

**Celebration of Life
Cindy (Cynthia) Tipton
January 21, 2017**

Cindy has one request - knowing that this day was coming.

She wanted to make sure you knew about the thing in her life that mattered the most - it meant everything and grew in importance with each passing day.

In the midst of her trials and suffering, she didn't grow weaker in this part of her life - though her body grew weaker - her spirit and soul grew stronger.

What I'm referring to is her faith in God - her relationship with Jesus. She, like the song says, learned to trust in God ever more stronger as she travelled through life.

I want to as best I can and as simply as possible, describe that faith that meant everything to Cindy. She didn't just want it for herself but wanted everyone else to have it also, because of how important it became to her.

There are a few words that come to mind - and some words from the Bible that back up these words - and were very evident in Cindy's life.

1. SHE LIVED WITH LOVE

Cindy knew Jesus love and trusted Him completely.

Cindy experienced God's love at the core of who she was. And we know that because we could see how much she loved to worship. She loved music that expressed praise and gratitude to God. She learned to play the keyboard - and enjoyed helping others express their love to God.

Isaiah 26:4 *Trust in the Lord always, for the LORD GOD is the eternal Rock.*

The song in the handout is the story of Cindy's love for God and trust in His ability to look after her.

*When You don't move the mountains I'm needing You to move
When You don't part the waters I wish I could walk through
When You don't give the answers as I cry out to You
I will trust, I will trust, I will trust in You!*

*You are my strength and comfort
You are my steady hand
You are my firm foundation; the rock on which I stand*

2. SHE LIVED WITH FREEDOM.

She knew Jesus forgiveness and held no grudges.

Cindy was free in her heart and soul because she had accepted God's forgiveness. This gave her the ability to not hold grudges - to not grow bitter when loss and pain came along in her life. She lived free and forgiven. Forgiven from shame, the guilt of unconfessed sin, the ability to let God work things out.

I knew Cindy when she was on a quest to know the love and forgiveness of Jesus. 22 years ago, she knew there was more to life and ended up coming to our church where she trusted in Jesus to forgive her and help her find the peace and joy and love she needed to live well.

Even in her suffering, she was free and was able to deal openly with the hardships she endured.

3. SHE LIVED WITH PURPOSE.

She followed Jesus pattern and walked with purpose.

Cindy lived a purpose driven life.

A favorite verse of hers was...

2 Corinthians 5:20 *So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!"*

She watched the way Jesus lives his life and spread his love and imitated Him. She found warmth and heat when under stress and in the midst of much suffering - and found peace and an inner calm that went beyond understanding.

Romans 12:1-2 *So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out.*

4. SHE LIVED WITH PEACE.

She focused on her relationship with Jesus and found true peace.

Cindy was not into religion (just following a set of rules and regulations you keep) but embraced a relationship with Jesus. It was that closeness she experienced that brought her peace.

Her walk with God was the most important thing in her life. She became with each passing day more in love with Jesus and more committed to following his will.

A verse she wrote a lot about more recently on FB and in her emails was

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.*

It doesn't say be thankful "for" your circumstances because none of us were thankful for the cancer - but she somehow found things to be grateful for in the midst of her suffering.

How did she do it? Because she walked with Jesus - knew the love of her Father in Heaven and had the comfort of the Holy Spirit with her every step of the way.

When we talked to her right before she went into hospice she said, "I have 150% peace." She was preparing to go meet Jesus - we didn't want it to happen but we knew God for some reason was allowing it to happen.

Those who believe in Jesus - so many of you who walked beside her - can take our worries to God and like Cindy, pray about everything - tell God what we need and thank him for all he had done.

To what end? To the end of having a peace that goes beyond anything you can explain or understand.

Philippians 4:6-7 *Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*

Today we are faced with looking past what we can see and touch and imagine - to life after death. Cindy is with Jesus today. Reunited with those she loved who went on before her. And will be waiting for us when we arrive.

What an incredible opportunity all of us have to have the same love, forgiveness, purpose and peace that Cindy experienced.

FINAL WORD

In the final few days – we were talking to Cindy about heaven. She was wondering what it would be like. We talked about the reunions she'd have and the absence of pain and suffering.

This is a celebration of life for a reason. Cindy is not dead – but alive and gone to be with Jesus who she loved with all her heart.

John 14:1-4 Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. And you know the way to where I am going.

Benediction

Jude 24-25 *Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into his glorious presence without a single fault. All glory to him who alone is God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord. All glory, majesty, power, and authority are his before all time, and in the present, and beyond all time! Amen.*