

My dear friends,

In a mere 2 weeks time on the 4th August I am turning **70 yrs old!**

Aunty Google calls it a Platinum Birthday:

"A specific traditional descriptor often used for the 70th year, symbolizing strength, endurance, and precious wisdom."

Sounds rather marvellous, although I wouldn't describe myself as any of the above 😊 I'm more like "***keep holding me Lord***!"

AT THIS MOMENT

*At this moment I'm not lonely
*At this moment I'm happy to be by myself

But when I look to my far future where Gj will never be

That moment that says,
"***this is the rest of your life, this is it! Forever!"***

*At **THAT moment**, I don't do well, it's unimaginable.



I see old couples holding hands and I can't stop telling God,
"*Lord this was gonna be us.*"

I also find myself a tad emotional thinking about me celebrating this milestone in my life at a venue where I will be sitting "on my own."

But, 70 is a **big deal** and needs to be celebrated.

On top of that, two days after my birthday, would have been our **33rd wedding anniversary** –

I suppose I better stop counting those because they ain't ever gonna happen again.

WHAT'S THE PLAN?

"Gj has fulfilled all that God wanted him to do,
his race is over – but yours isn't
God still has a purpose for your life"

I hear these words often.

One night I found myself "discussing" this with Jesus,

"*why can't Gj have been here for the rest of it Lord? Why do I have to do the next lap without him? He was my earthly rock, we did most of it together.*
I'm so insecure without him."



I'm sure in **time, He will tell** –

So, it's "onward Christian soldier" for me!
Live my life intentionally and
listen to His voice.

"**Bloom where you're planted."**

I have a wealth of experience with Parkinson's and dementia and a long period of mourning. (You have to remember that I mourned almost daily for 5 years before Gj died.)

Paul said in <u>2Cor.1:3,4</u>

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all **our** tribulation, that **we may be able to comfort** those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

SO MUCH FOR COMFORTING OTHERS 😊

Friend Pam and I went on a little mission to comfort a precious lady who was mourning "too much," she felt. Her husband had died a mere fortnight ago!



We listened and we ministered to her with heartfelt compassion until Gj's name came up in "the session"-

Suddenly Pam and I found ourselves crying our hearts out at the memory of what he went through and how sad we were when he died.

"The ministers" are not meant to burst out in tears 😊

But it was a good thing I suppose because our dear one could see that even after a year we were still crying and it's **no shame to mourn** 😊

AND MY GOD SHALL SUPPLY ALL YOUR NEED ACCORDING TO HIS RICHES IN GLORY BY CHRIST JESUS Philipp 4:19

When I returned from Cape Town, I had second thoughts about returning to public ministry – "*I am going to be 70 after all – an old lady maybe shouldn't be so involved anymore* 😊"

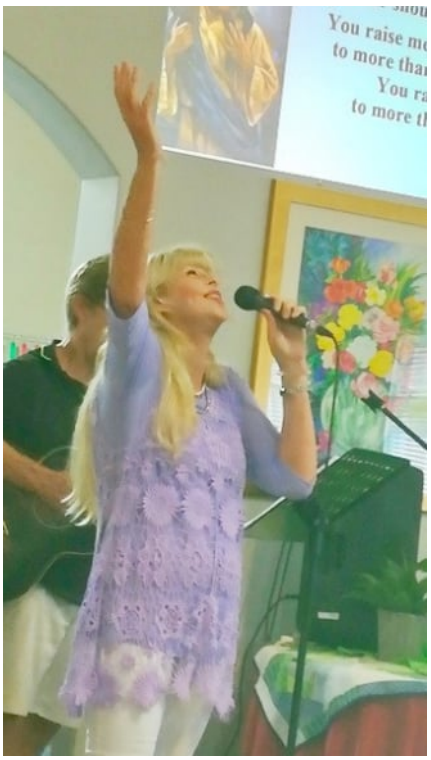
Well! My friends, God put a stop to that thinking the minute I sat in front of my laptop to check my email pile-up!

I opened an email from a young friend who I taught to play guitar when he was a teenager, he in turn taught his kids to play. This young man deposited money into my account enough **to replace all that I had sold** when Gj was sick and I needed money to pay carers.

I put my head down on the table in front of me and told God that I felt completely overwhelmed and I asked Him through the tears, "*why me Lord? Who am I, and what have I done to deserve such blessing*?"

I believe it was God's way of confirming to me, that it's "**not time to retire, but time to refire**" as a fellow missionary friend put it to me – 70 years old or not 😊

It reminded me of Joel chapter 2 where God tells the Israelites:



"I will restore all that the locust has eaten, you will eat plenty and be satisfied, and will "**praise the name of the Lord Your God Who has dealt wondrously with you."**

God has truly dealt wondrously with me it's like one of my favourite songs says, "I'm undone by the mercy of Jesus, I'm undone by the goodness of the Lord."

THANK YOU for spending time with me and for all the kindness you have continued to show me,

Much love,
Judy

Allow me to share something about the time when the one grieving is not broken anymore:

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO STAY BROKEN TO PROVE THEY MATTERED.

Grief is strange because the whole world keeps moving while part of you is still standing in the last place where everything felt normal.

People keep laughing and working and posting and making plans - and you're just trying to figure out how life continued when something inside of you stopped.

That is what people do not always understand about grief – you're not just missing a person. **Sometimes you are grieving the version of yourself that existed when they were here** like the routines, the conversations, the phone calls, the places that felt different because their presence lived in them.

You are grieving a whole world that nobody else can see disappeared - and grief is not always crying.

Sometimes grief is irritation, sometimes it is exhaustion,

sometimes it is forgetting things,
sometimes it is losing interest
in what used to make you happy.

Sometimes it is smiling in public,
then falling apart when you get home.

So, stop judging yourself for not grieving
the way people expect you to.

There is no clean way to carry love after loss,
but listen to what I am about to say:
You do not have to stay broken
to prove they mattered.

Healing does not mean you forgot them.
Laughing again does not mean you stopped loving them.
Finding peace does not mean their life had less meaning.

It means the love they gave you is learning how to live inside you without destroying you. I believe that God can hold parts of grief that words cannot explain. Not always by removing the memory but by slowly removing the sharpness from it.

So, take your time, cry when you need to say their name,
tell the stories, keep the memories
but do not let grief convince
you that living is betrayal.



You are still here and maybe part of honouring what you lost is refusing to let loss take the rest of your life too.

You can miss them and still move forward. You can carry the love without carrying the pain the same way forever.

Grief may change your life but it does not need to become the only life you know.

Jay Jay Douglas