CHRISTMAS 2023

Joy

A remembrance by Greg Smith

Amy was given a middle name that suited her.

Amy found **joy** in everything.

Amy is still giving **joy** to us all - **joy** was and is part of her life.

At life's every turn the **joy** of Amy's optimism was present.

Did others upset her?

SURE.

Joy prevailed.

Did life throw Amy more than a few curves?

Undeniably.

Joy prevailed.

This life was never about Amy. For Amy this life was about others. If Amy saw a need - Amy found **joy** in meeting it. Where did this bedrock of internal **joy** come from as Amy encountered life's failings in herself and others?

> *"Be **joy**ful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer" Romans 12:12 INVUK*

Exemplified even more so during Amy's cancer battle.

Amy's **joy** shining even brighter, emanating from Amy's ever abiding trust in her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and His finished work in her.

Amy knew, and came to grips with, as her body was failing; that this place,

Earth,

was not her home.

Did Amy want to stay here a little longer?

Absolutely.

Yet not for herself; for us. Amy wanted to give us **joy** and comfort in the midst of her circumstances. Amy through word and deed conveyed,

“I will trust Him."

We all witnessed this first hand, Amy constantly looked for the silver lining within the moments of her life, Amy’s voice echoing in my head and most likely yours too,

“God is going to heal me, here or in heaven, I will be healed.”

Amy knew this life, rarely had, or would give her the outcomes she wanted or expected. There were many things that brought Amy pain and heartache. Life has and will cause us all pain and heartache.

John 16:33 AMP says, “In this world, you will have trouble”.

Though in Amy’s darkest days Amy’s undaunted **joy** would show through. Amy knew that there was more to her life than the here and now. These darkest days would pass into the **joy** of being home with her Rock, her Refuge, her Friend, Jesus.

Amy’s incessant **joy** on earth is today; a never-ending **joy** and bliss in eternity with Christ! Amy lived her life and is whispering to me, and maybe to you as well…

"Trust Him,
Know **Joy**,
Real **Joy**,
Trust Him,
Know Peace,
Real Peace,
Trust Him.
Have Hope,
Real Hope.”

Amy’s witness, at her most vulnerable - through the good, the bad and the ugly - has profoundly changed me. Especially now, in her absence, I look back in thankfulness for the life I was blessed to share with her.

Amy’s life, her strength, confidence and courage within and as the unexpected events of her life were revealed (cancer among them), and in spite of her questions…

Amy’s trust in Christ never waned, faltered or diminished.

Seeing Amy’s trust in Christ lived out has brought me to this: An indescribable, yet certain **joy** and peace, I, too, know now in my life. This life I, too, attained through resting in Christ’s finished work. Redemption accomplished on the cross, for all who trust in, abide in and rest in Christ alone.

When you think of Amy think of her **joy**, and when you think of her **joy** think of Christ, the giver and sustainer of Amy’s **joy**.

I leave you with this prayer, a prayer that Amy attested to through her words and actions before she went home. A prayer, Amy lived before us. Feel free to substitute your name in place of mine:

> *My dearest Greg, only God's love through Jesus Christ to man exceeds - by infinity, of course - the love held between a woman and man. And yet in my marriage to you I feel I've experienced at least a sign of that highest love from you. You were instrumental in bringing me to faith. You were always there as we grew together. Know now, my dearest Greg, that as my keeping in the hands of God seems about to take me to eternity in His good will, your keeping in the hands of God on this shore can be no less firm. Know that I will always love you, dear Greg - that all the hosts of heaven, of whom I shall be one, will always be looking to comfort you and protect you. Read the Word, dearest Greg, let it speak to you. We shall one day be gathered together around His throne.*
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> *"(I) do not want you, says Paul, to be ignorant (concerning) those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope". 1 Thessalonians 5:13.*
>
> *All my love always and **joy** to the world the Lord has come,*
>
> *Amy*

Acknowledgements

My brother-in-law Chris without whom these Amy remembrances would not be possible.

My dear friend Steve Englehardt has been kind enough over the last several years to assist in helping me through my initial rough drafts on multiple occasions.

A Word Regarding the Music

My son, Jake, introduced Amy to Michael Bublé, who became one of Amy's favorite singers.

A tip of the cap to you, son.

As per usual, these songs weren't picked at random.

The words to these songs - as in years past - say something about Amy and our relationship. For that reason, I hope you soak the lyrics in as you listen.

The first song, "Someone like You" (by Michael McDonald and Tommy Emmanuel), speaks to what Amy meant to me.

For Amy was

"The
Pillar of Fire
That warmed my soul
The place I ran when the winds blew cold"

(the opening phrase).

And in the final song in this year's tribute...

"Whatever She Wants" by Micheal Bolton

The 1st verse speaks to my taking Amy and our relationship for granted.

There was a time thought I had everything
When the world was mine and I was blind
And I was king
I never saw it comin'
How hard that I would fall
But the one thing I was missin' (Amy)
was the meaning of it all

I almost lost forever the gift from God that was precious Amy.

The chorus speaks to God's grace in healing our relationship and my new attitude toward Amy as her cancer battle began....

Whatever she wants
Whatever she needs
All she's gotta do is call my name, and that's where I'll be
Whatever she wants
Whatever she needs from me

The second verse addresses who Amy was to me during our life together...

She's been the light that showed me the truth
Taught me love's the only real thing we can hold on to
She opened her arms
I laid down my heart
She knows I'd give her anything beneath the moon and stars

Amy's forgiveness through God's grace saved me, as conveyed in the final verse...

She came in like an angel to save this life of mine
Whatever she wants,
Whatever she needs
All she's gotta to do is call my name and that's where I'll be