

Prepared for Tamara's site on February 5, 2017.

Journal

August 5, 2009

I had my first whole brain radiation treatment today. I thought it was supposed to be at 4:00, but come to find out it was at 11:30. Anyway, they did it about 1:30. I am doing well. Thank you for thinking of me and praying for me.

Please continue to do that. I'm pretty emotional, big shock, huh? I'm hoping it's a little worse because of the steroids, but who knows. John and I have committed again to be thankful for each day because we realize each day is a blessing.

Chad is feeling a little better. He still has a lot of congestion.

My mom should be here any moment. That will be a huge comfort. I will update soon. Thanks and I love each of you!

August 7, 2009

Well, two down. Today went well. My mom and the boys came with me and after the treatment we took the boys to a counselling session at Southeast Christian Church. The boys were very comfortable with their counselor. That makes me so happy. I have felt much stronger today no doubt thanks to your prayers. All I could say walking in, out and during my treatment was, "Thank you God! Thank you for all your blessings, all my family, friends, doctors and opportunities ahead to proclaim your mighty name." Despite this valley, I am living and experiencing His amazing grace. Without this trial, I might never have known His love to this degree....what a blessing! Continue to trust Him and praise Him. He is worthy.

August 10, 2009

Treatment # 4 is over and I've been given the okay to start backing down on the Steroids a little. I hope that will clear up my mind some. With school starting back, trying to get Dr.s appts. in, the boys ready, and start back to work, I have been a little overwhelmed, but I came across this today and I thank God for the peace it supplied.

Therefore, do not focus on your feelings that will depress you. Look at Jesus and be transported in

ecstasy to the heavenlies. Look at him who lived the life of faith, who finished the race, who endured the life of obedience. Look at him in heaven, seated and waiting for us to finish our race. And we shall finish it, for he who finished the race is also with us and in us. He is helping us to run the race with patience. We shall run, and we shall meet him at the finish line.

August 12, 2009

The first day back to school! YEAH! I was there....amazing. What an awe inspiring place to work. God's timing is perfect as we are filled with the Holy Spirit...just when we need it. Where I work and where we all work, we need to be showing this Jesus we know to the world. Some may never have met Him.

Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands for us; YES, establish the work of our hands.

Psalm 90:17

I want to work! I want to work for HIM!

Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. BEHOLD, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

Isaiah 43:18,19

I finished treatment #6 today and aside from the constant desire to eat due to the steroids, I'm hanging in there. John and the boys have run down to the pool for a little fun...they may have been afraid to be eaten here. I am so blessed to have them come home and all of us sleep under the same roof.

Tomorrow night is a very special night for me. My prayer warriors are setting up a prayer time to focus on total healing for me. There are no words. Just love and sacrifice like I have learned so many times through them.....**AGAPE.**

August 14, 2009

Another wonderful day! Many from my church family gathered to pray for each other. It overwhelms me this

morning, even, to picture the cars pulling in to the parking lot..one after the other like a caravan. ...children piling out running to their friends and Christian brothers and sisters embracing each other anticipating the Lord's anointing on our gathering. WOW what will it be like on that glorious reunion day? I was inspired and blessed by a lot of people who love me and love our Lord and I am ever thankful for them. As much as we are praying for each other....remember this:

Thanksgiving and Prayer

15For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, **16**I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. **17**I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit[f] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. **18**I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, **19**and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, **20**which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, **21**far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. **22**And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, **23**which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

This is what the apostle Paul is doing for us. I have read that when Paul met Jesus, he found the ONE with the reason for living and dying, and he became totally sold out for Christ.

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21)

God did not waste any part of Paul and He won't us either if we allow Him to.

August 16, 2009

I just wanted to post a little note tonight regarding a wonderful weekend. John and I had the best weekend. Our family came to visit from TN and although it was a short visit, it was exactly what we needed. John's Mom and step-dad,(Nana Carol and Pa) Jason,(his brother) Jessica (his wife) Bailey, Caroline and Allie (cousins) came and we had the best time. This amazing family has always taken such good care of me. From our first meeting, they took me in just like I was one of them. I am so blessed to have them and have gained so much in so many ways from each of them. They are just another way God reveals His love for me.

On the cancer front....2 more radiation treatments. MON. and TUES. each at 8:30 a.m. I am feeling rested, renewed and ready to finish these up. I am expectant that God will show up just like he has for the previous 8 treatments.

I will update soon. God bless each of you and I pray you have a great week.

August 18, 2009

YEEEEEEEEEEEEEEHAAAAA!!!!!!!!!! I finished my last treatment this morning and it sure felt good. As I lay there on that machine I just thanked God for providing the treatment that might have been used to rid me of this disease and I thanked Him for all the opportunities I have been given to proclaim His majesty since all this started a few weeks ago.

Today at Walmart, I noticed a lady about my age wearing and purchasing a scarf and I had to ask. She had received a Jan. diagnosis and said she still couldn't stand people looking at her. I reassured her that she is beautiful and not to worry about people looking at her. This is just one more thing God has made me very aware of. It does not matter what we look like to others...just to God.

I will see my Oncologist on Friday and will have more information then.

Thank you all for continuing to lift up my family in prayer. You all mean the world to us. God has been so generous to John and me.

August 22, 2009

Sorry it has been so long. I am having some difficulty updating as everything I just typed in disappeared....again. I will try. I have a lot to tell about my visit to the Dr. and even more to tell about our weekend.

My appointment went well yesterday. I had both treatments so we call this my "long" one which really isn't because the staff at Norton is so amazing. They spoil us. Just more of our extended family.

Dr.Seeger said everything looked good and was pleased that my blood work was even lower than the last time I reported. I think it was closer to 55 from the last testing. She said we would not need to scan for a month or so because the radiation would still be working and shrinking tissue and killing cells for that amount of time. John is always reminding her that we will do whatever necessary to stay ahead of this. She is always so patient and gracious when we get anxious. She reassured us that, and I love this, "we still have a lot to throw at this...a lot in our arsenal." You've got to know that an arsenal feels so much better than just a small cache....especially to John.

So, I will continue on chemotherapy every Friday unless my blood work falters which by the Grace of God it hasn't yet. I think this fact surprises a few of my nurses. It doesn't surprise me so much because God knows I need to see my family at Norton every week....I love these women. Their dedication and outlook encourage me and they make me laugh.

We've had a busy weekend. Our dear friends, Kim and Gary, from East TN came in to visit. Our boys absolutely love them and we do too. We have known them since before we were married and have shared so many unique experiences with them and their families. John and Gary worked together for years and just share a special bond. You think John has been talking a lot lately....you should hear these two guys get together. I love it.

After Taekwondo this morning, we took off to the Creation Museum and spent the day there. I am speechless. ABF, we have got to make this a priority. I will write more on this later when I can gather my thoughts, but I will leave you with a challenge that was brought to my heart while at the museum.

The verse is found in 1 Peter 3-15

15But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

Are we hopeful and can others tell we are?

How can we tell others if we can't explain it ourselves? And if we're not telling others, how are we spreading the good news?

[Psalm 9:18](#)

But the needy will not always be forgotten, nor the **hope** of the afflicted ever perish.

[Psalm 25:3](#)

No one whose **hope** is in you will ever be put to shame, but they will be put to shame who are treacherous without excuse.

August 29, 2009

Wow, what a week this has been. Chad, my 7 year old asked Jesus to live in his heart forever. Another answered prayer. Is there anything better than knowing that your child will be spending eternity in Heaven? We are so proud of him.

....Then there's the steroids. Oh my! I don't even know how to describe it except to say there were times this week that I wasn't sure I would make it through the steroid "taper."

Yet in God's perfect timing, He has delivered me once again from my doubt. I am starting to feel much better. I will be off the steroids within the week and I pray I will never have to go back on them.

My chemotherapy treatments are going well and I was able to work all week. I love to work and have committed to working for the Lord. I want everything I do to point to Him.

I will post again, soon. Thanks to everyone who has signed the guestbook. I covet your prayers and well wishes! I know each of you are praying for us, but I want you to know that when I see your name, I am praying for you, as well. I am calling you by name and thanking God for you. Your friendship and support are priceless to me.

September 7, 2009

Just to let you all know I had written an update and it disappeared so after the boys baths I will try again.

September 7, 2009

Tamara just turned in early for the night. I wanted to let everyone know how thankful we are for your thoughts and prayers. I also wanted let you know what I see every day in Tamara behind the scenes. She is my hero. Not because of a single valiant act in a once in a lifetime crisis but in daily steadfast courage that surpasses my understanding.

I see her push on when she doesn't feel like it, when it would be much easier to take the day off and rest. When she tells the boys she feels great, but I know better. When our plan is for me to take the boys where she can get some rest and she decides to go with us at the last minute because she can't stand the thought of not spending the day together. When I have to tell her what the latest test results are, that I just received by phone from the doctor because we must start a new treatment immediately and she tells me it's going to be OK.

There are tough moments. They are usually brief for the most part. I believe we are learning what it means to live under grace. Our faith has grown in ways I can't put into words. Our home is full of love and appreciation for the smallest things we would have missed completely three years ago. Every day is a gift we have together as a family and I truly thank God every night as we lay down to sleep under the same roof.

My dad just turned seventy and is in poor health. He has always been close to Tamara.

Wednesday before last he talked to Tamara on the phone while the boys and I were at church. Tamara told me he asked her, how can you be sure you will go to heaven? Tamara walked him through scripture and led him in a prayer for salvation. My brother and I have prayed and tried to talk to my dad about salvation since I was twenty-six years old. But he was drawn through Tamara.

There is so much we will never understand this side of heaven but occasionally when our will aligns with His we get a glimpse of the eternal in the present. I was reading the other night and as I read these scriptures, I can see Tamara's faith being lived out every day.

2 Corinthians 2

14But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. **15**For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.

2 Corinthians 3

16But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. **17**Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18**And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect[\[a\]](#) the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 4

15All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

16Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. **17**For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. **18**So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

We love you all,

John

September 10, 2009

Do I have a sweet, Godly husband, or what? He's something else. I told him to feel free to post on here anytime, but I never imagined.... I should have. He is constantly looking on the bright side. It hasn't always been that way. He has always been very supportive, but being in his line of work, he has sometimes found it difficult to "find the bright side" of some things. I have seen God do amazing things in him during our trials. It just goes to show that when you truly seek Him, you will find Him.

Like I had told you, I tried to post but lost it somewhere. I was just trying to tell you we are in a holding pattern of sorts. I am doing chemotherapy on Fridays and awaiting a scan to see how successful the radiation was. I bet some of you are thinking, "Is she still taking chemo." Until God chooses to heal me, I will be on some form of chemo. Because it is still moving (not stable) I have to continue to fight it and chemo. is the best way to do that. They believe that the cancer in my liver is responding well to the meds I am on so we will continue with it until that is no longer the case.

A sweet friend sent me a card with a verse that has rang so true for me recently.

Lamentations 3:22-23

22It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

23They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

There have been so many prayers answered and symptoms resolved overnight, and once again, I should not be surprised. God is capable and faithful. I know He does not always choose this time-frame, but I hope that this gives you hope that He can and often does.

My boys sometimes think things are "not fair." I always try to remind them that they are right, things aren't always fair. Like it wasn't too fair that Jesus lived a sinless life and was treated the way He was. Or that Job endured such extreme suffering. Those things don't appear "fair" but God is a fair and merciful god. We are sinful and if we got what we deserve, we would be consumed. It is His

mercy and compassion that we aren't.

Look for His 'mercies' every morning and thank Him for them. I know most of you have experienced this and my prayer for those of you who haven't is that you will come to a relationship with the One who can supply ALL your needs.

September 14, 2009

This weekend two contradictory statements were revealed to me each one bringing amazing comfort and understanding.

I know many of you have read Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, that begins, *It's not about you*. After a sleepless night born out of confusion, pain and just simple disappointment, this was the conclusion I reached. It's NOT all about me. It is all about God and submitting to His will. God has things He wants to accomplish and He WILL accomplish them. Many of those things we will not understand this side of Heaven. I have prayed so often for God to use me and have offered that I am willing to be used in any way. What I was reminded of was that being used might be painful, confusing and even hurtful...by earthly standards. Who am I to think that I am too good to suffer? Oh poor me.....were my feelings hurt? God is too compassionate to say, "Get over it!" but in true Godly fashion, He revealed it to me gently and lovingly.

It is not always so expediently that things are wrapped up for me, but this time He chose to do so. On Sat. at the Arts & Crafts Fair at Highview, a sweet man walked up to me and asked if I would be willing to accept a gift from a stranger. He walked away before I could even open it. It was a wooden carving of the word BELIEVE. How could he have known that this was exactly what I needed-when I needed it? It wasn't that I didn't believe but rather that I hadn't acknowledged that all things are from God and will work out for my good and His glory. I also believe that this man didn't know my needs, but the One who sent him did.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not saying Rick Warren is wrong because millions in book sales indicate that he is not, but Jesus says it is all about Me....each of us. His life and death are a testament to the fact that it is all about us.

Have you ever thought about the people you choose to spend time with? I mean the ones you really want to be with. There must be something you really like about them or at least more that you like than dislike. Jesus knows us....inside and out, and He still wants to be with us. He longs to be with us. He's made many promises to us to this end. In John 17:20-24 Jesus speaks:

Jesus Prays for All Believers **20**"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **21**that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **22**I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: **23**I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to

let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. **24**"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. **25**"Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. **26**I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

I find this so telling about how much Jesus loves us, wants to be with us and wants us to be unified. I sense He has that feeling of knowing He has something priceless that He wants to share. You know that feeling that you feel when you are with those very special chosen few that you trust and enjoy spending time with.

I have been so fortunate. I was really very scared to move from the safety of the TN mountains, the only place I had ever lived. Since we have been here, I have made some of the best friends a person could ever hope for. I have found a church that unashamedly worships God and does what the Bible says those who love Christ should do and I have found a job that doesn't seem like a job at all because when you do it for the Lord, that's how it should feel. I am blessed and content and willing to be used not matter the cost.

September 29, 2009

Hey friends! This won't be much of an update but I just wanted to let you all know that I am hanging in there. I'm still having a bit of pain but I have been able to work this week with a lot of help and coddling by my co-workers. Thanks, AGAIN!

I have read some beautiful posts in my guestbook and have received true blessings from each one.

I have another treatment tomorrow. Let's all hope and pray this is the one God chooses to heal me of this sickness with.

Remember, though, if not....He is still on the throne....and the battle has already been won.

Can't leave you without a little story. It kind of goes along with the post by John Clemens. Thanks, John. We love you guys.

I wasn't feeling too good this morning and my co-workers were encouraging me to take some time and go rest at one of their houses while no one was there. Anyway, I stuck it out, but I was talking to someone about it on the phone after school and I told them I didn't want to go because I gather strength from the women I work with and essentially that I didn't want to be alone. Matthew, my 4 year old, said, "Mommy, you're not alone, Bubby and I are here (John is out of town for a couple of days) and God is always with you. So, you'll never be alone."

Out of the mouths of babes....the truth!!!!

I will update you soon!

October 10, 2009

I have been meaning to update you on my condition, but I wasn't exactly sure what to say because the news wasn't too good. However, in light of the perfect day I had today, I figure no news can put a damper on this feeling.

Today was the Louisville Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and my dear co-workers and ABF family created a team in my honor called Tamara's Sister's In Christ. I have never been so proud to be part of something in all my life. There were lots of pictures taken that I will share with you very soon.

Now my status: A few weeks ago I had an MRI that revealed multiple spots on multiple bones of my neck and back. That explained the increase in pain I was experiencing. My Dr. changed the chemotherapy I was taking and adjusted some of my pain medication. I had a rough time this week. I was unable to work and because John was out of town for work, My mom came up to take care of us. Between Mom and our friends here not only were we taken care of, we were actually a little spoiled.

Participating in "The Walk" today made me even more appreciative of the support we have. Not two days go by without someone doing something incredibly generous for us. Just in the last two weeks, I have received 3 dinners, an "anonymous" flower arrangement, a Longaberger Basket, a beautiful pink blanket, no less than a dozen cards of encouragement, monetary gifts, and my favorite candies.

I was so glad my Mom was here the day I received 18 beautiful roses from my husband's colleagues/fellow agents. They had gotten together and sent such a special gift from WI where John had been the last couple of weeks conducting training. Because my Mom still works full-time and cares for my aging grandmother, she hasn't been able to visit as much as she would like. I was so glad she was able to see how well we are cared for here.

Something else that made today even more special than I could have hoped for was to look up and see my dear brother-in-law, Jason, walking with "My Team."

God has been so good to me and my family and continues to bless us. There is no better feeling, when times get tough, than to know how willing people are to sacrifice to make life easier and more tolerable.

October 16, 2009

Hello friends and family. It has been a while since I talked to most of you. It has been a tough couple of weeks. I haven't been able to work and most of you know that is not good news since that is kind of my litmus test of how I feel.

I have been in a lot of pain and had terrible nausea. My doctor tried to change my meds, but I didn't respond as quickly as I had hoped so we made more changes today.

Let me tell you what an amazing medical team I have. I have mentioned that my circumstances are different than most others because I have been so blessed to have maintained a relatively normal life so far. Many fighting this disease have not. However, my medical team wants me to "get back to normal"... "my normal" They are working so hard for me.

I started a new pain med. protocol today. I'm back on steroids...watch out! They added a bone strengthening medication and of course the two chemotherapies. Wow! Is that enough?

My family continues to be blessed by the generosity of friends. All my "Sisters-In-Christ" dressed in their "FIGHT LIKE A GIRL" T-Shirts. Mrs. Nancy picked up the boys. The Nauerts, a family we met through Whitefield friends and have grown very close to fixed our dinner. Chad's class sent lots of gift cards and well wishes. So many more blessings I can't even think of right now.

I hope you all know how much we appreciate you, your prayers, your friendship and your generosity and I promise to try to get thank yous out to everyone...it just might take me a while. In the meantime, I want you to know that I have a list and I call your names out to our Heavenly Father and pray for your needs, the ones I know specifically and just general prayers for those I don't.

Until I have more information, God Bless You and We Love You!

November 3, 2009

HI EVERYONE! A lot has happened since I posted last. I am hanging in there. I have had some really good moments. I can't recall an entire day that was "back to normal" but I have definitely seen glimpses of "normal" here and there that at one point I wasn't sure I would see again.

I have gotten to go to church a couple of times and have been able to see 2 very special young ladies, Megan and Laura, be baptized. They have practically become big sisters to the boys. That was a sweet day. I had a special visit from my Dad in TN. He was able to see the boys do Taekwondo and go Trick or Treating. Both boys dressed as Fighter Pilots....we have exhausted almost every military Hero since 2001. I am so proud they aren't into the other stuff, yet.

I was able to witness another special baptism this Sunday. One of my dear friends who has had a sweet relationship with Jesus for many years, decided to follow through by making her public profession of faith. I am so proud of her and of our church for encouraging everyone, no matter where they are in their walk with the Lord to follow God's word. Rayann, reminded me how important it is to be faithful and I see her willingness to do so opening dialogue with the young and well...the not so young. My four year old was practicing in the bathtub last night so that he will be ready when the

time comes. I've got you to thank for that, Rayann. I hope you know how proud we are of you.

We have been having a tough time with Matthew's allergies lately. He has awakened many times with a terrible rash and itching. He has just been miserable. We think we have narrowed it down to the fact that John changed the clothes detergent. So, my Mom agreed to come to our rescue, again. She came up, from TN, and re-washed all of Matthew's clothes, sheets, toys and anything else he might come in contact with. He is clear...right now. I am sure Mom's visit wasn't quite as enjoyable as Dads, but the boys loved seeing both of them.

Today, before my mom left, she and I went to Whitefield to pick-up the boys. Wow, I can't even describe how good it felt to be back. It seems like forever. Please continue to pray...I feel it working and I hope you see it.

This Friday is a long appointment. I see the Dr. and have all my treatments. I will let you know all about it.

I am going to post some pictures, too. I don't want you to miss it!!!

November 13, 2009

Dear friends and family,

I have been reading through some of my guestbook entries lately and I have come to the conclusion I have the best friends new and old and of course the best family in the galaxy... as my boys would say. I am so proud to have John's co-workers, many of which I have never met, pulling for me, too. I think I have said it before about the many blessings I have received while going through this. I have really enjoyed hearing from you and finding that many of you have a strong faith in God and that we belong to the same family of believers.

In the last week, I got some discouraging blood work that suggested "growth." Following a recent PET scan unfortunately that was confirmed. There was apparently "uptake" in my liver, and more of my bones (femurs, pelvis, neck and back) We have stopped treatment at this time and are awaiting more information on entering a "Trial." (I just find it kind of funny to call it that. What have I been in thus far?) Never lose your sense of humor.

The “Trial” will possibly take place in Indiana and my Dr. appears very optimistic. Not to add any pressure to a job already loaded with it, but we have always had the best, most secure feeling being with the Oncology group that we are and feel that they are doing all they can to provide me with the most progressive treatment available. I encourage you to pray for them fervently as their line of work is not easy. Even saying it is a job is not adequate. What they do is a calling and I feel God brought me to Louisville, KY to experience such care.

I know how hard it is on you to watch this journey, but thank you for going on it with us. Just imagine how wonderful the celebration will be when it turns out the way we have all been hoping and praying. Please know I am going to rejoice regardless and I want you too also. We are doing well...hanging in there...controlling most of the pain...eating well. The boys are amazing and are enjoying being spoiled. We are trying to find a balance with them because although they are resilient, they have precious hearts. I continue to remind myself that God loves them even more than we do and He would do nothing to harm them.

I know this is a little vague, about the “Trial” and what it consists of, but I will let you know the minute I know more.

December 17, 2009

I regret to inform everyone that Tamara went into the hospital ICU on December 1, 2009 and passed away this morning (12/17/2009) at approximately 2:30am.

Service information as follows:

Fern Creek Funeral Home
5406 Bardstown Road
Louisville, KY 40291
(502)499-1361

Visitation-

Saturday (12/19/2009)

3pm-7pm

Sunday (12/20/2009)

12pm-2pm

Funeral-

Sunday (12/20/2009)

2pm

McCammon-Ammons-Click Funeral Home

220 West Broadway Avenue

Maryville, TN 37801

(865)681-4600

Visitation-

Monday (12/21/2009)

6pm-9pm

Sherwood Memorial Gardens

3176 Alcoa Hwy

Alcoa, TN 37701

(865)970-2956

Grave Side Service-

Tuesday (12/22/2009)

11am

Sorry I can't put something more reflective together at the moment. I wanted to make sure I got this information out as soon as I had the opportunity. I will post again in the coming weeks.

The love and support our family has received has been overwhelming and it would be impossible to express how thankful we are in words. May God bless you all.

John

February 20, 2011

It's been a long time since the last post and a lot has happened over the last year. We all will face that day when life will come to an end whether we have time to prepare or it comes in an instant. We will also likely lose some of our closest loved ones if not already. I wanted to send an encouraging word out of a very tough journey.

I could never express in words or deeds how thankful I am for the thoughts, prayers and help we've received over the last four years. God's love has flowed through our friends, family, church family, school family, my co-workers and supervision, doctors, nurses, etc... the whole way. God placed every text, email, letter, phone call, act of kindness, in the hearts of the people coming along side of us. The timing, words spoken and needs met have been nothing short of miraculous. Thank you for your faithfulness to act because God has sustained us through all of you.

I always thought if anything I could protect my family but there was nothing I could do to protect Tamara. I have been crushed and humbled and put in a position of total trust in God. He has been faithful all the way. He didn't heal Tamara the way I wanted but He ultimately healed her with no more pain, worry, or chemo. I hate asking others for help. God has stripped me of my pride and independence. God is preparing me for His service, not mine.

During Tamara's services I had friends (mostly peers from work) fly in from all over the country to show support. One that I haven't seen in well over a year made a comment that God used tremendously. He told me what a good friend I had been to him and I replied that I hate I haven't kept in better touch and we need to do better in the future. He said it doesn't matter when we do talk again it will be the same, as if we talked the day before. We will always be close friends no matter the time or distance.

After He made that comment I started noticing as friends walked up face to face (especially at the visitation in east Tennessee), many I haven't seen or talked to in eight to ten years or more, it was like no time had separated us. We picked up just as close as where we left off. It occurred to me that when I get to Heaven and look upon Tamara, all the time of separation and strife I may go through in the meantime will vanish like a vapor. We will pick up just where we left off, only in a perfected love, with no more worry of separation. That love will be at a much higher level than we had here on earth. Not just with Tamara but with our Savior and other believers.

I try to think about that coming reunion as much as I can. When Jesus went to raise Lazarus He wept, even though he knew what was about to happen. When he saw Mary and the Jews weeping "He was deeply moved in spirit and troubled", Jesus weeps with us also. He will never leave us or forsake us.

People have asked me "what is God's plan in all this". This is only my opinion based on my experiences, what I have read in the bible and what God has done in my own heart. As I consider the Creator and the vastness and

majesty of the universe all in perfect orbit, down to the complexity of a single living cell. I see thousands of plans being worked out through this situation. Everyone who knew or even heard about Tamara has to look at life from the perspective of eternity. If you were around Tamara you saw God's grace and love radiating from her no matter what her circumstances were.

We were created to love God and be loved by God. Again, as I consider all of creation, we are the crown jewels of that creation. To have true love there must be a free will to choose to love or reject. In the Old Testament God allowed Job to be attacked by Satan, enduring unbelievable hardships. Even though Job had lived an obedient life, God seemed silent in answering his prayers, his friends were giving terrible advice and he was encouraged to curse God and die, but he chose to continue to love God by his free will. Job was blessed greatly in the end while he was still on this earth for all to see his witness and be encouraged.

When Tamara was first diagnosed in May of 2006, there was a lot of fear and confusion of what God was doing. Very early on it came to us that God loves our boys and us more than we are capable. Tamara chose to trust God. I saw Tamara when no one else was around and she could pour out her heart without reservation. Tamara never was afraid to die. Her concern was always leaving me and the boys and the pain her family and friends were experiencing watching her go through this battle. I watched her pray and allow God to minister through her to the ones around her instead of her becoming concerned about her own pain and suffering.

There is no way I can capture what I saw in her on a daily basis. Look through the photos to the last one, with her sitting in the floor carving pumpkins with the boys. This picture captures her better than I can in words. I took that picture 61 days before God called her home. You are looking at a woman that has cancer tumors throughout her body; on her liver and internal organs, lymph nodes, neck, spine, pelvis, both femurs, clusters on her brain, so many they couldn't get a count. You are looking at a woman that had a double mastectomy, 41 lymph nodes removed, radiation, whole brain radiation, and had been on Chemotherapy for almost three straight years.

When you look into her eyes, you are seeing God's love and grace flowing through her to the boys and I, and anyone around her. She would get up in the morning singing as she woke the boys for school "this is the day the Lord has made and we will be glad in it". Tamara freely chose to love God and His grace and mercy rained down on her continuously. I believe she will hear these words some day; you have fought the good fight, you have finished the race, you have kept the faith, well done my good and faithful servant.

Psalm 40

- 1** I waited patiently for the LORD;
he turned to me and heard my cry.
- 2** He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.
- 3** He put a new song in my mouth,

a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the LORD
and put their trust in him.

Raising two boys and working full time and family more than three hours away is more than I can accomplish. The pace and obligations is more than I can sustain. So I have had to fully trust God. He has provided energy, guidance and has met our needs in a super natural way and I have to give Him all glory for it. I have lived one day at a time for a very long time now. God promises grace for the day, yesterday is gone and tomorrow will have its own troubles if it even comes at all.

God has allowed me to see just enough of the bigger picture for me to trust Him fully. I have seen some come to Christ and many others grow incredibly in their walk with Christ through this journey. God blessed our marriage from the beginning. I never had a hobby our entire marriage and never desired one. If I wasn't working, I wanted to be with Tamara and the boys. The love we grew into after her diagnosis was Divine. We may have been married fifty years and never learn to love and appreciate every moment like we did. I would walk through that valley of hardship a thousand times over to have the twelve years of marriage we shared.

Chad and Matthew are doing well. Chad is on the Honor Roll at school and Matthew is winning hearts and minds every day. The best way to describe their personalities; I see Chad becoming a fellow at a NGO think tank as a subject matter expert publishing a book every couple of years. Matthew will be a team leader of a special forces A team behind enemy lines liberating the oppressed. They both would quickly tell you all about their mother and that she is already at her heavenly home with Jesus waiting to welcome us there when our work is done here.

Tamara was able to see Chad give his life to Jesus and baptized a couple of months before she was called home. Matthew told me he wanted to give his life to Jesus several times last spring. I would tell him what that means and he would know when he was being called but avoided the decision unsure of his understanding. One night (05/03/2010) he would not be denied. I told him he would have to confess that he has done things he shouldn't on purpose and ask God to forgive him. He agreed. He would ask Jesus into his heart forever and he would never be the same. He agreed. He would put his faith in Jesus that He took the penalty when He died on the cross, for the wrong things he had done and will do. He agreed. He would follow and obey Jesus all his life even if it meant leaving his dad some day. He said he wanted to live with his dad forever. I further explained and he agreed. We got on the floor and I told him if he prayed after me these things and meant them with all his heart, he would open the door of his heart and let Jesus in forever and he would be written in the Lamb's book of life in heaven. He did and I looked up and Chad was watching and listening with tears in his eyes. Chad ran and dove on us. We hugged and rejoiced in the floor as God's love washed over us. Oh, how I wish I could've been the one to tell Tamara the good news.

Revelation 21

1 Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

5 He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.”

6 He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. 7 Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children.

With much love,

John