

*At times everyone feels like quitting. There are pressures that push in on our families that can seem overwhelming. But there is Great News! News that Jesus is with you through every moment, including those that you don't feel Him. The following is one such family's story. They were confronted with consequences from their past and difficulties staring them down for their future... and yet they found Jesus was with them.*

*I pray that like Steven and Kimberly Merry, who received breakthrough in the Lord, that you would continue to contend for your breakthrough and experience a new beginning in Christ. I hope this family's inspiring story encourages you toward that end!*

*Pastor Scott*



## **A New Beginning in Christ**

**"[Your heart is] empty, like you.  
Let me in, and I'll fill you up." -Steve Merry**

Steven and Kimberly Merry are members of Shingle Springs Foursquare Church in Shingle Springs, Calif., a congregation pastored by Jim and Allison Wells.

Following their marriage in 1989, the couple's first son, Samuel, was born in November the following year. They both loved the Lord and rejoiced in His blessings. His care and provision tasted that much sweeter after having lived most of their lives for themselves.

Like many of us, Steve and Kim have a past. Their partying lifestyles in a small community meant their paths would inevitably cross.

After a year and a half of dating, Kim had had enough and told Steve she would not live her life with a "drunk." God was wooing her to Himself. After a usual Friday night of drinking, Kim found herself at home crying out to God. She wanted to be set free. The next morning she confided in her mother, who invited her to church. That Sunday, Kim rededicated her life to the Lord.

Meanwhile, Steve's house was a sorry sight. With aluminum foil on the windows and an overgrown yard, it had only one purpose—a party house. Steve and his friends often spent days there, not knowing what time or what day it was.

Seeing his brother at a convenience store one day, Steve pulled in to say hi. He hesitated for a moment, because his brother was talking with a friend who had become one of those "Christians." Steve didn't stay long, but something was happening. God was moving in his heart.

Pulling into his driveway that night, Steve's eyes fell on his gas gauge. God spoke to his heart: "It's empty, like you. Let me in, and I'll fill you up." He poured out his booze, flushed his pot, and gave himself to the Lord.

Steve and Kim reunited and were married shortly after. Their testimonies could have ended there, but God had even bigger plans.

As Sam grew, they excitedly looked toward the birth of their second child. In Kim's third trimester, an ultrasound revealed a problem. The baby's heart had a severe abnormality.

The doctor immediately ordered an amniocentesis. The consequences of continuing the pregnancy would be severe. But against their physician's advice to end the pregnancy, Kim carried the baby to term, and Matthew was born in October 1992.

However, the consequences were indeed severe. Essentially, Matt's heart was upside down and backwards, and it leaked internally.

Steve and Kim have spent many hours in hospitals during the several ensuing surgeries. Their faith in God and faithfulness in prayer have not been hidden from the doctors and staff. They've responded to countless opportunities to minister to other families and even to the medical staff. God has changed many lives through their faithfulness.

Although Matthew continues to need special medical attention, he is a happy and active young man, enjoying the normal activities of a teen with his big brother, Sam.

Steve and Kim never gave up, and never stopped praying. They stand as great reminders of God's faithfulness to His children.