

## Ash Wednesday - February 22

*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.*  
*Isaiah 61:1-3 (NIV)*

“She only has 3 weeks to live.” I was shocked! And as I was processing this horrible diagnosis, my mind recounted the significance of this life that was shortened to an unbelievable length.

My experience of this woman was that she was a beautiful example of a woman of God. She helped everyone in her path, she was an amazing hostess, a wonderful caregiver and my son's step-mom.

When you go through the experience of a relationship that is broken and you move on in your life, you don't have control over the ramifications of all that means. And one of those things is: who will also parent your child as life goes on? I couldn't have asked for a better step-mom for my son. She kept him safe and created a loving environment for him with my ex-husband. I couldn't have crafted it better.

And so I realized that I was grieving in significant ways for this woman who I appreciated and who had made life special for many people. We got along very well even though we didn't see each other often and lived in different states.

As I attended her memorial service with hundreds of other people whose lives she had touched, I knew that God was with us. God had given her 13 months instead of three weeks. Many of her friends had been able to see her in that time. And even though we laughed through our tears as we remembered her life, we knew that we had just experienced beauty and we needed to pass that on to others.

Kim

**Prayer:** God of beauty and ashes, as we live this life of fulfillment and also mourning, help us to continue to remember that You are always with us in the good times and the bad. Show us those glimmers of hope in the darkest of situations. Amen.