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## Because He Lives

It's with a heavy heart that I share that my dear friend and co-worker, Mali, has passed away. I'm reminded that God is sovereign over our prayers and doesn't always answer them in the way we hope. It's hard to know what to say, but I want to share with you about her life and dedication to the Lord in both how she lived her life and how she clung to Him in death.

When I asked for prayer for Mali in my last newsletter I had no idea how suddenly her condition would worsen. It was only a few weeks ago that she received her tumor's biopsy results as being cancerous and within two days she passed away. She was the same age as me, only 31 years old.





Mali was one of my very first Thai friends. When I first moved to Thailand in 2021, I couldn't speak Thai at all, but I could speak Chinese. I remember feeling disheartened and overwhelmed. Mali was on my team and didn't have strong English and was rather quiet, but one month into being in Thailand, I discovered that Mali was fluent in Chinese. I remember when we both realized this, she invited me to dinner and wanted to hear all about my life.



After that first meeting, she regularly invited me to get a meal together, and she welcomed me to be a part of discipling two girls who she had led to the Lord. It was such an honor for her to invite me to join. It would've been easier for her to just keep the group simple and use Thai to teach them from the Bible. Instead, she would speak Thai to the two girls, Coco and Cream, and the girls would speak English with me (because they were English majors) and Mali and I would speak Chinese to each other. I just read through a few old journal entries from that time and am reminded that it was seeing how Mali disciplined these girls made me want to stay in Thailand to get to do the same. God used Mali to give me the courage and example to follow to want to stay and serve in Southern Thailand.



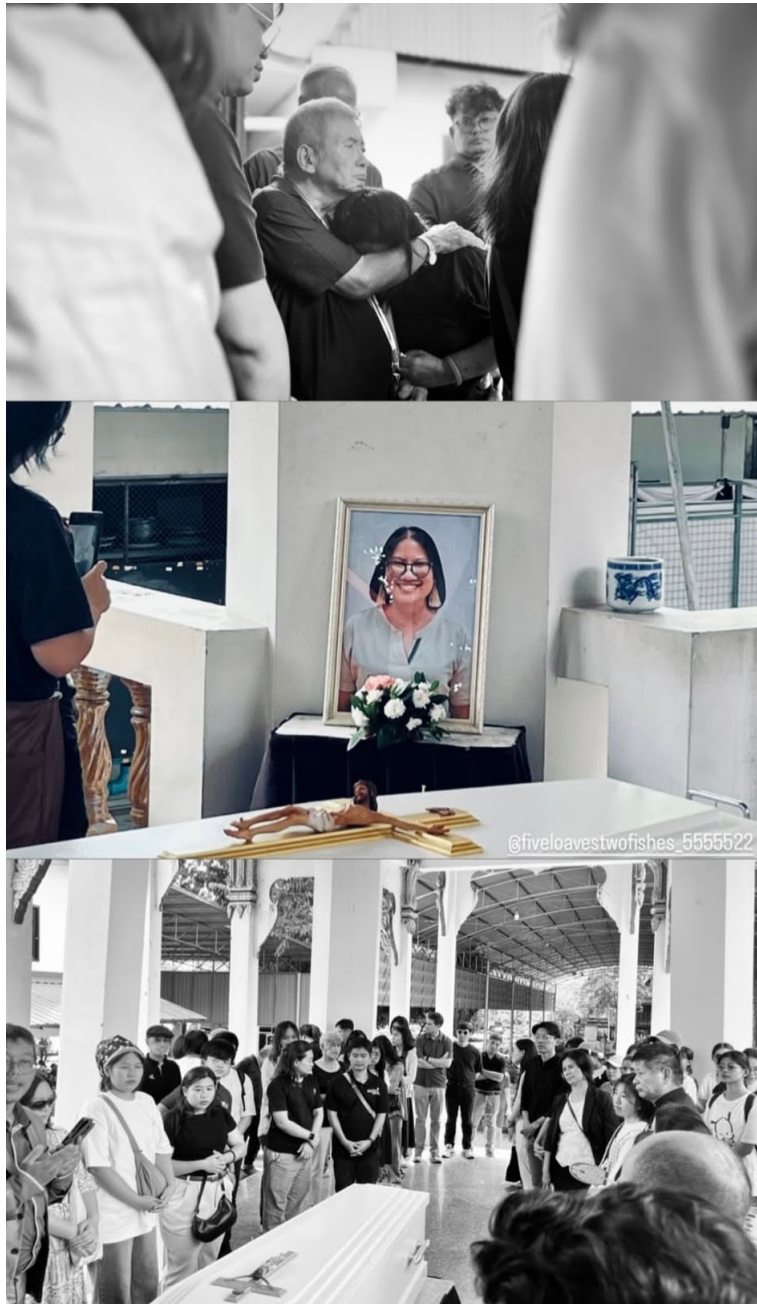
She was such a comforting presence and a safe person. In Thai culture they are not very physically affectionate. A typical greeting is putting your hands in a prayer position to say hello, but Mali was different. She was always ready to greet me with a hug. She was a great comfort in so many ways. Even in her last couple days of life as I cried by her bedside in the ICU, she squeezed my hand to console me even when she could no longer speak because the cancer had spread to her lungs.



Her family came up from their hometown of Beitong to be with her in her last moments. She was not only a dear older sister to so many of the girls she discipled, but also to her 3 younger biological sisters. Mali's story is unique in Thailand as she was born and raised in a Christian family. Her mother and sisters are all sincere Christians, but while her father had heard the Gospel many times, his heart was hardened toward accepting Christ. I was unsure how he would feel about us singing hymns to Mali by her hospital bed on her last day, and I could tell he was moved by the large number of people at her funeral who shared about the impact she had on their lives through her faith in Christ. It was endearing to see him taking videos of us singing worship songs and panoramic shots of all the people in attendance at his daughter's funeral.



In Thailand funerals usually last for about a week. Mali's funeral lasted 5 days. Each day, friends poured in from different areas of Thailand to come and honor Mali and her family. There was a funeral service each day with worship songs, memories, and a sermon. Some parts were in Chinese and some in Thai. It was such a poignant reminder of what a gift Mali was to so many. During that week my roommate, Emily, and I were able to welcome Mali's family to stay in our home and we were able to stay with our teammates who were also grieving Mali's passing. Emily and I both loved getting to know and spend time with Mali's dear family. We reflected on and only wished Mali could know how much we've grown to love them. On the final day of the funeral we got the wonderful news that Mali's father decided to give his life to Christ. Even in death God used the testament of her life to soften her father's heart and give him the reassurance that he will see his daughter again.



While I have been to several funerals in Thailand, this was my first time to attend a funeral in a church. As you can imagine, most funerals in Thailand are Buddhist and held in a local temple, but thankfully, there is a local Catholic school with a funeral chapel here in Hatyai, so the funeral didn't need to be held in a Buddhist temple. However, on the fifth and final day of the funeral, Mali's family followed the Thai tradition of cremation which required the use of the proper facilities in a nearby Buddhist temple. All the funeral guests drove from the chapel to the temple where other Buddhist funerals were simultaneously taking place. As we gathered around Mali's family before placing her casket into the furnace, we sang "Because He Lives" over the sounds of Buddhist funeral chants.

*And then one day, I'll cross the river,  
I'll fight life's final war with pain;  
And then, as death gives way to victory,  
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives!  
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow.  
Because He lives, all fear is gone.  
Because I know He holds the future,  
and life is worth the living just because He lives.*

Mali lived and believed in Jesus in a place with so few Christians. She heard and believed in Him as a young child. The Lord was faithful to her her whole life. She died without anger and without fear. We will see her again. And until then, we keep working so that more like her may hear and believe in the Living One who died and is alive forevermore.

with love,  
Jasmine



Thank you for your continued prayers and financial gifts to my ministry! **Please respond to this email letting me know how I can be praying for you.**

**Ways to pray:**

1. Praise God that Mali is no longer in pain and that her faith has become sight as she is with Him now.
2. For Mali's Mother, Father, and 3 sisters (Peach, Ching, and Jin) to be comforted as they deal with the many emotions that come along with the loss of a child and sister.
3. Pray that Mali's Father is sincere in his relationship with Christ and someone comes alongside him to disciple him.
4. Pray for all of us who worked alongside Mali as well as her disciples as we process and grieve.
5. Pray for miraculous healing for P'Boy, another coworker of mind who is battling cancer.
6. Pray for unity and love to abound on my team especially in light of the differing levels of emotions we feel as some of us knew Mali better than others.

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