

A Letter That Alan Groves Wrote
for His Memorial Service:
God's Unfailing Love Endures Forever

AS I HAVE WALKED through the valley of the shadow of death, I have walked hand in hand with Jesus, the one who has already walked through that valley and come out the other side—alive, raised from the dead. And as I hold his hand and trust him, I too am raised with him, for this was his purpose in walking that path: to raise those who trusted in him. His rod and staff, his cross of suffering have become my comfort. Now as I have died, I come before the God, the King of the universe, and I come in Christ. He chose to suffer and die on the cross in my place, so that on account of him, I might have forgiveness from sin and victory over death. And now I have received the resurrection and eternal life that has been my only hope, past, present, and forever.

I have led a truly blessed life. At a young age, I realized that Jesus was not just a story in a comic book, but that he was real and I could actually know him. I wish I could describe to you what a powerful moment of understanding that was, and I have thought about it many times over the years, marveling over and over at the truth of this central fact. The Lord placed me into the perfect family where I was raised by loving parents with wonderful siblings. God gave me a wonderful wife who has been my joy as we have raised four wonderful children together. The Lord has given me the opportunity to be intimately involved in the lives of so many wonderful brothers and sisters, in our fellowship at college, as a pastor in Vermont, as

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an elder at New Life Church, and as a professor at Westminster Seminary. Through family and ministry, I have had the privilege of loving and being loved by all of you, and I have been struck again and again by the deposit that each of you has left in my life.

Through all my life, Christ has been constant. Even as I have grown and changed, he is still the one whom I loved that first day. And nothing ever changed in how I came to him; every day of my life the story is the same: I come to God in Christ. His love for me has been steadfast, and he has pursued me through every time I have turned away from him and every time I have returned. The constant prayer of my heart for my own life and the lives of those around me has been that we would see Jesus, and that he would be welcome and present among us.

There may be some here who have never trusted Christ for life, who have never known that he is the answer to the sin and death in our lives. I urge you to consider the claims he made to being the Son of God, to consider that he didn't stay dead and sends a message down through the ages that there is life in him and him alone. His death on a cross, humiliating though it seemed, was his glory, by which he has defeated our true enemies—sin and death. By the ultimate sacrifice he made, he humiliated all powers arrayed against him.

If you struggle with faith, let me encourage you that in the hardest moments I have faced, he has been there. And death has been defeated. I am in Christ, as you are in Christ. So let us live out of the grace we have received. Let us live out of Christ. This means looking daily for him, asking him to open your eyes to him, and embracing what you see. Seek him with all your heart. Love him with all your heart. Love those he loves with all your heart, even to the laying down of your life for him. Jesus, the way, the truth, the life. In no other do we have hope. But in him we have hope that endures forever. We grieve, but we grieve with hope. The hope of a resurrection; the hope of life eternal. Together with Jesus.

For most of my Christian life I have wanted to see Jesus face-to-face, to join in with the heavenly chorus in his presence around his royal throne and declare his praise in new ways. Something else has grown through the years: an abiding sense that this is not for me alone. Being with Jesus by myself is not what he wants, nor is it what I want. To be there with you all, those he loves, and those I have come to love—that is true joy. I have often thought of coming to heaven as Jesus standing at

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the finish line of a race awaiting those looking for him, trusting in him, pursuing him. But it isn't a race for me to finish first or alone. It has always been a race for us to finish together, arm in arm, having encouraged one another in faith.

He is good. From the beginning, his steadfast love has endured. It endures forever. He is gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love. Trust in him with all your heart. For he is faithful.