

September 1, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last week I started reading a book for the second time by Winn Collier, "Love Big, Be Well." It details a series of letters between a pastor and his congregation. Yes, my first two letters I wrote to you, drew me back to this book.

One of the letters Collier writes, quotes St. Teresa of Avila, who states; "The whole way to heaven, is heaven itself." I don't know how many times I read that quote over the course of several days, going back to it, processing it. Each time, thinking of different events throughout life, where God walked with Kathy and I. I thought of the uncertain times that involved illness and insecurity, as well as the times of plenty and perceived certainty. Looking back, God was always there, walking with us; teaching, molding, preparing and most graciously loving, forgiving, and providing. Yes, I began to see; God walking with us, through all those situations of life, is heaven itself as St. Teresa stated.

All the time I was reflecting on this quote; I was obviously thinking about this journey Kathy and I are walking through now. All of a sudden, a poem popped into my head, "Footprints in the Sand." If you are not familiar with it, please look it up and read it. A person describes a dream where they are walking along the beach with God. The person tells God; "Lord, you said once I decided to follow You, You would walk with me all the way. But I noticed during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life, there were only one set of footprints, I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You, would leave me." God whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you...when you saw only one set of footprints, I carried you."

As I thought about that image and looked way back down the beach, I noticed on Friday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, that Kathy and my footprints disappeared from the sand. God certainly had no doubt, picked us up. Then I looked closer down the beach and I saw a few sets of footprints, then a few more, then hundreds of footprints, making a wide, deep path in the sand. All of a sudden I realized what happened; first our family, then as all of our brothers and sisters in Christ found out about Kathy's Leukemia and in love, like Christ, you have joined us on this journey.

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We've seen you; we've felt your love for us as you have prayed, sent cards, notes, texts, and emails. You've asked what you could do; I've said please pray and you've done just that, thank you, that is always the greatest thing we can do for anyone. Some day in the future we'll need practical help with things and we won't hesitate to ask.

You cannot believe how much your love means and has lifted us up. We are truly blessed, as you are; to know Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior and to have a family of brothers and sisters who will walk this difficult journey with us. Thank you!!

May God Bless you and keep you!

Love, Kathy and Brett and our family