



R. Steve Lowe
Executive Chaplain
Pacific Youth Correctional Ministries
Senior Chaplain
Protestant Chaplaincy Ministry
Orange County Juvenile Justice Complex

Dear Friend,

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Years ago, I received the most unusual call from my older brother. Don was in pain and worried.

He asked me to come and be with him in Alaska. This brother who was simply the most independent and self-sufficient person I had ever known, as well as being the strongest and most resilient to pain and suffering, needed comfort from his little brother. This was so unusual because complaining had always been seen by Don as weakness. I had watched him earlier in life, hurt badly after rolling a bulldozer down a cliff trying to aid a relative stuck in a gravel pit, simply get up and go to work the next day. I watched him a bit later, after he had gotten into a bar room squabble with several guys, one of which sat on his shoulders and beat his face with a motorcycle chain, simply get up and go to work the next day. Yes, it was that brother asking me to come to Alaska because he was in pain and worried. I went, spent a week, and realized Don was dying. I came home, got ministry and household things in order, and left again for Alaska to be with Don until he died.

In between trips I took a risk and sent Don a letter explaining his need for Jesus. I told him he was not man enough to meet God. My ex-Hell's Angels patch-wearing biker big brother had never wanted anything to do with God, choosing instead a life of tremendous rebellion, full throttle, with no regrets. Would he even read my letter? Tear it up? Be angry with me? It was a risk. However, when I entered his beautiful self-built cabin, the letter was by his lazy boy chair, the chair next to the picture window parallel to the mighty Yukon River. He had not, out of anger, started a fire in his wood stove with the letter and I was so relieved!

When Don was at the very end of his life and could not even hold his head up from the pillow he mumbled, "Dusty let's do the letter." In my extended family of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. I am Dusty and not Steve. I kneeled by the bed, read the letter to him including the prayer for salvation I had crafted just for him. He prayed the prayer word for word after me and at that moment became a child of God. His first words to me were, "Does this mean I have to be nice to people?" I almost cried because I knew that was what he had fought against his whole life; *being kind, because for him that meant being weak*. God was already at work, minute one! God then gave Don extra days, he was able to sit up, receive company, and kindly give instructions to his sons-in law about their responsibilities once he was gone. It was beautiful.

Here's my point:

My grandmother Jenny prayed for Don, my mom prayed for Don, my sister and I prayed for Don, as well as the many other relatives who never lived to see the answer to their prayers. The Apostle Paul tells us in Galatians 6:9, "*And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up*" (ESV). God's "due season" for my brother's salvation was at the last minute, but God was right on time.

Orange County Juvenile Justice Complex
331 The City Drive South * Orange, CA 92868 * 424-477-5840 * chaplainslowe@aol.com
Correctional Chaplains * Para-Chaplains * Christian Institutional Volunteers

In our Pacific Youth work with justice-involved youth and adults, both in lock up and in the community upon their release, we sow, trusting the Holy Spirit will reap at some point. We willingly choose to engage continuously in mutual burden bearing with people in crisis. We sow to the Spirit as we fight the weariness that a long-awaited harvest can create. It is such human nature to want to quit when results are not readily apparent. "Well doing" (the beauty of helping anyone in need with physical and spiritual things), requires continued effort, constant toil. Because we will reap if we do not give up (knowing there is a *Return On Investment*, R-O-I), the adage for those in ministry "*You can't afford to fall apart*" carries rich meaning. No, we cannot faint, quit, fall apart, or grow discouraged. God has a *due season* for those we serve that will be right on time. At Pacific Youth we simply cannot afford to fall apart.

Your prayers, your kindness to our team, your financial giving keeps us in place to sow the truth of God into the lives of youth and adults. In 2024 we will continue to place life-changing books into the hands of youth in juvenile facilities, and adults in jails and prisons. We will continue to provide church services, bible studies, pastoral counseling, mentoring, reentry, as well as materials to help people grow spiritually. We will continue to train others, nationally and internationally.

Please pray that God provides fresh wind in our sails as we continue by His grace and empowerment in fulfilling the Great Commission.

In His service with you,