

Pastoral Letter

Dear Friends,

Love is what Easter is all about: it is about Jesus Christ fulfilling God's love for us by willingly giving himself up on the cross as the sacrifice for our sins and rising again on the first Easter morn. As our risen Saviour, Jesus is alive and active on our behalf, transforming despair into hope and doubt into faith. This was the experience of George Matheson, a brilliant Scottish Presbyterian minister. His personal problems, including near blindness, got him to the point of despair. He felt like letting go of his faith in God but discovered that God hadn't let him go. He summed up his experience in the words of the much-loved hymn: *O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee.*

As Christians, all the commandments and everything that God requires of us can be summed up in one word: LOVE. The central message of the gospel, as demonstrated by Jesus' life and death, is extravagant love that will not let us go. So look at the cross this Easter season and be encouraged by the fact that Jesus wants to meet you where you are – he died and he now lives for all who feel stuck in the wilderness of despair, loneliness, and fear. He died and he lives for those who battle against personal darkness, difficulties, challenges, hurts and uncertainties. He died saying; I will come to you wherever you are and will be there for you.

I leave you with a prayer by Martin Luther: *May our dear Lord Jesus Christ show you his hands and side, and with his love put joy into your hearts, and may you behold and hear only him until you find joy in him*

Easter blessings!

Irene John