A Courageous Hepatitis C Warrior; A Memorial Tribute to Suzanne

July 31, 2019 By Connie M. Welch

Diagnosed with hepatitis C, I met Suzanne at the end of 2013. She was a true warrior, she was fighting her battle with the hep C giant and beginning a new treatment that would bring her the cure.

This special lady became well known on Life Beyond Hepatitis C as “our southern belle cheerleader.” She was a devoted Christian, fearless warrior, encourager, supporter, and faithful friend to all. Suzanne not only was a fellow hep c warrior but became an integral part of this ministry as a team member, prayer/hep C counselor, contributor/writer, and team supporter in every regard.

The morning of June 17, 2019, her comments on the devotional article, How to Handle Worry and Anxiety in Post Hepatitis C Treatment, were the last words she spoke here on the website. Soon afterward in the afternoon, unexpectedly, she changed her earthly address to heaven, and she left this life to be with the Lord.

How do you say goodbye to someone so dear? Our heads know with full assurance Suzanne is in heaven with Jesus, we rejoice in this fact, but our hearts are hurting. Suzanne left a forever mark on this ministry and to all who knew her. Grief, sorrow, and pain are the price for love, and we loved Suzanne deeply.

Suzanne had a big heart and deep concern for every soul she met, especially if she knew someone was struggling. She had been given an incredible gift of mercy and encouragement. She always had a word of hope and encouraging scripture to share, along with heartfelt prayer to each one here. She shared from her heart and her heart was full of Jesus.

She loved gardening, loved animals (especially seeing and hearing about my crazy mix of dogs, donkeys, and sheep). She dearly loved her husband and best friend, Mark. She loved sharing the love and hope of Christ with others. From the website, she even reached out to another hep C warrior and lead them to Christ.

Countless times she counseled people about hepatitis C on the website and those she met in person. For those that lived near her, she gave them information about her hepatologist and followed up with them on their appointments and progress, encouraging them every step of the

way.

Suzanne was on TV several times with her hepatologist, Dr. Andrew Muir M.D. about hepatitis C and treatment, where she spoke out about the importance of being proactive with hepatitis C.

Many times, she wore her Life Beyond Hepatitis C T-shirt to Duke University hospital and medical center while seeing her physician, she encouraged others who were dealing with liver disease. Sharing hope. Sharing love. Sharing life. She was a voice for advocacy, seeking treatment for hepatitis C and going for the goal of getting cured.

She laughed with us. Prayed with and for us. Loved us unconditionally. She modeled Jesus with skin on and shined brightly in our lives. The morning I learned of Suzanne's passing, I sat at my desk as my tears and heart spilled into a puddle. I cried. I prayed. I cried even more. "Love each other deeply from the heart," 1 Peter 1:22. That was Suzanne.

Suzanne was a woman of virtue. She was a warrior. She was courageous. She was a conqueror and overcomer. Though we will miss her in this life, we are not separated because of the bond we share in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

For this I know, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship, or persecution, or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake, we face death all day long; we are considered sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8: 35-39 NIV

As we draw near to love each other and to Christ, our love also is drawn to our dear friend. Because of our bond in Christ, we shall never be separated. This is our confident assurance. This is our joy.

On this scripture, I will always think of Suzanne, "Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, (sister), have refreshed the hearts of saints" Philemon 7. A sweet breeze blew into our lives. Suzanne was a refresher to all. Her love and legacy because of Christ will live on forever.

Our lives and this ministry will be forever blessed because of our dear friend and sister Suzanne.

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