

# Audrey's Witness

Most everyone's life has been affected in one way or another by alcohol. This is a short story of how it took away almost everything from my daughter, Audrey Gleason Short, but just when it looked like it would take the only thing left, her life at the age of 36 and drag her into hell, God had other plans for her. He gave her the victory through His precious blood just as she approached the finish line of her mortal life. It is the greatest comeback victory I have ever witnessed in my life.

I have had more than one friend in my life that alcohol tried to destroy, but they were able to stop and turn their lives around. The many attempts that Audrey made all ended up in failure, it had too tight of a grip on her. I am not going to get into the past other than to say alcohol left her one step out of a cardboard box and tore apart a lot of lives along the way.

God's call out of darkness to Audrey began with a flying rock on August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Audrey worked at our family business, Visions Auto Glass, by my side for 14 years. She was awesome at her job and great with people. On this date, Tammy Short was in our shop getting a rock chip fixed in her windshield. Audrey greeted her and made a comment about how they had the same last names and went back to her work at her desk, unusual for her not to engage in conversation with a customer while they waited. After sitting for a bit, Tammy was moved to go over to the counter and ask Audrey if she could pray for her. This caught Audrey off guard to say the least and she said "sure". After that prayer, the door was opened and the wall of resistance I could never crack began to crumble ever so slightly day by day, as Tammy is a warrior for Jesus Christ and a relationship between the two of them developed. I was actually reminded by Tammy when she was visiting the hospital that God had to throw 2 rocks at her windshield to make this happen. She had been in the shop just 2 weeks prior getting a chip fixed in the same windshield and Audrey was not there that day. I have been driving 20 miles a day back and forth to the shop since 1983 and never gotten a rock chip in a windshield.

In this story, I want to share with you the incredible journey God has taken my family on and the unmistakable miracles that occurred all along the way. We owe God everything for restoring our family and most of all, for being merciful and forgiving, and rescuing our daughter from the gates of hell.

**Ephesians 6:12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."**

Audrey's health has been deteriorating over the last couple of years and began to really accelerate earlier this year. It became difficult for her to work more than a few hours on the days she was even able to come in and watching her struggle to walk from her car to the shop tore my heart out. At the beginning of May she mentioned to Vic a desire for all of us, along with her sister Abby's family, to take a vacation back to Cocoa Beach, Florida. When they were growing up we took multiple family vacations to the same spot and motel by the Pier and it held many great memories for us all. When Vic told me this, my thought was "ya that's a great idea and all, but it is never going to happen, Abby and Jim have lives and jobs and there are too many obstacles." Vic called Abby in the first few days of May and hesitantly brought up the idea to her, not expecting a positive response to the suggestion. To her surprise, Abby did not hesitate to express her desire to go. Whether Jim was going to be able to pull it off was up in the air. Once Vic shared this with me, the decision was immediately made we were going to make this happen, despite the fact our busy season at work was upon us, and we had never been able to take a family vacation other than in late fall or winter. Normally we planned out vacations months ahead, but this one came together for a May 31<sup>st</sup> departure date. Nothing else mattered.

Once plans were in place there were still a lot of moving parts that could blow them out of the water at any time. Things fell into place for Jim to go and we would be driving 2 vans. Jim, Abby, along with their 2 sons, Kenny (4) and Connor (2) in their van, while Vic, myself, Audrey and 2 of her children, Tom (16) and Lily (13) would ride in ours. Her oldest daughter Mya (20) just graduated UNI with a 4 year degree after an incredible journey of her own, and was unable to go along. But things happened in her life simultaneously to bring about healing old wounds, as they were in the rest of ours.

**As you read the rest of this story keep in mind Ephesians 6:12, that I mentioned previously.**

Five days before the departure date, I received a text from Audrey asking if it was too late to call off the trip after an incident had occurred. We got past that obstacle and the plans remained intact. Then came May 31<sup>st</sup> at 2:30 am and we were due for departure in the morning. My phone rang waking me up and when I saw it was Audrey my heart about stopped. I got out of bed and went to the living room to talk so Vic could continue to sleep. Expecting the very worst, she said “I am so sorry I woke you up but I had to call you. About an hour ago I had a dream and I cannot go back to sleep and I was hoping you could help me make sense of it.” I responded that I can’t interpret dreams but I will do my best to help her make sense of it.

She dreamed that Vic, Mya, Tom, Lily, and myself were there. Everything was bright white, including our clothes. Audrey had a white shirt on, but was wearing blue jeans. She asked if I thought this dream had come from God, to which I responded, “Without a doubt.” I then asked her where her walk with Jesus Christ is currently at, as I know God had been calling her and she had been responding. She said she has been praying every day for forgiveness. I said that is wonderful to hear, and that tells me she is halfway home. Which also may explain why she has on blue jeans in the dream. Now she just has to obey the command of Jesus Christ to be baptized recorded in Matthew 28:19, and expounded upon by Peter in Acts 2:37-38. When those asked him that he had just preached to, explaining the things that had just occurred, they were sorrowful and asked him “what shall we do?” Peter said “*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ...*”. The power of forgiveness is in using the NAME. I had thought of bringing up baptism while in Cocoa Beach figuring what better place and this provided the perfect opportunity to do so. She agreed without hesitation.

We took off around noon for Florida and were driving non-stop on the 24 hour-ish drive we’d made several times in the past. The drive never really bothered me or was stressful on previous trips. This one was much different from the start. Once we understood there was a spiritual battle for Audrey’s soul taking place, all that transpired on this journey made perfect sense. “Someone” did not want the plan for Audrey to be baptized to take place as he *had been* in control of her life for a long time. For whatever reason, on a Tuesday, traffic was crazy that had us white-knuckled the whole way. It went to a whole other level once we reached Atlanta, well known for its insane traffic. To add to the excitement, we started to find ourselves in the middle of the Gumball 3000 Rally (Google it). We suddenly had Lamborghini’s and the like with numbers on the side, being driven by billionaires from Europe, zipping by us and weaving in and out of traffic at high rates of speed.

Just south of Atlanta we hit a rest area and Audrey was having a panic attack and looking unwell from the stressful drive. Once settled down, we continued on. In southern Georgia, as we are getting into Lenox, while driving in the left lane of 3 insane lanes of traffic, Vic started panicking and screaming “Audrey is having a seizure, pull over!” which I saw in my rear view mirror. Abby was ahead of us. How we got to the right hand shoulder through that traffic as quick as we did was the start of many miracles. We ended up less than ¼ mile from an intersection and how Abby was able to take that exit is inexplicable. Chaos ensued as one might imagine. When Abby exited into the small gas station right near the exit, she saw she had 3 missed calls, thinking they were “rest stop” related. When she heard what was happening, she ran into the gas station to ask for an address so she could call 911. There was absolutely no one in the gas station, so she ran back outside. Looking toward the exit she had just taken 30 seconds earlier, there was now a police car sitting there that was not there before. She sprinted to them waving her arms and said “my sister is having a seizure in that van right down there!” The officer told her to get in the back of the car, and with lights on, flew down the exit the wrong way into oncoming traffic and were at our van just as the seizure that started 4 or 5 minutes prior had ended. They helped keep Audrey from trying to get out of the vehicle on the traffic side, and escorted us up the shoulder to the gas station, where an ambulance was waiting for us just 10 minutes after the start of her seizure.

After about an hour of examination and the EMT’s recommendation to let them take her to a hospital, she flatly refused and was determined we continue on to Cocoa Beach. They informed us the nearest hospitals were 15 minutes back or 45 minutes ahead. We continued on with Abby now driving our van, as I was in no condition to do so. Within 20 minutes, Audrey’s condition changed and it was clear that we needed to get her to the hospital. We ended up in Valdosta, Georgia, at the South Georgia Medical Center emergency room. We decided to send the rest of the family to our final destination of Cocoa Beach, and Vic and I would stay with Audrey. (The next morning when Jim tried starting their van, it almost did not start. Had they stayed in Georgia, we would have been of the mind to get it fixed there causing increased delays and issues. Instead it was repaired in Cocoa Beach for a small charge.)

While Vic was sitting in a chair in the waiting room, a lady walked past her in a t-shirt that read “Not Today Satan.” As evening was setting in, I went out to the van and tried to get some shut eye, as I hadn’t had a great deal of sleep since we left. With the Georgia heat, I had the van running and noticed a low tire warning light on the dash. Upon looking, the front right tire was extremely low. I found the nearest gas station and overfilled it with air figuring we’d be good to go, and could deal with it in the morning. We left the hospital about an hour later and drove to the hotel. As we pulled into the driveway, I saw two prime parking spots to the left. I figured I’d unload the luggage and let Vic out, then circle back to that spot. I drove the end of the lot and back out to the street, to re-enter and park in the spot I’d chosen. I looked at it, but changed my mind and drove to the back of the lot and parked along a hedge with one other vehicle. I got out and looked at the tire, which was now on the rim. I couldn’t have gone another loop in the parking lot without doing some serious damage to the tire. The next morning, I went out at 7:00 with the intent to change the tire. The spare was up under the van and had been there for several years. It did not cooperate and I needed to find a “plan B.” After getting up, I looked across the hedge and noticed there was a vacant convenience store. Just on the other side of the hedge was a coin operated air compressor with a long hose. I just hoped it was operational, and it was. I pumped the tire up, and we drove down the street to purchase two new front tires by 10:00am. Had we not had the issues we had, when we had them, we may have blown out the tire and had an accident, or at the very least, been stuck along the interstate with a flat tire we couldn’t change.

The doctors shared that Audrey would be admitted for three days to get her low red blood cell count corrected with a transfusion, and that we should return on Saturday to pick her up. We drove the remaining four hours to Cocoa Beach. In hindsight, I feel like this is time the Lord had set aside for Audrey to do her final preparation for baptism. Saturday morning, I headed back to Georgia to get Audrey. On the way, I randomly grabbed from a bunch of sermon CDs by Pastor David Meyer, Last Trumpet Ministries, in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. The title of this sermon was called “The Battle is the Lord’s,” which was very fitting for our situation. After that was finished, I reached for another, and the name of it was “Who Can Hinder The Almighty” – the perfect follow up to it. I had ammunition for our return trip discussion. On the return trip, Audrey was anxious to hear them and the ensuing conversations confirmed that she was indeed ready for baptism. We pulled into the hotel parking lot as the second sermon CD ended.

After the treatment she received at the hospital, she looked the best she had looked in nine months. We had barely parked and she already wanted to hit the beach and walk in the ocean. She did so holding her daughter Lily’s hand, creating photos we will cherish forever. Her energy level remained high for the entirety of the trip and she didn’t miss out on anything.

Early Sunday morning, while getting ready, the words “I once was lost but now I am found” were going through my head. As I got to “now I am found,” an image of Audrey’s face appeared in my mind and I heard “now *she* is found”. I praised the Lord and knew it was time. Soon after, we were having breakfast in the pool area by ourselves and I mentioned to Audrey that she should make a decision on where and when to do the baptism. She pointed over at the pool and said, “Now. As soon as we are done eating.” And so Audrey was baptized, and we rejoiced. The timing was perfect for me to join the online church service at 10:00 to share the good news with all those that had been saying many prayers on her behalf.

Tuesday came around pretty quickly and it was time to head for home. We figured the return trip would be a piece of cake – the battle was over and the victory had been won. (And it had, but the pathetic sore loser wanted to get in one more sucker punch). I was determined to avoid Atlanta. even if it meant detouring through California. I found RVs often take a route to the west, circling around a ways that would add an hour to our trip. I did not care. Jim was in the lead and by the time we reached the mountains in northern Georgia, it was dark. He lost us, not knowing it wasn’t our headlights behind him. At 5:30am, I was following (probably too closely to) a semi, with another beside me in the left lane, when I got a brief glimpse of something resembling a rolling cylinder come from either under or out of the back of the semi in front of me. I had zero time to react, which turned out to be a blessing. When we hit it dead center, it lifted the front of the van up in the air followed by the rear of the van in a bucking motion. I knew we had to pull over immediately, looking ahead, and *once again* there was an exit right there. Directly across the overpass was a gas station in the middle of nowhere, southern Kentucky. I pulled in and parked as quickly as I could, discovering a lot of liquid coming out from under the van. I am thinking we are in a world of hurt and in line for an expensive fix and some time in Kentucky. I was the only one really in a panic, as no one else seemed overly concerned after all that we’d just been through. I should have been of the mindset “I can’t wait to see how God gets us out of this one” as well. By now Abby and her family were way ahead of us with two young travel-weary sons.

Soon, Vic noticed a lady up by the convenience store preparing to open the store, and went to talk with her. She mentioned there is a local mechanic just down the road, and gave her their business card. Amazingly, a lady answered the phone at 6:00am and said she'd send someone soon. He arrived about 8:00 and looked things over, confirming the liquid was nothing more than an excessive amount of air conditioner discharge water, but to follow him to his shop and he would examine everything. We were absolutely in the middle of nowhere and his shop was down a remote road in backwoods Kentucky. They turned out to be Christians that home school their kids. Inspecting under the van, he noticed it hit the engine skid plate and had it been 12 inches either way we would have been incapacitated. We were back on the road by 10:00.

Once home, Audrey was back at work for a few hours a day for a week or so before it got too difficult for her. Ten days after we arrived home, she needed to go to the emergency room. She was in a condition that Fort Dodge was not capable of handling. They called all over Iowa and there were no hospitals with open beds. They ended up life fighting her to Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. She was there 5 days and they got her to a point we felt pretty good about her chances of recovery. She was discharged and came home with us for eight days. On July 4<sup>th</sup>, in the very early morning, we needed to once again take her to the emergency room. This time, Methodist Hospital in Des Moines had a bed and she was transferred there. She was in rough shape and we received word that her only chance would be to receive a liver transplant soon.

Visitor restrictions are rather tight at the hospitals, but it was almost like we were invisible the whole time there. We had a lot of visitors, and none of them were turned away. We were able to stay overnight in her room. Another lady mentioned that her husband was dying, and they still would not allow her to do so. We met with a team of doctors about 9:00am on July 6, and were informed that the only hospital that had agreed to accept her for transplant evaluation was the University of Wisconsin-Madison. However, her insurance denied coverage for an out-of-state hospital and Dr. Eli Kelly said he was going to make this his priority today to get an appeal heard. He had mentioned Mayo and University of Nebraska had denied her. I asked him about Iowa City, and Dr. Kelly reminded us that they had declined. We informed our prayer group that we needed a lot of prayer for the situation we were in, and prayers were sent, virtually around the world. Sharon Tay from Singapore even emailed me volunteering to be tested for donor compatibility, although that isn't possible in these cases.

At 11:30 we were down the hall having lunch in the waiting area. Dr. Kelly came walking by with a look of astonishment on his face, he said, "You're just the people I was looking for." He had just received a call from Iowa City and they had changed their mind, which had never happened before! He just had to wait for a bed and transfer date. Audrey's kidneys had now quit working and they did dialysis that afternoon, which kicked her butt. The following morning Dr. Kelly called Vic and told her the transfer would happen later that day. We anxiously waited all day and at 6:30pm, we asked the new nurse that had just come on shift when the transfer was taking place. He responded "What transfer? I haven't heard about a transfer. I would know if that was going to happen." Our hearts about stopped. I wondered if Vic had misunderstood Dr. Kelly, as our brains were mush and we hadn't gotten much sleep. Our daughter Abby took off after him, and even though Dr. Kelly had gone home, she got the nurse to call him on his cell phone. The nurse came back with a look of bewilderment and said it was indeed a fact. Dr. Kelly just hadn't told anyone else as he was waiting for the logistics to be finalized from Iowa City.

She was to be transferred at 1:00am. Vic's sister Tina, who never left our side through the whole ordeal, was in the room with Audrey that evening when another nurse came in. She asked Tina "You guys are waiting on a transfer? How are you pulling this off? This just does not happen!" Tina responded "Lots of prayer, all over the world!" Vic and I headed for Iowa City, and once we arrived and entered the parking garage, a couple exasperated looking ladies walking by said "You won't find a space on this level, it is full." I circled around and back intending to go to another level, but found two prime parking spots just waiting for us, as we had driven two vehicles.

In Iowa City, the visitor restrictions were extremely rigid allowing just ONE visitor per day between 9:00 – 5:00. Vic went in on Friday to be with Audrey while I just hung out. The report from her that day was very bleak. We were in the frame of mind of; "well, it was a nice try..." More prayers went up that evening. The next day, July 9<sup>th</sup>, was my birthday and my turn to be with her. Expecting the worst when I walked in the room, she was sitting up, alert, and able to have conversations with me. I was elated, to say the least, and our spirits and hopes were restored, as it was 100% improvement from the day prior. A doctor on the Liver Team said they would still need to get her coherent enough for an interview, as she had been very sleepy for several days. Her kidneys had begun working again and additional dialysis was not needed. The next day was a major improvement and the interviews began on Tuesday. After the

committee's decision on Thursday, they made allowance for two visitors, so both of us to be with her all day to hear the doctors' verdict. It was an agonizing wait for the liver doctor to come in, but we were really confident we'd receive the green light for a transplant. After all that had happened in our lives over the last 30 days, we had faith that it would work out in our favor, just as everything else. He came in around 4:30, and the news was not good. Audrey had underlying health issues that did not make her a good candidate. God gave both Audrey and us the strength to receive this news without becoming instantly unglued. We were informed time would most likely be short.

We brought Audrey home late Thursday evening, intending to do hospice care in our house. We assumed we'd have a decent amount of time left to enjoy with her, since she was in relatively good condition at the time. Her kids came and spent Friday and Saturday with her and it was precious. Saturday afternoon, things turned south pretty quickly and we knew it was time to transfer her to a hospice facility. Mya, Tom, and Lily went to Mya's apartment in Cedar Falls to spend much needed time together while we followed Audrey to hospice. Once there, it was agony and the tears did not stop flowing for the next 48 hours. Sunday morning, we had the online Church service from Last Trumpet Ministries playing and the message was tailor-made for our situation. It pertained to what was in store for Audrey when she falls asleep and goes to be with the Lord. We were in tears of joy and praising God.

On Monday afternoon, she had not been awake or spoken for 36 hours, although you could tell she heard us and knew what we were saying by her physical responses. We had been playing songs of worship almost non-stop. Vic, Abby, Tina, and myself were gathered on each side of the bed holding her hands and stroking her hair when the song "I Can Only Imagine" by MercyMe began playing. Immediately her head and neck started to stretch out, straining with all she had as one would when giving their all in worship to Jesus Christ. When the song got to the verse "Will I sing hallelujah?" she mouthed "hallelujah" in perfect timing. It was incredibly moving for us all to witness and from that point on, a sense of peace and calm came upon us. My tears were gone, and any tears that did fall from there on out, were tears of joy.

Early evening, Audrey took a turn for the worst, and it was really unpleasant to watch. After a couple of hours, we got her settled down and from then on, it was a real struggle for her. We were telling her it was ok to let go. Mya had taken Audrey's cell phone to Cedar Falls with her, and it rang with a call from Audrey's best friend, Mindy Nelson, from Minneapolis, looking to talk to Audrey. Mindy had no clue what was going on. Mya answered the call on Audrey's phone and filled her in. Mindy was in her car within 5 minutes and headed to Fort Dodge. While Abby got word this was happening, she did not say anything to Audrey, so Audrey did not feel obligated to hang on any longer than she needed to. We continued to reassure her it was okay to say "see ya later," because we know this was not a final goodbye. Mindy arrived at 9:15pm and spent a wonderful half-hour with her best friend.

At 9:45pm, Vic, Abby, her husband Jim, Tina, Mindy, and myself were gathered around the bed. We put the song "I Can Only Imagine" back on and followed it with Audrey's favorite song "My Jesus" by Anne Wilson. During this song, she took her last breath. I had my hand on her hair, my forehead to hers, leaning over her. The moment of that last breath, I felt a rush of air that made my hair fly back, and the Spirit inside of me about burst, giving me goose bumps over my entire body like I have never felt in my life. We rejoiced with exceeding joy. The following morning, I shared the verse of the day from the Bible Gateway app with Audrey's friend, Tammy Short:

**Isaiah 41:10 "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God:  
I will help thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."**

She sent back a picture of her wrist tattoo – Isaiah 41:10. This dear saint, Tammy, went through unbelievable hardship in her own life that led her to get a tattoo of this verse. She said she would now also think of Audrey each time she looks at it.

I repeatedly told Audrey that she is leaving behind an extremely powerful witness that will change a lot of lives without her saying a word. I promised her that I would share her story with as many people as I could, knowing it has the power to show others that there is no sinner Jesus cannot save. I tried to remember every miracle along the way, but there were so many I know I left some out. There were so many perfectly timed messages on Last Trumpet CDs as I was commuting to this hospital or that. Our family has been blessed beyond measure through this life changing experience. While alcohol had taken nearly everything in life that Audrey had, God called her to repentance, restored all, and healed many wounds. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt, that she is rejoicing in the presence of Jesus Christ at this very moment, and "We Can Only Imagine" what unspeakable joy she is now experiencing.

**1 Corinthians 2:9 ...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man,  
the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.**

**Mark 5:39 ...Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.**

**Psalms 17:15 As for me, I will behold they face in righteousness:  
I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.**

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, to everyone that has been involved in this journey with their support and prayers. I can attest that God hears the prayers of His people because, on more than one occasion, they were answered in less than one hour.

Written by her dad, Brian Gleason

In loving memory and honor of my little girl

Audrey Gleason Short  
May 6, 1986 – July 18, 2022



Lyrics to “My Jesus” – Anne Wilson

He makes a way where there ain't no way  
Rises up from an empty grave  
Ain't no sinner that he can't save  
Let me tell you 'bout my Jesus  
His love is strong and His grace is free  
And the good news is I know that He  
Can do for you what He's done for me  
Let me tell you 'bout my Jesus  
And let my Jesus change your life