



Dear Friends,

On Thursday morning, Kathryn and I were sitting on comfy chairs in a nook in the dining room, enjoying a coffee - like we do most days. We use this time to do the same things. Favourite word puzzles, like Wordle and Connections. View new photos or videos of our grandson that have been posted overnight. Read the Bible together and pray.

At around 7:50AM, there is a “ding” from Kathryn’s phone. It’s a text from our daughter, Jess. It says she’s been in a car accident. We immediately worry. I feel panicked. My heart pounds. Emotions rise to the surface. I can feel them in my throat and tear ducts. We wonder, is Jess ok? So, Kathryn calls. Jess is clearly emotional. Thankfully, she is OK.

We get a call ten minutes later. It’s from our daughter, Caitlin, in the UK. She calls on Kathryn’s phone. But she wants to speak to me. That’s unusual.

Caitlin tells me she received news from a close friend in Australia saying that one of the students I taught at Sydney Missionary and Bible College had died. The student, Chris, and his wife, Alison, met and married while they were at College. They have three young children. Chris and Ali moved to Arnhem Land in the northeast corner of the Northern Territory for Chris to serve as a pilot with Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) <https://maf.org.au/>

On Wednesday morning, Chris was driving to work when a stolen vehicle collided with his head-on. In an instant, his life was extinguished. A wife was widowed. Children left fatherless.

Chris’ tragic death gave rise to a mix of emotions within me. On the one hand, I felt a deep sadness for Ali and their children and wider family. Here was a man and his family serving the Lord in a remote part of our vast country, whose life was suddenly taken in a senseless, tragic moment. Chris was only 37 years old. Why, O Lord?

On the other hand, I was profoundly grateful to God for his preservation of our daughter.

Life is complex ...

Earlier in the week, I had begun preparing the next sermon series in Isaiah 40-66. I had read in Isaiah 40:6-8:

A voice says, “Cry out.” And I said, “What shall I cry?” “All people are like grass, and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

“All people are like grass... The grass withers.” Those words now weigh heavily upon me as I reflect on the events of the past few days. Life is short. It can be taken in a moment. The loss of a life can seem utterly senseless.

But in God’s infinite wisdom, he still brings about his good purposes. That’s the point of the final words in this passage. God’s word endures forever. His promises come good.

That’s what Chris and Ali Coffee believed. It’s how they lived. That is why they gave up a comfortable life to serve the Lord and people in Arnhem Land. They lived out Paul’s words:

For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)

Life is short. It can be taken in a moment. Are you living in such a way, that you can say, “for to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain?”

God Bless,
Mark Adams