

Living with joy, dying with peace

By Milton Dykes

I'm going blind. I won't be able to write my stories."

Kristy stood in our home office. She had just returned from a routine eye exam that revealed peripheral vision loss.

The next day at Mayo Clinic, an MRI brought more shocking news. A tumor the size of an orange was growing in Kristy's brain.

Kristy, a skillful writer and investigative reporter, quizzed the doctor as to the seriousness or malignancy of the tumor. He answered quietly. He had seen hundreds of these types of tumors. This was a deadly malignancy requiring immediate attention.

I felt the weight of the world falling on top of me.

Kristy didn't blink. She calmly shared her complete trust in God's care: "We believe in God. He will heal me here or He will heal me in heaven. I'm going to be OK."

Nurses and technicians stood with tears streaming down their faces. The radiologist felt the faith of the moment. As we left, they shared, "We have never seen faith like this or anyone receive this news as you have. Most people scream and go crazy."

Kristy was an award-winning author — 10 works of Christian fiction, more than 650 published

articles. She was a columnist, speaker, teacher, mentor, designer and leader. She loved humor and was a gifted storyteller. Kristy hit every writing deadline and hated procrastination. She was a wonderful mother. She was my wife, friend and ministry partner.

How could this happen? I stood by my dearest friend with so many questions and fears.

"Let's go on to church," she said as we left Mayo Clinic.

"Let's go home," I said. "I'll have someone lead the prayer service. We need to go home."

We were pastors of Southside Assembly of God in Jacksonville, Fla., where Kristy had attended church during her youth and where we had served as pastors for the previous five years.

"I'm the one with the tumor," Kristy said gently. "We're going to church."

Tears filled the eyes of our loving congregation when Kristy shared with them the news we had heard only an hour before.

"I'm in God's hands," she assured them. "He will heal me either here on earth or He will heal me in heaven. I am going to be OK."

God's peace and strength filled the room.

"God's got this supernatural cloud of peace above me and a chair below me," Kristy wrote that day on her blog, christianlovestories.blogspot.com. "The chair thought comes from missionary John Peyton and how he taught the natives to believe in God. ... God is going to hold me up through this ordeal. He is GOING to see me through. My cloud of peace is above me, and God's chair to hold me is beneath me."

A week later, a biopsy revealed Kristy had a glioblastoma multiforme brain tumor. The prognosis: just a few months to live.

Kristy spent the next months preparing her family and me for our lives without her if the Lord didn't heal her in this life. She kept her praise, joy and laughter.

Our dear family, church and friends stood with Kristy and helped carry me, our daughters Julie and Jennifer, and their young families through a long, difficult and unexpected journey.

I questioned God's fairness at times. It felt like He was robbing Kristy and me of our dreams yet to be achieved, dreams of her writing projects and of ministry in our church. Then one day I sensed God's Spirit questioning me: *What dream of this life is greater, big-*

ger or more important than the joy and wonder of the dreams of heaven and of being with Me?

After her surgery, Kristy wrote these words on her blog:

"All I know is, EVERYTHING'S OK WITH ME AND GOD. If He gives me my complete healing on earth, great. If He gives me my complete healing in heaven, great. Either way, He will fulfill His purpose in me.

"The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your love, O Lord,

at her dressing mirror as she held her make-up bag.

"I don't know what this is," she said weakly.

"It's your make-up. Do you want me to put it on you?" I offered.

Her humor rose to the surface. "Are you crazy?"

I had to leave her with a friend while I went to church. Amazingly, during the worship service she and her friend, Sandra, appeared in church. Kristy whispered to me that she wanted to speak to

her with Him to heaven. I could only speak blessing, thanks and worship to God for a good and faithful wife and friend who partnered with me in life and ministry for 37 years.

My heart ached as my dearest friend went to a place I cannot yet visit. But I know Kristy entered into heaven through gates of pearl and walked with Jesus on streets of gold as she received her wonderful healing.

After Kristy's death, one reader of



"All I know is, EVERYTHING'S OK WITH ME AND GOD."

— Kristy Dykes

endures forever — do not abandon the works of your hands' (Psalm 138:8)."

The last Sunday Kristy went to church, she could not identify her make-up when she tried to get ready for church. I stood with her

the people. I wasn't sure how she would be able to speak, but she stood and for 10 minutes she spoke with sweet, bold confidence faith-filled words about living with purpose, yielded to God's will. She led the congregation in a beautiful chorus, "My Jesus Knows Just What I Need." It was her last time ever to speak in church.

Nine months after Kristy's diagnosis, I held her hand as the Lord came into our bedroom and took

her blog wrote, "Kristy showed us how to live with joy and how to die with peace." A cloud of peace covered her and a chair of strength kept her every step of the way. **tpe**

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