



JULY 2018

Dear Praying Partners,

It is with a heavy heart that I write this prayer letter. On June 12, 2018, my best friend and dear wife, Cosie, went home to be with our LORD. She fought a good fight, and kept the faith during her Christian life, but the LORD chose to take away her pain once and for all. I was the most blessed man to have such a loving, compassionate, and supportive wife. We were married just shy of 43 years (August 1, 1975), and including the 2+ years that we dated, we were on Team Jesus 45 years. Since her passing, I have never known such loneliness existed.

My wife had a bone marrow biopsy just a couple of weeks before her passing, and she was totally leukemia free. However, on Monday, June 11th, we went to The James Cancer Center for a blood draw and check-up. It turned out to be anything but normal. Her liver enzymes had doubled from the previous week, and so she was admitted into the hospital. By the next morning, her enzymes had doubled again. She had developed an infection, and her organs had been so compromised from chemo treatments and BMT, they could not fight off the infection. She went into respiratory failure, transferred to ICU, and within 10 minutes, went into cardiac arrest. Nurses came for my daughter, Kelli, and me to ask if I wanted them to resuscitate. Of course, I did, and about half an hour later, they came back and told me that they had a pulse and her blood pressure had returned, but Cosie was in extreme critical condition. About an hour later, we were allowed to see her. My heart melted as I saw her. Thoughts of losing her were unbearable! Later, a doctor came to us and said that it would take a miracle for her to survive the night. He suggested we call family members to come. Our family made it to the hospital, and our grandchildren were able to kiss their MUM and say, "Good-bye." I was especially thankful for Pastor Dennis Hankins who came by my side and visited my wife. While we were in the room, Cosie went into cardiac arrest a second time. Pastor Hankins and I watched as the ICU response team work frantically to revive her. After 5 minutes, I asked him to get my daughters. My daughters and son-in-law watched them do CPR for another 10 minutes. A doctor came out to the hallway and asked me what I wanted them to do... I then spoke the 3 most difficult words I have ever spoken. I said, "LET HER GO!"

I know I will see her again one day. I have this promise from God. We buried my sweet wife, Cosie, beside her mother just 3 miles from our home. I have visited her grave several times since, and I plan to visit often. I know she's not there, but it helps for me to talk to her anyway. During the past 9 months, we were together nearly every minute of every day. Only recently did she want me to get back on the road to preach.

Her funeral was the most beautiful I have ever seen. Such a tribute and outpouring of love by family and friends! Cosie's visitation line was long and the church was packed. All of the speakers, Pastor Jim Beals, Dr. Glenn Mathews, and Dr. Stephen Willis did a great job memorializing her. Pastor J.R. Gossett (Pastor of Community Baptist Church, Greensboro, NC) also did a wonderful job at Cosie's burial.

Now we begin a new journey. This journey will be more difficult than our battle to beat leukemia. During that journey, we had the hope of remission and cure. In this new journey, we know we will no longer see Cosie this side of glory. This world is hard enough to live, and living it without my wife and ministry partner is almost unbearable and unthinkable! God told Ezekiel that He was going to take away his wife, "The desire of his eyes" (EZEKIEL 24:16). That phrase perfectly describes how I felt about Cosie - she was... THE DESIRE OF MY EYES. After Ezekiel's wife died, however, Ezekiel did not quit. We read, "So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I DID IN THE MORNING AS I WAS COMMANDED (EZEKIEL 24:18). It is my prayer that I will continue to do the same.

Though THE DESIRE OF MY EYES is gone, I intend to – PREACH THE WORD! This is what God has called me to do, and I want to do it as much as I can until JESUS COMES or CALLS ME HOME. Job said, "THOUGH HE SLAY ME, YET WILL I TRUST IN HIM..." I TRUST IN HIM TO SEE ME THROUGH THIS VALLEY OF DESPAIR, FILL MY SCHEDULE, AND USE ME OFTEN! Please PRAY for my family and our ministry.



SHALOM,

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