

CHRISTMAS 2020

A Season

A remembrance by Greg Smith

Dear family and those who hold Amy dear,

Amy lamented that we couldn't come with her before she went to her forever home in heaven. Amy was right we couldn't then.

However, we can still follow Amy to heaven. We can know what Amy knows. Amy's faith is now sight. Our faith can become sight too.

Amy is very much alive in heaven. We too, can live such a life; if we would come to believe in Amy's Savior, Christ, and rest in Him.

'Tis the season to be thankful for all God has done for each of us. Thankful for how God brought each of us through another year.

A very trying year for us all in so many different ways.

Yet, by His grace, we are to another Christmas season; another New Year is upon us; another year has almost passed.

We are all living in that season we spoke of in December 2018: the season, the passage of time, between when Amy left us and we leave this earth ourselves.

For a season...

Those words were so easy to say then; uttering them to myself and you as a way of encouragement to us all. That we wouldn't be without Amy forever - just for a season.

It seems like a blink, like yesterday, since Amy left this earth. Each day of these almost two years, the flutter of my eye in time has been anything but easy. Each day stacking one on another.

Each day, for the most part, the same in rhythm, in routine without Amy ... a perpetual "Groundhog Day", if you will. Each day without my completer, my compliment, my soulmate by my side. An emptiness and a void that each of you are, undoubtedly, feeling in your own way.

I know each of you have your own struggles, as Amy's presence was unique in each of your lives. Therefore, the loss of Amy is felt differently by each of you and inescapable.

Take solace in this... **Amy is still this day very much alive!**

"To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8)

Amy comforted us all with these words: "I know where I'm going." Sometimes she would add, "I'm going to heaven to live with my heavenly Father, and Jesus, my Savior, forever."

Yes, we grieve, missing Amy so very much each day.

But there is this...

"Now we do not want you to be uninformed, believers, about those who are asleep [in death], so that you will not grieve [for them] as the others do who have no hope [beyond this present life]. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again [as in fact He did], even so God [in this same way-by raising them from the dead] will bring with Him those [believers] who have fallen asleep in Jesus." (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, Amplified)

You see, I miss Amy with hope! My tears now are shed in "**Joy**" for the life God gave Amy and I together, and the life Amy and I will enjoy together again - albeit different in eternity with God, our heavenly Father, and Christ Jesus, our Savior.

Thankful that, just as Amy is no longer empty or void of anything, God in His grace is filling the void, the hole, which Amy leaving has left.

To quote Amy's favorite verse...

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

Praying for God to carry me through each day. Thankful, by God's grace, I am no longer leaning on my own strength. I am leaning on the limitless strength and power of Christ, my God and Savior. This life, this season of time, as I said (and each of you can testify) isn't easy.

"I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have [perfect] peace. In the world you have tribulation and distress and suffering, but be courageous [be confident, be undaunted, be filled with joy]; I have overcome the world." [My conquest is accomplished, My victory abiding.] (John 16:33, Amplified)

Though if we trust in Christ, we can know that...

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors and gain an overwhelming victory through Him who loved us [so much that He died for us]. For I am convinced [and continue to be convinced-beyond any doubt] that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present and threatening, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the [unlimited] love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39, Amplified)

All we must do according to scripture is...

"For God so [greatly] loved and dearly prized the world, that He [even] gave His [One and] only begotten Son, so that whoever believes and trusts in Him [as Savior] shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16, Amplified)

And if we believe and follow Christ there is this...

"All that My Father gives Me will come to Me; and the one who comes to Me I will most certainly not cast out [I will never, never reject anyone who follows Me]." (John 6:37, Amplified)

Amy's prayer this Christmas is the same as it was when Amy left this earth. Amy wants us all to follow her to heaven, by believing in and following Christ.

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wishes to follow Me [as My disciple], he must deny himself [set aside selfish interests], and take up his cross [expressing a willingness to endure whatever may come] and follow Me [believing in Me, conforming to My example in living and, if need be, suffering or perhaps dying because of faith in Me]. For whoever wishes to save his life [in this world] will [eventually] lose it [through death], but whoever loses his life [in this world] for My sake will find it [that is, life with Me for all eternity]. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world [wealth, fame, success], but forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?'" (Matthew 16:24-26, Amplified)

Now is the time, Amy leaving us so soon attest to that.

"Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call on Him [for salvation] while He is near." (Isaiah 55:6, Amplified)

God bless you all,

Love, Greg

PS - On a personal note...

With each passing day I see more and more how unfit I am, how my best each day is a miserable fail, how I don't measure up - and no matter how hard I try I won't ever measure up - to God's standard.

Today, I rest in Christ Alone, His righteousness, the son of God - The Standard.

Christ came to rescue, to heal the sick, the lost, the broken, those who realize they can't and won't ever measure up. That's me: broken, lost, sick, and absolutely not measuring up at any level.

So thankful that I measure up today only because I am resting in, trusting in Christ's righteousness and not my own righteousness (good deeds).

That's the peace, the wonderful peace, I've come to embrace and know by resting in Christ alone this Christmas.

I will get through "this season" that we spoke of because Christ will see me through the rest of my life's journey, my race.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses [who by faith have testified to the truth of God's absolute faithfulness], stripping off every unnecessary weight and the sin which so easily and cleverly entangles us, let us run with endurance and active

persistence the race that is set before us, [looking away from all that will distract us and] focusing our eyes on Jesus, who is the Author and Perfector of faith [the first incentive for our belief and the One who brings our faith to maturity], who for the joy [of accomplishing the goal] set before Him endured the cross, disregarding the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God [revealing His deity, His authority, and the completion of His work].” (Hebrews 12:1-2, Amplified)

I choose to be encouraged as I look forward to the rest of what God has for me, including eternity...

“So we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are unseen; for the things which are visible are temporal [just brief and fleeting], but the things which are invisible are everlasting and imperishable.”(2 Corinthians 4:18, Amplified)

"Joy" to the world, family, the Lord has come!!!