

## Kevin's wife's story 1

He did see the doctor. They told him about he had that gallstone and had to come out. But because everyone, you know... They all, you know... Doctors tell them and then it goes away, kind of thing. They think it goes away. They don't go further. So this is how he acted.

Then he said, 'We going up to Karalundi for this meeting.'

Got ready. We went along early. Then he vomited. Stopped the car and vomited. And it suddenly hit me, I thought, 'How come he's vomiting?' And I said to him when he came in and drove along, 'Shouldn't you go to the doctor for that?' I said, 'How long you've had that sick?'

He said, 'A few days.'

We kept going. Got there. And Friday night they had a meeting and through the meeting he came out and he was feeling sick. So he said, 'Oh, I'll have a rest.'

And, like, everyone else was in the meeting. And, I thought, 'He's never usually like this.'

He slept for a long time. He got up and he said, 'Oh... This is bad. I got to go to the doctors.'

So I said, 'Oh, okay. We'll get the girls...' His nieces were working there at the time, and I said, 'Well, we'll take you in.'

So we took him in and they kept him in. And this was Saturday morning. They said they'll send him down [to Perth] some time in the afternoon. So when they said that, we went in to see him before he went. And when I went in there, he didn't look too good.

I said, 'Well, I'll catch you back in Geraldton. Coz I'll get a ride back with one of the girls and you probably have the gallstone out and back home by then.'

I rang the next day to see how he was in Perth. The doctor, he said, 'Are you Mrs M?'

'Yes.'

And he said, 'What's the matter with your husband? Can you tell me what you think is wrong with him and, you know, how he was when he left Meekatharra?'

I said, 'He was having pains, very bad pains and, um, for a good while.' I said, 'Oh it's that pain... He had that pain.'

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And the doctor said, 'No, I think it's more than that. You better come down. We give him 12 hours to live.'

Well, I went limp on the phone. I had to ring my daughter and tell them, and then they all panicked, and we all went to Perth then. We drove from Meekatharra to Perth, and I thought I wouldn't make it... Wouldn't make it to see him. And the nieces... We all drove... His brother and his wife... And we got to Perth.

They said 12 hours. Well, we got to Perth early hours of the morning and, um, it was about two o'clock. So we went, he was still in Intensive Care, went in and saw him. He was just lying there, but I sang out to him... Sang out to his name and that, he knew who I was then.

I had our Pastors all there and they... Oh, there was a crowd about 40 people there... Family. Doctors got worried, 'What are they all doing in Intensive Care?' [Laugh].

So we sat there and our Pastor come up and he... They went in and they anointed him and... The family, they all wanted to have a little bible study. Half of them don't go to church [laugh], but here they was, they wanted the...

Then I went into the doctors and he explained what's going to happen then. So I said, 'Oh, well, all I can do is let you do it... Do the operation and see how we go.' And I wasn't thinking any better. After seeing him, you know, I thought... I don't know if the old boy laying in there...

He went in and he come out of it. So that was good, but then he was very, very sick.

I stayed. I went to see the social worker and they put me in that [hostel] place. I had a daughter there [in Perth], but she has nine children. I said I'd never be able to get her to bring me in, coz she's too busy with the kids.

It's, um... It sort of... Changes everything. Changes your thinking, your life... Well, just going into another kind of a life now. Thinking, 'I have to be with him.' So I stayed there and see what would happen, you see. Didn't know how I'd take it.

Everybody left and I was on my own, so... Had lots of time. But I had one of the Pastors of ours, he rang every morning. So that gave me a bit of confidence. And the nurses were very good as well. They used to say, 'Go home and don't worry. Just have a sleep.'

He was having lots of operations and all I was doing was going in to sign, sign... Sign for him to have all these operations. I said, 'Oh... Doing a lot of cutting and things around here.'

The doctor, he did [explain things]. Coz I went in there once after the operation and he was just all blown up like a big balloon... All his body. I said, 'What's going on here?' So they explained that it's something to do with the medication.

The worst I hated was going into the Intensive Care... Oh, so long... Three months in

Intensive Care. I didn't go anywhere much. My son was there and, like, he'd come in. He'd come in for a little while. I don't think, you know, they liked seeing him like how he was, so they didn't go in as much.

And then you had all those helping you, around. But none of them understood how very sick... He wasn't just sick... Nothing worked, everything stopped. And I signed for him to have the kidney machine... The dialysis, it was a brand new one. So every day I went in, to check if any of the kidneys was moving... Nothing, every day. Nothing.

Then one day she said, 'We've got a little bit of movement there. I won't say, you know, that it's working, but there was a bit of movement.'

So we let that go for a couple of days and it started working then... The whole dialysis.

One other daughter come in to ask him if she could go ahead with her pregnancy, coz she was having twins... He didn't know anything, he was just laying there. But he remembered it.

I enjoyed staying and probably being on my own, but I was... Like, I wouldn't of been able to sit with someone and talk about things. So I never went to his sister's, or brother-in-law's, or anywhere. I just stayed there, and went every morning, sat at the hospital all day.

[At one stage] he looked terrible, he was down to 57 his weight. So everything looked like... Like a dying person. I used to get him in the wheelchair and take him down the bottom for a walk and try and get the sun.

I started walking, it was good for myself. The more I walked... I'd walk downtown and I'd walk back. Coz it was hard to sleep. There was no tiredness. I'd go back to the... It was a bit boring too, coz I had no one there to talk to or anything.

He's well now, but I say to him, 'You made us all cry and everything.'

I think I was a bit... I had that little bit of strength because of what you are taught religiously, and that was a big help.