



my heart. my joy. my people. in His name.

The Journeys of Pami, RN

"For the needy shall not always be forgotten, and the hope of the poor shall not perish forever" (Psalm 9:18, ESV)

May 1, 2011

Becoming a Papaya



Medical professionals, among others, have to become papayas. I don't know when the last time you cut up a papaya, but the meat is soft and tender, yet the skin is super thick and tough. In order to survive here, we must develop thick skins but keep soft hearts.



For the last several weeks, I've had the privilege of sitting in with an American missionary doc who is absolutely amazing. He is a teacher at heart, and not a day goes by that I don't feel like I learned more than my brain can contain (and feel a bit stupid for how much I DON'T know!). I'm learning some great medical Tagalog like balisawsaw (ball-ee-sow-sow), which means urinary frequency. But most of all I'm learning that there are times when you can lead a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink.

Example: I met an older lady, probably in her 60s, who has just started going to Dr Scott's medical clinic for cleaning of her breast tumor. Most likely it is cancerous because she had chemo 10 years ago for the same. I could smell her before I saw her. When she undressed, I could not believe my eyes. I had never seen anything like this before. Never. Her tumor was about 8 inches in diameter and about 4 inches raised above the breast tissue. It was oozing pus and blood.

At this point, there's very little we can do except clean it and redress it. She won't go to the hospital for treatment because the line is too long and she'd probably die before her turn came up.

I was surprised at how happy she still is. Smiles, laughter, still a sense of modesty. Though underlying I could sense some grief in her eyes. Life is fleeting and I think she's come to terms with that. Death is real and can only be put off for so long. Sounds fatalistic, but it's true.

As a medical professional, it's hard to see something like this and feel like my hands are tied behind my back. There's so little that I can do, except give her a soft touch, a smile, pray with her, and help her sit up from the exam table. (btw - I did not clean the tumor, another gal did that...I just oogled dumbfounded)

Please pray for those of us here. That we would be able to think like a papaya. That our compassion would stay strong, but that we would realize that we are but hands and feet. The decisions of life and death are not ours. A life lost is not our fault, a life saved is not our victory. We simply do what we can, with what we have. God is sovereign - I really believe that. Inasmuch, we can rest knowing that we do the best we can.



Pami

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