. She did not know it was my favorite flower in my favorite color, but God did! Her eyes filled with tears as she hugged my husband and me. Her arms had become strong and confident during many years of surfing the Atlantic waves by her home on the east coast. Now they enfolded us both with love and the joy of giving back! I felt a supernatural bond form that same night and the strength and suddenness of it took me by surprise. Jody felt like the child I had never had.

Four more months of testing and waiting were yet to come, but one October day, we got the news...Jody not only passed every test easily – she was a *perfect medical **match** in all six criteria for transplantation!* Truly the Lord had sent me a “***match** made in heaven*”! On November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017, I received a new kidney from my new friend and little sister in the family of Christ. My wonderful surgeon at the Cleveland Clinic was so delighted with my progress that he sent me home in record time. There is so much more to tell about many other things the Lord did for us at that time, but it can all be summed up by a single verse in the gospel of Mark:

*“People were overwhelmed with amazement.  
'He has done everything well,' they said. (Mark 7:37)*

That verse was written 2,000 years ago, but our good God has never changed! In the tenth chapter of the Book of Acts, Peter says this in the bible: *“I see very clearly that God shows no favoritism.”* Dear reader, this truth leads me to ask you this, **“What miracle do you need in your life?”** Jesus loves you *as much as He loves me*. We know this because He said so Himself in John 3:16:

*“For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”*

The original Greek word for “**believe**” in that verse means “**trust in, adhere to, rely upon**”. This is what Jody and I both did as children and what my husband Bob did as an adult. True faith in Christ is not merely a mental agreement with a set of facts. It is the deepest commitment of the heart which afterwards grows to

influence every other decision in your life. Anyone who makes **this** kind of commitment to Christ will receive their **own** miracle *when and where they need it most*.

Thank you for letting me share my story with you. May God grant you *your own miracle* soon once you **trust in** and **rely upon Him** for His **gift of forgiveness and salvation** through His Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Your friend,

*Rebecca Mandel*

*On November 5, 2017, my husband, Bob, introduced Jody to our church. She gave a 10 minute testimony. It was annointed! You can listen to her at the link just above this story title on the web page for "Personal Stories". Thank you!*

