

James Robison Pays Tribute to Late Daughter

How do you say goodbye for now to someone you love so much? Someone so precious—to us, so perfect. Only 40 years old, our youngest child, Robin, fought the good fight of faith against one of life's greatest enemies. After a seven-year battle with cancer she left to be forever with Jesus on Friday, December 28.

Betty and I have never experienced such unexpected heartache nor watched such a precious person suffer such dreadful pain and never once complain. From the time she was diagnosed with throat cancer seven years ago, she had signed every email: "I WIN." Indeed, she has because her Savior has never lost a battle.

Everyone who knew her recognized she was one of the brightest lights and most consistent witnesses they had ever observed. She was our miracle baby. Betty had been told after the birth of our oldest daughter, Rhonda, who is now an amazing mother of four, that she would likely never have another child due to endometriosis. Five years after Rhonda's birth, we adopted Randy—our wonderful son and father of four. Robin came unexpectedly three years later.

From the moment she was conceived, the fight for life was on. Before Betty even knew she was pregnant, she nearly lost her in a pool of blood at a restaurant while we were dining with some friends. The doctor immediately put her on a controlled program in order to carry Robin to full term. We didn't know until years later that our daughter had not taken a breath on her own for more than 45 minutes after her birth. The doctor had rated her a "2" on a scale of 1 to 10 and recorded that she would likely live in a vegetative state. Every time he heard the reports of our active daughter, he said he was

amazed and finally told us what a miracle she was.

Rhonda always said her little sister Robin was her hero—and Randy felt the same. She was a hero to everyone who knew her.

During the past year, Betty wrote these words to Robin concerning her battle for life:

“As I look back, I believe in my heart—even though the signs of trouble were there—you were safe in the care of God. You were in His sanctuary, protected from all harm. He had a very special purpose for ‘ve never known anyone with more energy and who expressed the joy of life any more than you. I believe everyone who knows you agrees that you celebrate life with enthusiasm and zeal. It is an expression of the life God offers to all of us if we will embrace it.

“You take hold of every event in your life as a celebration. A party! You have always taken control of any situation, good or bad. You’ve never faltered or wavered on the journey. How courageous you have been and still are! Even during this serious and difficult time, you threw a party to celebrate God and His care for you. As you sat in the hairstylist’s chair, you praised God as she shaved your head. Then you stood up and said, “Old things passed away; all things become new.” I wanted to weep, but you had let everyone know that there would be no tears shed—only rejoicing and laughter. We all saw God’s healing power revealed in the peace and joy you freely expressed.”

Betty and I recognize that Robin didn’t get the finish to her life the way we all envisioned, but she did run the race, finish the course—and she did win! Robin did not fail. Faith did not fail. Her family and church did not fail. And God certainly did not fail! No, we do not understand why she suffered so much. We don’t have to. We continue to trust God. Robin is pain free, whole and in perfect peace forever.

Our son-in-law Kenny never left her side and served her as no one apart from God's enabling possibly could. No way to witness more tender, faithful loving care on the part of a husband. All of her family, especially their three beautiful children—Christopher, Cody and Callie—stood shoulder-to-shoulder and heart-to-heart with , trusting and knowing she would win. I've never seen such fearless, unwavering faith.

While in the hospital ICU a few days before she passed, I whispered to her, "We win." Even in that moment of weakness, her lips moved and she said, "I win!" I saw her fingers wrapped around her husband's as they had been for so many days and nights. Her body weight had been reduced to about 85 pounds, and a lot of the brightness in her beautiful brown eyes had dimmed. I watched intently before she slipped into a sleep from which she would never awaken as she literally looked at every one of her children, nephews, nieces, brother and sister, husband, mom, dad and close friends. Somehow with the bewildered look of an inquiring child, I felt she was trying to say, "I'm not supposed to be like this. I never expected to be right here. But I want to know: Are you okay?" We were as okay as God could make us, but somehow we all wanted to reassure her.

Her brother Randy sat down by her bedside, and with a guitar in his lap, he said, "I wrote this song for you two years ago. A friend at my church made me promise I would sing it to you." He did, as difficult as it was. She listened to the words, nodded, tried to smile as tears glistened in her eyes:

Hold On To You

*And you will be with me 'til the end
You are my Savior and my friend
Nobody else can take your place
Unending mercy and daily grace*

You have not forsaken me

You love eternally

So I'll hold on

Yes I'll hold on

You've carried me

So faithfully

I'll hold on to you

I'll hold on to you

And you are the breath of life in me

You gave your Son to set me free

Nobody else will satisfy

The gates of hell are cast aside

You're with me through the darkest times

Forever by my side

So I'll hold on

Yes I'll hold on

You've carried me

So faithfully

I'll hold on to you

I'll hold on to you

No height, no depth

Can separate the love you gave

Not life, not death

Will ever shake my faith

So I'll hold on

Yes I'll hold on

You've carried me

So faithfully

I'll hld on to you

I'll hold on to you

Randy looked at me a little later and asked, "Dad, do you think maybe she's fighting sleep so hard because she thinks if she goes to sleep, she may not wake up?" I agreed, but knew

Robin so desperately needed sleep, as her little body was exhausted. She had texted her mother a few days earlier: "This has to end!" The pain and suffering was about to end forever and ever.

She remained another day in a peaceful rest until Jesus took her in His loving arms; and with the love that lifts us all, He lifted her into His eternal presence. In no way did she deserve what she suffered. Satan, the enemy of all life, is a cruel and evil tormentor. Our entire family is resolved to do what Kenny said before the funeral, "I am going to live every moment the rest of my life to make Satan regret ever striking Robin!"

We remember a few years ago when Robin suddenly announced, "Mom and Dad, I want to tell you the worst thing I ever did when I was a little girl." We paused a moment, thinking, *Oh my, what will we hear?* She said, "When I was about 9 years old, my friend talked me into climbing out my bedroom window one night and sneaking around the house, and then coming back in the thought, 'I'm so sorry I did that,' and I still am." We thought, *Dear God, how could anyone suffer who has such a pure heart and sweet spirit?*

While visiting in her home a few weeks before she reached her weakened state, with tears we seldom saw welling up in her eyes, she said, "I don't understand." Of course, we didn't either—likely never will. She said, "I must be going to have some kind of testimony." Oh boy, honey, you sure do. I just wish everyone could have a testimony like you. I pray we will all lift Jesus as high as she did with every breath.

We saw Jesus so clearly not only in the life she lived, but also in her peaceful passing. We see Jesus in her oldest son, Christopher. What a man of God. And in Cody, who looks so much like his Papaw and is so much more talented. And in Callie, who in almost every way is just like her mother. What a legacy our daughter has! We want everyone to know the Jesus, peace

and joy that filled her life. She was a walking demonstration of what Jesus referred to as “abundant life.” She lived with the peace that only God can give and as the brightest possible light piercing the darkest areas on this earth.

At the hospital, as we were discussing with the social worker the hospice care they were recommending to make it easy for Robin to pass, the entire family together in confidence, peace, love and faith said, “We want to take her home so that we continue the battle until she wins.” The peace and love that overflowed in that room caused that worker to say, “What a family. What a truly special family!” I sensed my heavenly Father saying, “That’s what I want people to say about my family—about my church: ‘What a family!’” I want that too for His glory!

As parents, Betty and I have experienced waves of both overwhelming peace and unbearable sorrow. With each wave, one of us seems to have the strength to hold the other up. With the pain so great that sometimes I feel like someone is pounding on my chest with a sledge hammer and then sitting on my heart, I find myself crying out to God: “Lord, please let us live the rest of our lives to help alleviate the suffering and pain in the lives of others, many of whom do not have praying, love-filled friends and family to comfort them.” I want to live so people around the world who are losing their young children for any reason, including disease and malnutrition, find hope and help from God’s loving arms. Betty commented to me, “Precious families who lose their beautiful children at a young age like those in Connecticut only enjoyed them a few years. We had our daughter for 40 years.” We pray God will help us alleviate suffering everywhere possible.

We want to thank everyone from the bottom of our hearts who has through prayer lifted us up into the glorious presence of our God and Father who is the only One who can comfort and give peace during times like this. It is unnatural for a parent to bury a child, but it becomes supernatural when a

parent buries a child who, throughout his or her life, has revealed the glory of our great God and wonderful Savior.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be this earth, in us, as it was in our beautiful, precious daughter, Robin Rochelle Robison Turner. She will be waiting for us someday at heaven's gates saying, "Come on, Mom and Dad, and meet the King of kings in all of His glory!" And we will!