

When I was in college, a friend of mine gave me an unusual gift. Now, I want to tell you this is a true story, because if you know Jamie, you're going to think I made this up, but it's true. This friend gave me a green candle in the shape of a frog. I was surprised because no one had ever given me a frog before; this was years before Kermit. And it left me with a real quandary: Should I burn this candle or keep it as it is? I hated to burn it because then I'd have a deformed frog on my hands, and I hated to leave it alone because it was, after all, a candle, and I liked to burn candles. So, I asked my friend what to do. And my friend said, "Candles are for burning." So I burned my frog. It never looked the same, but no matter what shape it was in, it always reminded me of friendship.

When we meet another human being, it's like lighting a candle. That person will never be the same again. And sometimes when we say goodbye we want to reshape the wax. Friends, like candles, change, but it doesn't matter what shape they're in; they're still our friends.

St. Paul says our bodies are like tents; they are homes for people on the move, a place for backpackers to rest before moving on. Tents don't last. But Paul says we do have a tent in heaven pitched by God. And that tent will last forever.

Jamie has changed; she has changed her tent, but she's still our friend.

Jamie will remain in our memories as a young lady who liked to have a good time. She will be forever young, a symbol of happiness, a symbol of the joy God has prepared for us all in heaven.

I just want to encourage you all to keep on loving the way you loved Jamie. You might be wondering, if it hurts this bad to miss somebody you love, is it worth loving again? Yes, it is. If love has caused our sorrow, it's also love which binds up our wounds. We need to keep loving, especially now, even as God loves Jamie, and gives her an unusual gift, the gift of peace.