

A Tribute to Osiris - a Very Special Friend

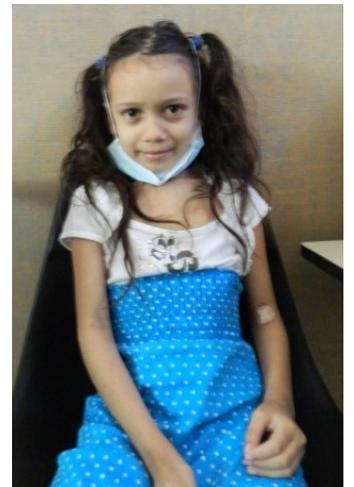
A story of unfailing faith, great love and an eternal hope



How do words adequately describe the light of this little life? How can I express her mother's love, her family's devotion? How can words express faith in action? Here is a very small, very inadequate accounting of the life of a very special friend and her last 3 years on this earth.

In the beginning of 2013 (*April to be exact*), I met a very special little girl named Osiris. She was 8 years old at the time. She was shy and humble and her family was obviously not well off. She was from a community about 20 minutes away from the hospital. She came in the same blue dress with the same blue shoes each time she came (it was probably the only dress she owned). Her mother brought her to the hospital because she was sick. The doctors thought maybe she had Chagas disease. They did some tests and sent her home with a follow up appointment. When she came back in June, she was much worse. She was weak, pale, short of breath, and did not look good. I asked the girls in information to get her chart immediately and I was going to tell the doctor that she needed to be seen

ASAP. She was admitted to the hospital that day and stayed inpatient here at the hospital for 2 weeks. She won the heart of the nurses immediately with her precious character, teaching them to make paper flowers, etc. She received 2 units of blood for severe anemia, but she just didn't seem to be getting better. The doctors had tried everything and decided that with her presentation, she must have leukemia or some kind of blood cancer. Her mother, Erlinda, had her 9month old baby with her during the 2 week inpatient stay. The doctors told her what they thought was going on, and that her daughter might have leukemia. She was quoted "El gozo del Señor es mi Fortaleza" (*The joy of the Lord is my strength*). She was sent home to get her things together over the weekend. She was to come back on Monday for lab work and to come ready to go to Tegucigalpa to the Children's Cancer Foundation. We took up an offering from all of the hospital employees and sent her on her way with over \$100 for transportation and expenses. We prayed for them before they left and knew the Lord would protect them. I got Erlinda's phone number to check in with them from time to time. Little did I know that this would start a 3 year friendship that would last until she met Jesus face to face.



About a week after arriving in Tegucigalpa, Erlinda told me that Osiris' blood was sent off to Guatemala to be tested and they would know the results in about 5 days. So, we prayed. When the results came back, Osiris was diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia. She would need a minimum of a year and a half of treatment which would start very soon. She was going to have to stay in Tegucigalpa for 3-4 months. She was very worried about her 9 month old and 6 year old she had left behind. She also left Osiris' 2 older brothers who were about 11 and 13. She wasn't as worried for them since they could fend for themselves.

Her first trip home was about September of 2013. We had a huge welcome home party for her at the hospital with cake and coke (*A tradition that would continue for the next few years*). Heather, one our missionary nurses made her a beautiful cake in the shape of a butterfly. They would come home for short trips of a week or 2 every 3-4 months over the next 2+ years. During this first trip home, Erlinda asked for help from our children's center for her 2 younger children. Dilcia, who was now about 12 months old, was with an aunt who just didn't want to keep her anymore. Hilber, who was 6, was wandering the streets since his dad was working and the 2 older brothers were in high school. After alking to the directors of the children's center, they decided to step into help in their situation. I went with Iain (*director*) to pick up Hilber and Dilcia and bring them to what they would come to know as their new home. We continued to pray. My Sunday school kids began to pray for healing.



We spent time with Erlinda and Osiris when they were home from Tegucigalpa. We would visit them, they would visit us at the hospital, they would visit with the kids at the children's center (*where Osiris' 2 youngest siblings lived almost full time*). Osiris' older brothers would come by bike some weekends to visit Hilber and Dilcia at the children's center. Sometimes dad would come too and bring special treats for the kids. We asked for donations from one of my teams that came for medicine for a pneumonia that she got. I always tried to help them financially in their trips to Tegucigalpa when I could. Erlinda's faith was evident to everyone she came in contact with. She passed her faith on to Osiris. They claimed scripture and claimed healing in the name of Jesus Christ.

Osiris was declared cancer free in September of 2015. We had a huge celebration at the hospital when they came back! We shared cake and coke with all the employees. She would still have to go back once a month for tests to make sure she didn't relapse.

This past Christmas, they had a wonderful time together as a family. All the kids were home, finally. We went to visit them on December 24th and ate tamales and brought fun food gifts for the family to share. We brought apples, grapes, fun cookies, flavored marshmallows, Nesquick with milk, chicken and other meat. We also brought boxes of sparklers for the kids to do at night. They really enjoyed Christmas as a family and all the special goodies we brought. Erlinda said, "thank you" for all the goodies. Osiris really enjoyed her last Christmas with her family. I am sad that I didn't get pictures with Osiris and her family.



In mid-March, I heard that Osiris was back in the hospital in Tegucigalpa and not doing well. After testing, they said she had relapsed and had cancer in her central nervous system. This caused swelling on her brain and hydrocephalus. Erlinda said she was bedridden, but still able to chat, so I talked to her for a bit on the phone and a couple more times while they were in Tegucigalpa for those 2 weeks. *(I didn't know if she would make it through this time.)* I found out when we got back from Guatemala *(April 19th)* that she had been sent home on hospice. The Children's Cancer Foundation took her home by ambulance with a nurse on board. I was so sad and I called Erlinda right away. Her first words to me were, "We are waiting for a miracle." Oh, a woman of such faith! Calix and I went to visit them that afternoon.

We got to see Osiris, awake, for a few minutes. When she saw me, she recognized me and said "Hola Cristi" and still had the same sparkle in her eye she always did, just a little more faded and hard to see. We talked for a few minutes, sometimes getting responses and sometimes not. Her responses were not more than a word or 2. She was in a lot of pain sometimes in her back, sometimes in her legs and feet. She threw up her food most of the time. Erlinda took such good care of her, always changing her and cleaning her up, and changing the sheets when they were soiled. (Her devotion and love for her daughter were so evident.) I went to visit 3 times before she passed away bringing yogurt and jello and trying to help in any way I could. Calix and I got to talk to Erlinda for about an hour and a half about accepting the Lord's will. She was expecting a miracle, but would have to accept if that was not God's plan. She said when she was in Tegucigalpa, she gave Osiris up to the Lord and knew that His will would be done. I took my lab employees on the 21st to visit with her as well. She would always come and visit us in the lab when they would come to the hospital for her injections.



I will never forget when Erlinda called me on Wednesday, April 27th to tell me that Osiris was gone. She had just passed away and I could hear the tears in Erlinda's voice. I had just called her 30 minutes before to ask if she needed more yogurts for Osiris because I wanted to visit the next day. Osiris knew she was a daughter of the King and she said she was going to tell the world how the Lord had cured her of cancer. Many things written by her bed were written by her: Jehovah has healed me, Jehovah is my redeemer, I belong to the Lord. There were so many verses filling the walls about life, and healing, and salvation. On Wednesday, April 27th 2016 around 2pm, Osiris was called home by our Lord and is now healed completely and free. In Heaven she is free to run and laugh and play and best of all, she is in the presence of her heavenly Father, not like her last days here on earth where she was bedridden and suffering.



I was sad I could not leave right away for the funeral when I got the phone call. There was a patient in surgery that could need blood. I had to stay close until they knew she wouldn't need blood. We finally got away about 6pm. We bought bread and coffee and sugar and cups at the local pulperia before heading out. They always serve coke and cookies and coffee with bread at night during funerals here. Calix thought it would be a great thing for us to bring them, so we did. When we got there, I was surprised to see that Osiris was not in a coffin, but was dressed very beautifully. They had gone to buy her a brand new white dress to bury her in. *(Children here are always buried in white since they say they become angels in heaven.)* She looked gorgeous. Iain took our truck to go look for a coffin, which was finally ready and brought back at 9pm. We went the next day for the burial and it was so different from so many I have been to here. Yes, there was sadness, but there was no wailing and fainting and no one trying to throw themselves in the grave. The father spoke about how thankful he was for all the help they had received in caring for Osiris and their other children, and that now she was in her Father's arms. She was a dear little friend and her hugs outdid many. Her excitement for life was contagious. She was vibrant and energetic and beautiful and this is how she will be remembered.



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