

December 23, 2025

Dear Brethren and Friends,

As I write this letter, my heart is hurting somewhat. On Sunday, December 14, my aunt died. She had been suffering for some time with cancer, and it finally ran its course. This is not the first time I have faced death with family and friends. I know that many others have faced this occurrence in life as well.

This is a somber experience that occurs for all people eventually. I am grateful that she is no longer in pain and now, as the Bible states, she is awaiting the better resurrection.

When these events take place, it is easy to become saddened. I have been thinking a lot about what I wish I had said to her or that I had sent more messages or called her more often, but these are useless thoughts now. We live short lives, relatively speaking, and God knows the times that He has given each of us. Moses thought about this in his life, and he was cognizant of the impact it had on himself and those around him.

In Psalm 90:10–17, Moses writes about the power of turning to God so we can understand how our lives are important, even though we live as human beings for just a little bit of time:

*"The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, Yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knows the power of Your anger? For as the fear of You, so is Your wrath. So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom. Return, O LORD! How long? And have compassion on Your servants. Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy, That we may rejoice and be glad all our days! Make us glad according to the days in which You have afflicted us, The years in which we have seen evil. Let Your work appear to Your servants, And Your glory to their children. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us, And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands."*

Since God has called us as His firstfruits, the challenges that we face as Christians are more severe than what anyone else in the world goes through. We become targets because of what we believe. This may be a reason why it is emphasized that we are to endure and hold on to our crowns. For us who are still continuing on after a loved one dies, I feel that this challenge becomes even more important so that we can be with them again in the future.

We can at this time take solace in the Truth that God's plan is so inclusive that it will give everyone a fair chance. I have always found great comfort in the fact that death is not the end but it is a milestone. Even those people who are alive at Christ's return will experience a type of death as they are changed from mortal to immortal.

Regarding the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan for all of mankind, Revelation 21:4 tells us: "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

The time when we can see our loved ones again, when we can help family and friends to learn the Truth and how to live a better way of life—these are the moments that we each are looking forward to!

Paul taught those around him what Christ had shown him. He was sure of what he believed and put everything on the line for it. His compassion and love for people proved his belief that there was

something far better out in front. If we lose sight of this in our daily living, it can be challenging to live this life with joy and thanksgiving.

1 Corinthians 15:54–58 points out: “So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ ‘O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?’ The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Let us take comfort in knowing that God’s Truth will prevail. His plan for ALL mankind continues to unfold and we have the opportunity to be a part of this great plan. Let us stay the course and do what must be done to finish our race individually and collectively.

The Apostle Paul was able to say this near the end of his life in 2 Timothy 4:6–8: “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.”

Let us also be able to say these words when our time comes.

In Christ’s service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kalon Mitchell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kalon Mitchell