

We had a new family move to Durham for awhile so their daughter Tori could be close to UNC hospital where she was awaiting a double-lung transplant. Actually, only her mom and sister came with her, as her Dad needed to stay home in Tennessee to earn a living to support the family, and her teenage brother also stayed home.

Tori was a sweet girl, but it was so hard for me to see her tethered to an oxygen machine, wherever she went. Tori suffered from Cystic Fibrosis, and the disease had really taken a toll on her lungs. She was unable to do much, as she got out-of-breath so easily. Her mother and I hit it off, as she was also a singer and music lover.

I had another friend who had died of CF about ten years earlier, so I found a special place in my heart for Tori and the whole family. Often, Tori would need to go in the hospital for a “tune up” where they would do intensive therapy with her, working to clear her lungs of the thick sticky mucous that would build up and prevent her from breathing.

It was during one of those times that Tori took a turn for the worse. Her oxygen saturation level kept dropping, and she was moved to a special unit. The youth from our church went and visited her, and had what turned out to be her final church service right there at her bedside. She was glad they came and prayed and sang songs to God around her bedside.

Later, Tori needed to go to ICU, “behind the big double doors” as her little sister Tabitha would say. Tabitha knew she wasn’t allowed back there. Tori eventually lost consciousness and passed away. It was so sad for all of us, but especially her mother.

I remember thinking to myself, “There is no way I am going to try to write a song for her mother.” I just couldn’t conceive of it. And then, almost as quickly as I said those words, this song came to me. It had to be the Holy Spirit. It draws a picture of Tori running to Jesus and embracing him, totally free and untethered from all the medical equipment which had kept her alive for so many years. It is to Tori that I dedicate this song.