**雪中睡美人**

文／余韻基

**能源之都卻停電**

唰、咕嚕、唰、咕嚕……我不會忘記那個聲音。丈夫和我在驚慌中衝出屋外，夜裡華氏12度的霜冷刺痛我們的臉。帶上手電筒、雨鞋、扳手的裝備，我倆涉過已淹沒腳踝的水，到達目標：水閘。用點力拽了一下，丈夫把它關上了。看到陽台上那灘水，猜想就是那裡的水管破了。幾天前氣象預報會有結凍的低溫時，我們盡責地把水管包裹好，打開水槽下櫥櫃的門，水龍頭開一點，讓水一點一點流。但還是沒用，水管仍舊爆了。睡眼矇矓間，我們跩著腳步進到從昨天開始停電的冰冷的家中。咕嚕咕嚕的水聲解決了，我倆又冷又累。房子停電、沒水，家裡還有兩個稚兒，我無法置信地搖搖頭，想著：「今昨之間，猶如天壤之別！」

昨天是禮拜一，早上看到一層閃亮的薄雪時，我是多麼興奮！興沖沖地把冬衣挖出來，把孩子們裹得嚴實實地，好像會走動的棉花糖。四歲的兒子諾亞躺在地上畫出雪地天使，一歲的女兒諾薇第一次踏在雪地上，搖搖晃晃地尖叫。晚上孩子們都睡了，也停電了，家裡還保持著一絲平靜。我們希望能很快恢復供電。禮拜二早上了，電力依然沒有恢復，我的平靜迅速演變成擔憂。從手機裡讀到的新聞標題讓我愣住了：輸電網路崩潰，百萬德州居民無電。我想，這裡不是號稱世界能源之都嗎？

**回應禱告的微波爐嗶聲**

接著，禮拜二夜裡水管爆了，我心灰意冷地想，這次結凍帶來這麼多問題，先是停電，現在又沒水可用。丈夫和我想著諾亞和諾薇，都感到很挫敗。他們喜歡用手來玩，拒絕戴手套，珍貴的手指頭冰涼涼的。夜裡雖然都蓋著好幾層被，他們的頭還是露在外面，醒來時臉也是冰涼涼的。新聞預測要到週末才可能供電，我們除了擔心這麼冷的天沒有暖氣，孩子們要喝要吃的水、牛奶、食物也不夠。沒人預料到結凍會帶來這些結果，所以我們都沒準備。路上結冰了，外出也不安全。孩子們沒有抱怨，但我心想：這樣能維持多久？我們禱告，祈求快快恢恢復供電，修好水管。

神同在，祂也聽見了我們的顧慮。就在隔天，禮拜三下午，一個聲音讓我們豎起耳朵——嗶。我流下歡喜的眼淚！誰能想到微波爐的聲音有如此的震撼力，但這意味著電力恢復了。

**結凍中的功課**

回頭看看這次的考驗，有件事印象鮮明：女兒在丈夫的懷裡睡著了。停電的那幾個晚上，諾薇總是在凌晨3:00在嬰兒床上哭喊，似乎是在嚴寒的房裡發出的求救呼號。一聽到她的哭聲，丈夫立即衝到她身邊（可想而知，我睡得太熟了）。她依偎在爸爸強壯、溫暖的膀臂環繞中，很快又入睡了。這一幕貼切地描繪了這次結凍教我的功課。

首先，如同我的女兒發出求援的哭聲，**我們也需要願意求助**。尤其是在亞裔文化裡，我們很容易就有「自己來就好」的心理，或是不願「麻煩」別人的態度。以賽亞書30章19節這麼說：「主必因你哀求的聲音施恩給你；祂聽見的時候就必應允你。」**我們的主要我們求助——通過向祂禱告和向他人求助**。祂不要我們靠著自己的力量活著。

更進一步來看，若驕傲攔阻我們向人求助，這是讓他人失去了幫助的機會。藉由禱告和讓別人知道我們的需要來尋求幫助，主就應允。有電有水的家庭敞開雙臂歡迎我們去，為我們準備了熱騰騰的飯菜，讓我們可以洗浴和洗衣服，為我們提供歇息之處。一位好心的鄰居說要把院子裡的水管從籬笆上接過來，讓我們用她的水。一位親愛的朋友清早一家家商店轉，為了幫我們多買幾箱水。透過我父母的朋友，當地一位水管工人很快就來查看情況，幾天內就把漏水處止住，我們有水可用了！能這麼快修好，讓我們深感驚奇，也備受感動，因為水管破裂的德州居民數目，遠遠超出水管工人和所需要材料的量。

還有，在冰凍期間，女兒安穩睡在她爸爸的膀臂中，知道他會一直照顧她。同樣的，**在困難的情況下，我們要能在天父裡面安息**。馬太福音11章29節說：「我心裡柔和謙卑，你們當負我的軛，學我的樣式；這樣，你們心裡就必得享安息。」神在我們需要之時與我們同在，這讓我們可以確實安息，而不為將來要發生的事擔憂。

怎麼做呢？對我來說，**安息意味每、一、天、著從生活的快步調中退一步，更刻意地與神連結**。把每天的一部分專注於神，從讀經當中向祂學習，我就能找到安息，感到平靜，堅信神掌管全局。今年初，我得到靈命歷程中的一大祝福，就是一個叫Bible Recap的免費讀經指引，鼓勵基督徒按著年代順序一年通讀整本聖經。這個計畫包括每天讀數章經文，再聆聽五分鐘的播客摘要。

老實說，這是我做得最好的時間投資之一。現在我對一些複雜的經節有比較清楚的概念，還可以退一步看到貫穿不同書卷的主題，和書卷間如何串聯銜接。我殷切期待每天的靈修時間，一天又一天，神的屬性一層又一層地顯現，那是何等喜樂！你可曾想過這樣讀聖經，在祂的話，全部的話語中，真實體驗安息？你一旦愛上一件事，你就會花時間去做。每天。我們的神豈非最值得這樣的愛？

我想有一天女兒會聽到睡美人的童話故事。但那個故事和現實可是天差地遠。反之，我會對女兒講她自己作睡美人的故事……在雪中。在面對困境，無法處理生命中各樣超出控制範圍的挑戰時，會是多好的提醒。這也是我們積極尋求神和人的幫助的機會，並學習每日安靜倚靠在祂的話語中。耶穌是至終的和平之君，總是趕來救我們，利用困難的景況建立對祂的信任，也向我們顯現祂的屬性。即便女兒對我們家經歷的這場凍災不會存留記憶，這仍然是雪中睡美人教我，讓我終身難忘的一課。

作者小檔案

余韻基，小兒科醫師，住在休士頓逾15年，生活中因著丈夫和兒女充滿笑聲與奇妙經歷。喜愛烹飪、手工藝、健身、旅遊。期盼能與丈夫帶著孩子探索不同國家。

圖說：

Joyce-1

作者全家福。

Joyce and husband Andrew, son Noah and daughter Noelle.

Joyce-2

誰能想像水管上的一個小裂縫，會帶來這麼大的不方便？

Who would have thought that a small crack on the pipe could cause so much trouble?

A Lesson from Sleeping Beauty in the Snow

*Gush*… *Rumble… Gush*… *Rumble… Gush.* I’ll never forget that sound. Panic-stricken after hearing that noise, my husband and I bolted outside our home. The frosty 12 degree air on a Tuesday night stung our faces. Armed with our flashlights, rain boots, and a wrench, we waded through ankle high water to reach our goal: the water valve. After a bit of tugging, my husband turned it off. We could see the pooling water halt under our outdoor patio kitchen and suspected our broken water pipe was there. Several days ago when the forecasters predicted freezing temperatures, we dutifully wrapped our water pipes, opened sink cabinet doors, and trickled our faucets. But to no avail, the pipe still burst. Drowsily, we trudged back inside our frigid home which lost electric power earlier yesterday. The gushing sound from our hallway had resolved. We were cold and exhausted. In a home with no power and now without water. With 2 young children. Shaking my head in disbelief, I thought, “What a stark contrast from yesterday!”

Yesterday – Monday morning - I was thrilled to see a thin sheet of glistening snow. I gleefully dug out my family’s winter gear and bundled my children until they looked like walking marshmallows. My son Noah, 4, made snow angels and my daughter Noelle, 1, squealed as she wobbled in snow for the first time. Later that evening, just as our children had gone to sleep, the power flickered completely out – but our household still had a sense of calm. We hoped the power would return soon. But when Tuesday morning arrived and the power outage persisted, my calm quickly evolved into worry. I was shocked to read this local news headline on my phone: Millions in Texas left without power due to catastrophic power grid failure. I thought, “Aren’t we the energy capital of the world?”

So moving forward to this Tuesday evening when we discovered our broken water pipe, I was disheartened and thought, “This freeze has caused so many problems – first the power and now the water!” My husband and I felt discouraged as we thought about Noah and Noelle. Because they wanted to play with their hands, they refused gloves, so their precious fingers were ice cold. Even though they slept under multiple comforters at night, their heads were still exposed, so they both woke up with frigid faces. The news predicted that the electric power wouldn’t be restored until the end of the week, so we were very worried not only about the lack of heat amidst the harsh chill in our home but also insufficient water, milk, and food for our children. Nobody anticipated the freeze would bring these consequences, so we were not prepared. Icy road conditions were unsafe for travel. The kids never complained, but I thought, “How long can we keep this up?” We prayed for the power to return and our water pipe to be fixed soon.

God was present and heard our concern. The very next day – that Wednesday afternoon – a sound caught our attention: *Beep*. I cried tears of joy! Who thought the microwave beep would carry that much weight, but it meant the power in our home had been restored!

Looking back at this trial, one memory stands out: my daughter asleep in my husband’s arms. Noelle cried out from her crib around 3 AM each night our home didn’t have power, likely as a wail for help because of the fierce cold in the room. As soon as my husband heard that cry, he sprinted to be by her side (apparently, I’m a deep sleeper!). When she was enveloped in her father’s strong, warm arms, she snuggled in and promptly fell asleep. This scene aptly describes what this freeze experience taught me.

First, just as my daughter initiated the need for help by crying, we too need to be willing to ask for help. Especially in our Asian culture, we can easily have the mentality “We can do it on our own” or an attitude to not “bother” others. Isaiah 30:19 (ESV) states, “He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you.” Our Lord wants us to ask for help - by praying to Him and reaching out to others. He does not want us to live on our own strength. Furthermore, if our pride gets in the way of asking for help, we are denying a chance for others to be helpful. We sought help by praying and letting others know we needed help. And the Lord answered. Family who had functioning power and water welcomed us with open arms to their home, cooked us a warm meal, let us use their laundry machine and shower, and provided us a place to stay. A kind neighbor offered to rig a garden hose over our shared fence, so we could have access to her functioning water supply. One dear friend trekked to several stores in the early morning to buy multiple water cases for us. And through friends of my parents, a local plumber came quickly to assess our water pipe situation. Within a few days, he was able to cap the leak, and our water was restored! We were shocked and deeply touched to get it fixed so soon because the sheer number of Texans with broken water pipes vastly outweighed the number of available plumbers with supplies.

In addition, amidst a freeze, my daughter peacefully slept in her father’s arms, knowing he would always take care of her. Similarly, during tough situations, we need to be able to rest in our Heavenly Father. Matthew 11:29 (ESV) states, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Instead of worrying about what might happen in the future, we need to rest assured that God is present in our time of need.

And how do we do that? For me, resting has meant taking a step back from the fast pace of life and being intentional with my time to reconnect with God. Every. Single. Day. By devoting a daily portion of my day to God to read the Bible and learn from Him, I can find rest and feel at peace, trusting that God is in control. Earlier this year, I was introduced to a big blessing in my Christian walk, a free reading guide called The Bible Recap that encourages Christians to read the entire Bible chronologically in one year. The program involves reading several Bible chapters a day and then listening to a brief 5 minute podcast summary. I started the program several months ago, and I can honestly say it has been one of the best investments of my time. I now have a clearer picture of complex passages, and I can take a step back and see overarching themes with different books of the Bible and how one book connects with another. I eagerly look forward to my daily quiet time - there is true joy as God’s character is revealed, layer by layer each day. Have you ever thought about reading the Bible, to truly experience resting in His Word, His entire Word? When you love something, you spend time with it. Everyday. And doesn’t our God deserve this love the most?

I imagine one day my daughter will hear the fairytale of sleeping beauty. But that story is a far cry from reality. Instead, I’ll tell my daughter her own true story of being a sleeping beauty… in the snow. What a good reminder that we will all face difficulties and feel unprepared to handle some of life’s challenges that are well beyond our control. But it’s also a chance for us to actively seek God and others for help and to learn to rest in His Word daily for support. Jesus is our ultimate Prince of Peace who comes to our rescue every time and uses tough circumstances to build our trust in Him and reveal more about His character. Although my daughter won’t have any recollection of the freeze our family endured, it’s a lesson this sleeping beauty in the snow taught me this year… and it’s a lesson I’ll never forget.

Author bio:

Joyce Yue Chang, having lived in Houston for the past 15 years, is blessed to have Andrew, Noah, and Noelle fill her life with new adventures and laughter. In addition to serving as a pediatrician, Joyce enjoys cooking, crafting, and exercising. She and Andrew - avid travel enthusiasts - also hope to explore new countries with their children in the future.