

I have asked Rick to write this letter on my behalf and it faithfully represents my views. On Saturday he read this letter to me and I have told him that this is what I would have wanted to write to you myself if I had the strength.

As you know, since my diagnosis of pancreatic, liver and lung cancer at the beginning of this year, my health has deteriorated, and I am not expected to live for many more days.

Some of you have wondered if I feel cheated by God and am angry at Him for this sad turn of events. Of course, I am sad not to continue my life on earth and equally sad that I will not be able to enjoy the love and friendship that you have all shared with me over many happy years. These have been difficult weeks. I am not in any way a 'super saint' and I have struggled with my faith over these weeks. But I have complete faith that Jesus is preparing a place for me where I will be relieved of all my suffering and sadness. I gave this message to my church in Lincoln shortly after my diagnosis, and I want to assure you that my faith remains constant.

However, what has happened to me could happen to any of us. An unexpected and worrying health diagnosis suddenly changes everything. It shockingly makes us aware of our mortality. I want to say that there is no hope other than that provided by the Christian faith; namely that Jesus died on a cross to wash away our sins and rose again from the dead to give us all hope of a life eternal.

I want to urge those of you who have a personal faith to cling to your belief and hope in God. And I want to urge those of you who have not yet found faith to be open minded about the Christian message and examine for yourself the good news of eternal life that only Jesus Christ can give.

I will be going home soon. This letter will be my goodbye to you all. Thank you for all the love and support you have shown me.

Rev Tim