

Alan Nunnelee

LATE A REPRESENTATIVE FROM
MISSISSIPPI



MEMORIAL ADDRESSES
AND OTHER TRIBUTES

HON. ALAN NUNNELEE  1958–2015

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Memorial Addresses and Other Tributes

HELD IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE UNITED STATES
TOGETHER WITH A MEMORIAL SERVICE
IN HONOR OF

ALAN NUNNELEE

Late a Representative from Mississippi

One Hundred Fourteenth Congress
First Session



*Compiled under the direction
of the
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BIOGRAPHY

Congressman ALAN NUNNELEE represented the citizens of Mississippi's First Congressional District. On January 5, 2011, he took the oath of office to support and defend our Constitution. ALAN believed that the strength of America lies in its people, neighborhoods, churches, and communities, not the Federal Government. He was known for his conservative, pro-life, pro-family, fiscally responsible values and was a defender of the Second Amendment. He served on the House Appropriations Committee and the Agriculture, Energy and Water and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Subcommittees.

Before joining the 112th Congress, ALAN represented Lee and Pontotoc Counties in the Mississippi State Senate. As chairman of the appropriations committee, he developed a reputation as a strong fiscal conservative. Every year he was chairman the budget was balanced without raising taxes. Prior to that role, ALAN chaired the Mississippi State public health and welfare committee where he fought against waste in Medicaid and was a leader on several national committees addressing public health issues. He also stood shoulder to shoulder with his fellow conservatives during the tort reform battles in 2003 and helped Governor Haley Barbour pass comprehensive tort reform in 2004.

Known as a champion of pro-life causes, ALAN was nationally recognized for his success in helping make Mississippi the safest place for unborn children. ALAN also knew that faith in God is a cornerstone of American life. In 2001, he authored legislation to place our national motto, "In God We Trust," on the wall of every school classroom in Mississippi at zero cost to the taxpayers.

In Congress, ALAN continued his work as a fiscal conservative by voting for spending cuts, the balanced budget amendment, and repeal of Obamacare.

ALAN was a graduate of Mississippi State University. Prior to Congress, he was vice president of Allied Funeral Associates, a life insurance company and a member of the Community Development Foundation's board of directors.

ALAN was a deacon and Sunday School teacher at Calvary Baptist Church. He and his wife Tori have three children, Reed who is married to Kemily, Emily who is married to Trey, and Nathan who is married to Colleen. ALAN and Tori also have two grandchildren, Thomas Kemp Nunnelee and Harper Grace Nunnelee.

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES

AND

OTHER TRIBUTES

FOR

ALAN NUNNELEE

Proceedings in the House of Representatives

MONDAY, *February 9, 2015*

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Gracious God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

In this Chamber, where the people's House gathers, we pause to offer You gratitude for the gift of this good land on which we live, for this great Nation which You have inspired in developing over so many years. Continue to inspire the American people that through the difficulties of these days we might keep liberty and justice alive in our Nation and in the world.

Give to us and all people a vivid sense of Your presence, that we may learn to understand each other, to respect each other, to work with each other, to live with each other, and to do good to each other. So shall we make our Nation great in goodness, and good in its greatness.

On this day we also ask Your blessing of peace and consolation upon the family of Representative ALAN NUNNELEE of the First District of Mississippi, who is being laid to rest this day. Bless as well the Members of this House, his staff, and all who mourn him. May he rest in peace.

May all that is done this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

TUESDAY, *February 10, 2015*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 99

In the House of Representatives, U.S., February 10, 2015:

Resolved, That the House has heard with profound sorrow of the death of the Honorable ALAN NUNNELEE, a Representative from the State of Mississippi.

Resolved, That the Clerk communicate these resolutions to the Senate and transmit a copy thereof to the family of the deceased.

Resolved, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn as a further mark of respect to the memory of the deceased.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE LATE
HONORABLE ALAN NUNNELEE

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, on Friday we lost our colleague ALAN NUNNELEE, who represented the First Congressional District of Mississippi.

Yesterday was the funeral for Congressman NUNNELEE. The entire Mississippi delegation and 40 other Members of Congress attended.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that the House pause for a moment of silence in remembrance of Congressman NUNNELEE.

The SPEAKER. Members will rise and observe a moment of silence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Rouzer). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Speaker on February 9, 2015, appointed the following Members of the House to the committee to attend the funeral of the late Honorable ALAN NUNNELEE:

The gentleman from Mississippi, Mr. Thompson

The gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Boehner

The members of the Mississippi delegation:

Mr. Harper

Mr. Palazzo

Other Members in attendance:

Mr. McCarthy, California

Mrs. McMorris Rodgers

Mr. Aderholt

Mr. Neugebauer

Mr. Conaway

Mr. McHenry

Mr. Fleming

Mr. Thompson, Pennsylvania

Mr. Walberg

Mr. Benishek

Mrs. Black
Mr. Denham
Mr. Flores
Mr. Hultgren
Mr. McKinley
Mr. Womack
Mr. Hudson
Mr. Messer
Mrs. Radewagen

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 13 minutes p.m.), under its previous order and pursuant to House Resolution 99, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, February 11, 2015, at 10 a.m., for morning-hour debate, as a further mark of respect to the memory of the late Honorable ALAN NUNNELEE.

*Honorable Patrick Alan Nunnelee
United States House of Representatives*



*2:30 p.m., February 9, 2015
Calvary Baptist Church*

Survivors:

His wife Tori and their three children, Reed (Kemily), Emily (Morris), and Nathan (Colleen). Alan referred to his children's spouses as his daughters-in-love and son-in-love, "because the relationship is created by love and not by law." He also leaves behind three grandchildren, Thomas, Harper, and a grandson expected in April; his parents Sandra and Pat; four sisters, Lisa (Carl), Dodie (Scott), Shannon (Jimmy), and Ammi (Brian); two brothers, Joshua (Allie) and Matthew (Olivia); his mother-in-love, Pat Bedells, and brother-in-love, Barry Bedells (Karen); eighteen nieces and nephews; and many aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Pallbearers:

Morgan Baldwin, Mike Currie, Doug Davis, Ted Maness, Dickie Rhea, Rob Rice, Jordan Russell, and Giles Ward

Honorary Pallbearers:

Members of Rep. Nunnelee's Congressional Staff



Micah 6:8

"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with the Lord your God."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Patrick Alan Nunnelee

October 9, 1958–February 6, 2015

Order of Service

- Presentation of Colors* *Mississippi
State Highway Patrol Honor Guard*
- Special Music* *Calvary Baptist Church Quartet
“Happy Over There”*
- Opening Remarks* *Rex Gillis*
- Opening Hymn* *Congregation
“Great is Thy Faithfulness”*
- Special Speaker* *Gov. Phil Bryant*
- Special Music* *Rev. Doug Spires
“The King is Coming”*
- Eulogy* *Reed Nunnelee*
- Hymn* *Congregation
“Be Thou My Vision”*
- Message* *Dr. Ed Deuschle*
- Folding of the United States Flag* *Mississippi
State Highway Patrol Honor Guard*
- Presentation of the
United States Flag* *Gov. Phil Bryant*
- Special Music* *Calvary Baptist Church Quartet
“America the Beautiful”*
- Recessional* *Congregation
“Because He Lives”*

*Pianist:
Lisa Tally
Organist:
Lynn McGrath*

LIFE STORY

PATRICK ALAN NUNNELEE, 56, of Tupelo, Mississippi went to be with the Lord on February 6, 2015 with his family by his side.

He was born in Tupelo on October 9, 1958 to Sandra and Pat Nunnelee and spent most of his childhood in Columbus, Mississippi. His family moved to Clinton, Mississippi in 1975, where he graduated from Clinton High School in 1976. ALAN attended Mississippi State University where he served in the Student Government Association and graduated with a degree in marketing in 1980. After graduation, he went to work with American Funeral Insurance Company selling life insurance. He fell in love and married Tori Bedells Nunnelee of Clinton on April 10, 1982. The company promoted him to Regional Sales Manager in 1987, and ALAN transferred his family to Morristown, Tennessee where they lived for seven years. In 1994, he was promoted to National Sales Manager and returned to Mississippi. ALAN and his father formed another life insurance company, Allied Funeral Associates, in 1996, and he spent the remaining years of his life building their company into a small-business success story.

ALAN was known to many as a servant. Some may remember him through his work with the Mississippi Lions Club Eye Bank and donor recovery program. During his college years he was diagnosed with an eye condition, which ultimately caused him to lose his sight. Through the loving acts of two donors, he received cornea transplants, which restored his eyesight. He spoke in churches and civic groups all over Mississippi telling his story. He also served his church faithfully, teaching Sunday School classes of all ages and serving as deacon at First Baptist Church in Morristown and later at Calvary Baptist Church in Tupelo.

ALAN's servant heart prompted him to be exceptionally active in the political arena. He spent many years campaigning for political candidates and issues whose views represented his conservative values. In 1995 he was elected to the Mississippi State Senate. He served the people of North Mississippi for 15 years, chairing multiple committees and tirelessly traveling back and forth to the Capitol. ALAN was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 2010 where he served until his death. He took great joy in telling people of his beloved Mississippi. His life's work revolved around protecting and promoting the family, defending the lives of unborn babies, and cultivating an environment for job creation.

Rex Gillis. Tori asked me to share with you that ALAN loved Gospel music and this one will make your toes tap, but we are here for a celebration, let's keep that in mind.

["Happy Over There."]

Rex Gillis. That was great. Mark 10:45: "Jesus said, 'For even the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve.'" And gave his life for ransom for me. We are here to celebrate, we just started celebrating, the life of one of God's greatest servants, ALAN NUNNELEE. You know ALAN wouldn't have had it any other way, for ALAN was at peace, in Jesus' presence and he's smiling, and he doesn't want to come back. Now selfishly, I want him to come back. Just like I know you would. My name's Rex, I'm a longtime friend from Columbus, Mississippi, where I went to high school and church with ALAN.

I'm both humbled and honored that Tori asked me to share today about a great man. Going way back now, we've all been teenagers. Unfortunately, I did some things that I didn't really want my kids to know about. I think we've all been there. But you know, ALAN was always upright and he was the good kid. Never in trouble like the rest of us, but I had one good story on him where he slipped up. That's always good to have, is one good story on your Congressman. However, when I was at his home, and Tori invited me about 10 days ago and I was bedside holding his hand and we were talking, I said, "You know, I think I'm going to tell that story," and ALAN with extra energy surged up and said, "No!" So I promised him I wouldn't share and I won't today. But the truth is, is that ALAN's standards were so high, that for us that story was not a big deal because we were in trouble all the time, but for ALAN it was a big deal. Because he had impeccable character.

Now when Tori called me from the hospital Saturday, January 24, she told me that ALAN had turned for the worst and that the medical community, which had served him well, had done all that they could do. Suddenly ALAN, in his bed, turned to Tori, and said, and in his toughest situation I might add, said, "How's Rex doing?" Did not those actions speak louder than the words?

The funeral service was transcribed by the staff of the House Republican Conference.

Yesterday I received a message from another fellow high school classmate, Dr. Rusty Linton, a surgeon and the Mississippi State team doctor. This is what the message said. "Over the last year, every time I sent ALAN a text of encouragement, he asked about my wife and said that he and Tori were specifically praying for her. He always downplayed his problems and showed care for my wife. Selfless. Humble. I sent him a text on Super Bowl Sunday thanking him for all of that and for being my friend. He was a true man of God and the kind of leader that Washington needs more of."

I think the point is, and it's obvious, that ALAN was deeply struggling, and his first concern was others. ALAN always lived his life concerned about the welfare of others. Above himself. Always strong for others, he did not have to seek for strength, he just always seemed to have that strength. He was who he was, always. He just generally lived life in action to serve others. That's all I can remember. ALAN, many times over his political career, he would state, and this is a quote from ALAN, "It's not about a person named ALAN NUNNELEE, but a voice of the people seeking change, motivated by their love of country."

He personifies the message that was on Ronald Reagan's desk. It said there's no limit to what a man can do, or where he can go if he doesn't mind who gets the credit. You know that was ALAN. We believe that there was a calling on ALAN's life to serve the people publicly. He was obedient to be God's man for our community, for our State, and for our country. Simply, ALAN made a difference. For that reason we celebrate today. He leaves a great legacy for his family. He'll be remembered as a great man who served others.

Now family and friends, the Bible in Nahum 1:7 says, "The Lord is good, a stronghold in a day of distress; He cares for those who take refuge in Him." We are all here today to encourage the Nunnelee family and some of our friends and colleagues.

Now, we all know the truth; behind every great man is a great woman. Tori, you define the virtues of a Proverbs 31 woman. In every aspect a wife is to serve her husband, and that you did. You lived it out. Besides ALAN experiencing your overwhelming love, you have ministered to the rest of your family, your two sons, your daughter, your father, father-in-law and mother, your in-laws, your sisters, your church, your community, everyone around you. What we witnessed were the virtues of your faith, marriage, finances, your career, your homemaking, your beauty, and all the wise

use of your time. Your countenance today in this place is overwhelming. God's peace transcends through this whole process, and as we gather today to celebrate, because we know where you're at, we know where ALAN's at. So thank you for serving my friend and our leader. I think it's appropriate at this celebration as we witness ALAN's legacy, and I know we're in a church, but I just think that we need to clap and thank this family and ALAN. [Clapping.]

Now Tori, I know if you were standing up here, you would say just as ALAN would today, it's only by God's grace that we're able to do anything, and we all know that ALAN and Tori realized that God is the source of their strength. I know what they want us to do here is not just to honor ALAN but to honor God in this place. So in a world with many countries, and countries with many leaders, can one man make a difference? Well yes, it depends on where his strength comes from. David, when he faced Goliath, or Moses when he faced the Pharaoh, Paul, when he had his many excursions and trials, and even Job who faced more trials than anyone including Christ himself. Many individuals make a tremendous difference, when they use God as their source of strength. So ALAN sought his strength in Jesus Christ, and he was bold in his faith. He never wavered back even in high school, ALAN was a solid man of character, he was true to his wife, true to his family, his children, his friends and colleagues, but most important he was true to God.

It's often said that the true character of a man is easily seen in a time of distress, and in very hard times we have witnessed the character of ALAN NUNNELEE the past several months. He is what defines a real man, and a great man, and his legacy now reflects that.

At a Prayer Breakfast before the swearing in to Congress I stood before an audience with ALAN, and our Nation being in trouble deeper than most realize, and with probably the only way to truly revive it was through God using one faithful man at a time. So we publicly asked ALAN, "Are you that man,?" and looking at him we all believed that he was that man, and we said, "Let's go to battle." ALAN said, "Let's go." Now, here we are, ALAN has fought the good fight, he's crossed the finish line, God is prepared for him in God's time.

In our human logic, we may ask, why did a great man like ALAN have to die, why now? We'll only know these answers in God's presence, however some of those answers become clear today for some of us in this service. Because we see the

testimony of a godly man and a godly family. So ALAN's gone, he's left, so what's our legacy, what will we lay before God?

In closing, as we celebrate ALAN NUNNELEE serving us, with godly character his whole life, I truly believe if ALAN were talking to each one of you individually or if he stood up here at this podium today his final words would be, "Well, I'm just doing fine, all is well, how are you doing?"

Rev. Doug Spires. Lamentations 3:22, 23 tells us this, "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail, they are new every morning, great is your faithfulness." Let's sing it together, we proclaim it together in a song. Lord, great is your faithfulness.

["Great is Thy Faithfulness."]

Governor Phil Bryant. ALAN NUNNELEE was my brother, my friend, and the best man I ever knew. Now he would not like for me to say that, because he would think in his way somehow, I might compare him to others in his goodness, kindness, love, devotion, and character. He would never do such a thing. He would always encourage others to be better than they may be, not in an overt way but in ALAN's dear way. Tori, I had the last opportunity to visit with him, it was such a joy.

Children, I know that may seem strange under those conditions and circumstances, with our dear friend's health challenged in so many ways. But it was a joy for me. I realized, as Tori did, it might be our last chance to see one another this side of paradise. Now we will all see ALAN NUNNELEE in the blink of an eye. I have a feeling when I walk through those gates he will say, "Well good morning! How are you?" When the sun is setting it will be "Good afternoon!"

ALAN and I came into the legislature, my second term and I think his first in the senate, about 1995 and as we began to work together during that legislative process I realized this man was something very special. One writer would say that if ALAN NUNNELEE would tell you something you could guarantee that it was for certain. I felt that same way and I thought how unusual it is that in this great legislative body that telling the truth is such a premium. That people would go about telling others, this is ALAN NUNNELEE, if he is telling you the truth he really means it. Oh he did. Sandra and Pat what a wonderful job you did. What an amazing man he was.

These last 2 days I've spent a good deal of my time reading my Bible, searching for answers and quotes and I realized this morning ALAN NUNNELEE had me reading my Bible. One more time he made me a better person. He wasn't even there but there I was searching Scriptures. I kept coming back to the first psalm. David wrote, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the council of ungodly, but delights in the laws of the Lord." Mr. Speaker, I thought about that. He delighted in the laws of the Lord. He shall be like the tree. That was ALAN NUNNELEE. A tree. Strong oak, that could stand against it seemed, any wind, storm, challenges that came its way, but also offer the beauty and the coolness of the shade that he would invite you into. Just to rest and take comfort.

"A tree planted by the river of waters," writes King David, I think he meant the Mississippi River. May not have realized it at the time but of the rivers of water of course is the great Mississippi and there was this great oak of a man, ALAN NUNNELEE. Whatever he shall do will prosper. Oh, did he prosper. Wonderful children, Reed, Emily, Nathan, how proud he was of you and his wonderful grandchildren, and Deborah and I have our first, so we realize it's the best thing ever and ALAN would tell me that, "Just wait," he would say. "You just don't know how wonderful life can be."

He was always telling me how wonderful life could be. Even when he was appropriations chairman and I was Lieutenant Governor, he would say, "Don't worry Governor, we're doing just fine." He had a strong faith like that. I was thinking as I stood at this podium today looking at ALAN at this angle, it would be very similar as I would stand there and say, "The Chair recognizes Senator NUNNELEE." As he stood at that podium, he would always have an Alanism. He would begin with some historical reference. Something someone told him back home, and I would think, "Where are we going here Mr. Chairman?"

He would tell everyone at the first appropriations committee that he attended, that he was chairman of, I think he stole that from Jerry Clower, you see he had always been on the finance committee, in the senate, and when I called on him to be chairman of the appropriations committee he said, "Governor, you may not realize it, but I've never been to an appropriations committee meeting." You see, they're divided in equal parts. So if you're on finance you're always meeting in finance and you never get a chance to go to appropriations in the same way, and he said, "Are you sure?," and I said,

“I’m pretty sure, I prayed about this, and I think you’re going to be appropriations chair.”

As the Chair recognized the appropriations chairman, ALAN did something remarkable, he let all that would come share in that process. He would listen to everyone. Now his door and hallways were always full. I thought there was a point where more people wanted to talk to ALAN NUNNELEE than they did to me. As appropriations chairman, the Lieutenant Governor, is here today. He appreciates and understands that, but you see, oh, did he prosper, and the wonderful family, tremendous career, friends that love him dearly, love him so much. His son-in-law and daughters-in-law, to which ALAN, an Alanism, he would call son-in-love and daughters-in-love. Daughters-in-love and son-in-love, that was ALAN.

At special times he could capture that wonderful moment of faith and joy and even in the most difficult of times. I had never seen anyone quite like him. I thought at some point, surely I will see that there will be an ALAN that will weaken in these storms that come on us. A flair of anger perhaps somewhere along the way. Never. He was always the strongest oak that could be.

He called me when he was considering a run for Congress. We had talked about it, he was my appropriations chairman so I said, “ALAN, you are my right arm. What will I do if you leave? We have another year of appropriations and some of the most difficult times ahead of us.” That was during the times of the great recession. He of course said, “Oh, there are other people who can do this job much better than I.” Well we had other people, Senator Davis, but ALAN NUNNELEE was that special man. He called me at home one evening and he said, “I have made a decision, I have crossed the Rubicon,” an Alanism. I said, “Is that in Lee County?” I never had heard that before so I had to look it up and see exactly what ALAN meant. He had crossed the Rubicon like Caesar into Rome, he was at the point of no return. He realized that was the moment for him, he had made that decision, he had intended to give it all his energy. He had asked Tori and she had said OK.

We would never do it without the women, I can assure you. We would never even attempt it and we would never be successful without these wonderful women that lift us up and keep us strong and stand with us.

So as ALAN crossed that Rubicon, there we were campaigning together. I said, “I am on the way. Tell me what-

ever I can do to help you.” That was the way we always were. If I needed his help in the political or personal arena, he was coming. There was no doubt. He was one of those friends that you can count on, no matter where you’re at, and circumstances did not matter to him. If you needed the help, there were no questions afterward. It was “I will be there as quickly as I can.” What a remarkable man this was.

There are so many things that I think of when I think of ALAN. I will certainly miss his friendship. Though that’s the selfish way of looking at it. But I had opportunities to call and talk to him, to hear that encouragement again, to hear the faith that he had in this great country. How much he loved this wonderful State and those beautiful grandchildren, especially that one.

My favorite movie is “It’s a Wonderful Life” with Jimmy Stewart. In fact, Deborah can tell you, for many years until they got old enough to rebel, I would force my children to watch it. Oh, they would say, “Here they go, we have to watch ‘It’s a Wonderful Life.’”

I wanted them to understand the meaning of what George Bailey’s life was about. ALAN NUNNELEE was much the same. I notice little things in the movie each time I see it. In Peter Bailey’s office, George’s father who passed away as a young man, it seemed, in the movie there was a sign that said, “All you can take with you is that which is given away.” A sign in the office. Next time you watch the movie, it’s there hanging. All that you can ever take with you is what you have given away. That was perfect for ALAN NUNNELEE. He gave away so much. To everyone who came into contact with him, he gave all that he had. He was the best man that I ever knew.

George Bailey thought his life meant nothing. Did he make a difference? He kept wondering. In fact, he thought it would be no different in the world if he had never been born. A clumsy little angel named Clarence showed him the difference. George Bailey changed the world around him for so many. He made their lives whole. He built houses and he was determined to make sure that everyone had an even chance in life. He protected those who needed protecting; he stood for those that had no one to stand for them. ALAN NUNNELEE was as much a George Bailey in our time as could have been. Clarence, after showing him what life would be like without him, said to him, “You see, George, each man’s life touches so many. When he isn’t around, it leaves an awful hole, doesn’t it?”

There's an awful hole in our lives now. Our friend is gone on, to walk the streets of glory. I will miss him dearly, as we all will. But I will never, I shall never forget, what ALAN NUNNELEE gave me. To see his faith. To believe as he believed. To know that one day again we will be together in paradise with all those we love and cherish. ALAN NUNNELEE was my friend, my brother, and the best man I ever knew. I love ALAN NUNNELEE. I know that God loves him too.

Rev. Doug Spires. Tori asked for me to share with you that this is one of ALAN's favorite songs. Now that he is in glory face-to-face with the Lord Jesus who he loved so much, I have no doubt he would want you to know the impending truth of this song.

[“The King is Coming.”]

Reed Nunnelee. I was with him this summer when a physical therapist walked in the hospital room and she sheepishly confessed, “You know, we've been meeting in the lunchroom and none of the therapists are sure what to call you. You know? Do we call you Mr. Congressman? Do we call you Mr. NUNNELEE? Do we call you Your Honor?” He grinned at her. “Oh, almost 56 years ago, Pat and Sandra Nunnelee thought ALAN would be a pretty good thing to call their little boy. Why don't you just use that?”

You see, he was important, sure enough, but he was not ever self-important. He took his job very seriously but he never took himself all that seriously. You know, he didn't get hung up on titles. Sure he'd introduce himself as Congressman NUNNELEE, if that would help a veteran get his benefits, but otherwise, well, he was just ALAN. He could talk with crowds and walk with kings, but never lose the common touch. Most of you in this room knew him by one of his many political titles: Mr. Chairman, Senator, Congressman. But if you hung around him long enough, you knew that there was one title that he was proudest of. He called it the most important title he's ever held, and it wasn't chairman, and it wasn't senator, and it wasn't U.S. Congressman. Well I could say it but he gave the commencement address at my law school graduation, so I'm going to let you hear it from him.

[Video plays.]

Emcee. Please join me in giving Congressman ALAN NUNNELEE a warm MC Law welcome as he delivers our commencement address.

Alan Nunnelee. Thank you. It is a privilege to be here. It's an exciting day. One of my three children is a member of the graduating class, so while I

may have a lot of titles, the title I'm most proud of is dad. Reed, I'm proud of you.

Reed Nunnelee. How about that. There are only three people in this world that have the absolute privilege of using that title. I am so proud to stand before you today and be able to call him dad because as dynamic a State leader as he was, as faithful a public servant, I assure you he was a better daddy. I told my Aunt Shannon I empathize with the Gospel writer a little bit who concluded his book by saying, "Look, if everything that Jesus did was written down, there wouldn't be enough books in the world to contain all of that."

Well, I can't keep you here all day, but I did ask my siblings to write down something about their dad. My youngest brother Nathan wrote this:

In 2007 people began talking about the upcoming statewide election. My dad had served in the State senate for 12 years and had established himself as a workhorse in Jackson and a politician who could get things done. His natural leadership abilities, his incredible work ethic and his ability to find solutions made him an obvious candidate for one of those statewide positions. Many people began to approach dad about running for Lieutenant Governor. Well, dad loved Mississippi and knew that if elected to that position he would have the opportunity to serve Mississippi in a way he never could before. However, dad chose not to run, and the question that came to everybody's mind was, "Why? Why would a man with such a love for this State and such a desire to serve choose not to pursue that position?" What's more, why would a candidate with such obvious support choose not to run? Publicly, dad just downplayed those questions, but privately dad explained to us why he wasn't going to run.

I was 16 years old in spring 2007 and was getting ready to start my senior year at Tupelo High School. Dad knew that running for Lieutenant Governor would require him to spend much of the summer and fall campaigning around the State and doing so would mean that he would be gone for most of my senior year. Dad chose not to run so that he could spend time with me before I left for college. It was important to him to be there for me. When he said, "the title I'm most proud of is dad," those weren't just words to him, he lived it. Through his actions, he was telling me "I love you." He was saying, "You have value. I value you more than I value men's praise. I love and value you more than my career, or money, or success. I love and cherish my time with you more than anything this world could offer."

Over the past few months, dad became very intent about telling us how proud he was of us. He told me many times, "I love you and I'm proud of the man that you've become." Those are words every son needs to hear, but for me, it was something dad showed every day.

The middle child, my sister Emily, wrote this:

As a little girl, my dad often took me on daddy-daughter dates. He always let me choose what we would do for our date which inevitably meant I would ask him to go to the mall and pick out pink dresses. Every now and then he would surprise me with a special date to the Velveteen Rabbit. There he would let me pick out any outfit in the store. These became my favorite outfits because he would always tell me I looked beautiful, like his

little rosebud. I cherished those dates with my dad because it was time he set aside just for us.

My freshman year in high school, a boy came to our house to pick me up for my first date. My dad met him at the door and shook his hand. Looking him in the eye he said, "You better take care of my little girl, son, she's the only one I got." This soon became the tradition for any boy who came to pick me up on a date. Even when I went to college, I would call my dad for him to tell my dates over the phone. Only later did it occur to me what my dad was doing when he took me on daddy-daughter dates. He took me on dates to show me how his little girl deserved to be treated. Later he made sure those boys who came to our house knew he was entrusting them with his precious little girl, and he expected her to be treated with respect.

On my wedding day, my dad walked me down the aisle right here in this church. When we got to the front of the church, he reached out his hand to my future husband and said, "This is the last time I'll get to say this and it brings me joy knowing you'll do this. You better take care of my little girl son, she's the only one I've got."

Over the past 9 months, I had the privilege of meeting a lot of the doctors and nurses that cared for my dad. With every caregiver I met, I found myself telling them, "You better take care of my dad. He's the only one I've got." Every time I said that, my dad would grin. He knew that I meant it. So now, for one last time I say, "God, you better take care of my dad. He's the only one I've got."

You know, I remember. When dad comes home from work, you know what kids do. You just kind of assault him at the door. Well, he'd no more than get one foot in the door and I'd come up there with questions. Well having inherited his love for baseball, I'd always have the same one, "Hey, dad, you want to play catch?" Well, I'm a dad myself and I know how easy it can be to say, "Oh, you know Buddy, I've had a long day at work. I'd really just like to take a load off. Can I sit on the couch?" I never got that response from dad. It was always the same. This is verbatim, "Hey, dad, you want to play catch?" "Absolutely! There is nothing so important in the world that it can't wait for me to play catch with my little boy."

Every night when he tucked us in bed, he'd tell us a story, and conclude with the same message. In fact, the night before he went in for brain surgery, I asked him to record a video for my two children. "Dad, just tell them whatever's on your mind. Whatever you want them to know." He told them the same thing I'd grown up hearing every night. It's on the screen.

[Video.]

Alan Nunnelee. Harper, Poppy loves you. I'll never forget how it felt the first time I saw you and how proud I was. I want you to know that you are special. You're special not because of anything you'll ever do in life, or any-

thing you'll ever own or accomplish. You're special because God made you special. If God makes you special, nobody can make you un-special.

Reed Nunnelee. You're special because God made you special. If God makes you special, nobody could ever make you un-special. Let me tell you, that's something every little boy and girl needs to here.

That's what he was saying when he decided to forgo his State election. That's what he was saying when he talked to my sister's dates and that's what he was saying when he threw the baseball with me. We're special, we have value. Well I'll tell you as much as I learned from dad growing up, I learned at least that much in the last few months. When dad gathered us all around to deliver the diagnosis, he began by saying, "Let me tell you my attitude about this whole deal. You know, 'Amazing Grace' has always been one of my favorite hymns. One verse in that hymn says 'Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I've already come. It's grace that's brought me safe thus far and grace will lead me home.'"

He had surgery last summer to remove most of the tumor. Well the night before the surgery I had an opportunity to talk with him and tell him the things on my heart. You know it wasn't anything I hadn't already said but it was good to sit down to tell him those things again. He said, "Reed, I taught you how to ride a bike, I taught you how to shave, I taught you how to throw a curveball. Unfortunately, it looks like I am going to have to teach you what it looks like for a Christ follower to walk through something like this." Oh, and teach he did.

When the doctors told dad how serious his cancer was his attitude from the very beginning was to consider how blessed he was. He and my mom reminded everyone that the Bible says in all things give thanks and that's the attitude they adopted. They handed out these bracelets which many of you are wearing which are inscribed with that verse. "You know," he said, "You don't just give thanks when your bill gets signed into law, you don't just give thanks at a victory party on election night, you give thanks even when you find out you are dying of cancer because God richly blesses and we have a lot to be thankful for," and that's what dad did.

You know they began writing down all of their blessings on a poster board. I have it here. In all things give thanks. Well one poster board turned into two, into three, and before you knew it we had nine poster boards filling up the walls in every hospital we went to and they were hanging on the

wall when dad spent his last days at home, to remind us that God richly blesses and in all things to give thanks.

You know his attitude was just relentless. Many of you know he had a stroke during the surgery. Well he couldn't speak right after the surgery. He was paralyzed on his left side. We're talking about a politician who can't walk and talk. Many of us would sit down and quit. That's not what dad did. Sitting in a hospital bed, his speech was garbled and he told me, "Reed, put on 'Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.'" All right, OK. He told me a story you know. Many of you know that when he was in college he went blind. He said he would sit in that dorm room and lay on his bed and he would listen to "Beethoven's Fifth Symphony." Couldn't see a thing but he said, "You know when Beethoven wrote that he had started going deaf and I knew sitting on my little dorm room bed that if God can speak one of the greatest pieces of music to a deaf man, he can do the same with a little blind boy. That was the attitude he carried.

"Anything the mind of man can conceive and believe it can achieve." That's what he said. Well I wrote that down. You know when PT and OT would come in I know what my response would probably be—"Oh, I don't want to do this." That's not what dad said. He would look them in the eye and say, "I'm ready to work hard." They said, "We wish all of our patients had that attitude." He said, "the last freedom any man has is the freedom to choose his own attitude." I wrote that down.

We were in Baltimore at Johns Hopkins before a big PT session and I was trying to temper his expectations. I said, "Dad, you know you had a great day yesterday. You know it's fine if you can't do everything today and need a little rest." "My job," he said, "is not to rely on past successes but to draw on them." I wrote that down. It's like a Jedi master.

You know I also learned during the last few months how proud he is of our State. I heard him on many occasions implore the therapist to visit the New Mississippi as he called it. He was so proud of how much progress Mississippi has made over the past few decades especially in the area of race reconciliation. He was so proud of his generation for their role in integration. While lawmakers and teachers and coaches and parents were certainly instrumental in that change, it was the kids who made it work and he was proud of that. That's why in our house dad didn't dismiss racism as some quaint little southern quirk, he rebuked it for the sin that it is. "I don't think God will hold me accountable for

the Mississippi my grandparents created, but he will make me answer for the Mississippi my grandkids grow up in.” So it won’t surprise you that I remember many Sundays sitting in the back of a mostly African American church because dad had been asked to preach.

A few months ago we spent the weekend visiting mom and dad in Tupelo. It came time for me and my family to go back to our home in Jackson, and I became emotional because I didn’t know how many more goodbyes I was going to get. Dad reminded me that in all likelihood this wouldn’t be our last goodbye but if it is he said, “aren’t you glad we can say it without any regrets?” And I am. See unlike many people who get told they have 14 months to live, dad didn’t have to spend the last few months of his life making amends for strained relationships or going to former friends and apologizing. He often quoted one of his favorite proverbs which served him well in politics. “When a man’s ways please the Lord he makes even his enemies be at peace with him.” So this morning I am sad beyond belief but I don’t despair because I had a daddy who taught me the most important lesson that real joy is found only in Christ.

I’m reminded of a story he told. When dad was growing up in Columbus, Mississippi, he learned a song in Sunday School that says “This joy that I have, the world didn’t give it to me, the world didn’t give it, and the world can’t take it away.”

Well when he chaired the appropriations committee he said they were literally about 2 minutes away from a government shutdown and other fellow legislators would say “You know you’ve got to be under more stress than anybody in the State right now but we don’t hear it in your voice.” “This joy that I have,” he said, “The Capitol didn’t give it, and the Capitol can’t take it away.”

I decided to let dad close this one out. You know I mention he gave the commencement address at my law school graduation and his speech focused on how quickly our culture is changing. How are law school graduates supposed to deal with that change? Well there was a bigger lesson that he wanted us to hear.

[Video.]

Alan Nunnelee. There’s another aspect of change. It’s much more personal than the macrochange that I talked about. The large economy, the changes in technology. It’s a change that hits home to every individual. It’s the type of change that comes when you’re sitting in the examining room. The seconds tick by like hours as you’re waiting for the physician to walk in and

the physician walks in and says, “We have the results of the tests. They’re not good.” At that moment you know your life is going to change.

When the phone rings at 2 a.m., and if you wake up and try to shake the sleep from your brain, you answer the phone and a cold sweat breaks out, because your worst fears become reality. That’s a much more personal change. Or, you’re called in at work, and they use different phrases: downsizing, cutbacks, and budget reductions. But the end result is all the same. You thought your life was planned out for the next several years. And all of a sudden, your life is changed.

I would encourage you, in order to prepare for that day—and those days come to us all—make sure there is something in your life that doesn’t change. I’ve had a great role model in that area, my dad happens to be here to watch his grandson graduate. At age 41, he took a job with a very small fledgling company based in Mississippi and over the next 18 years dedicated his life to watching and making that company grow. As it grew to a major national force, he approved all of the benefits and recognition including financial that came with that role. The company became so large and so successful that it became attractive to outside investors who came in and said, “This is great. We are going to add three more companies to this operation and we’re going to make you a major national leader and you’re going to have even more opportunities than before.”

A very short time after that merger they came to see him and in less than 5 minutes time, his career was over. Then they brought in a psychologist from way out of town. My dad looked at that psychologist who he didn’t know and he said, “Look, let me explain something to you. As a little boy in a small country church in Eastern Pontotoc County, I put my faith and trust in Jesus Christ. He said, “It’s a good thing I didn’t have my faith and trust in a company, because if I did, I would be reaching to hold on to something that wasn’t there.”

Graduates, I encourage you in order to cope with change, put your faith in Christ, in Jesus Christ, something much more important, much more lasting, than anything that you’ll see here today.

Reed Nunnelee. That’s the man who served our State for so many years and that’s the man I am so proud to call dad.

[“Be Thou My Vision.”]

Dr. Ed Deuschle. Haven’t we been blessed beyond measure? All these powerful testimonies of ALAN NUNNELEE’s life. I was in his room on Wednesday when I saw him for the last time, and I saw those placards all over the wall, seeing all the things he was thankful for, and all the people he was thankful for. I looked on one and there in the middle was Uncle Ed. I’m Uncle Ed, and I was proud to be on that list of people for whom he gave thanks. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, said, “You are the salt of the Earth.” He also said, “You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men that they might see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

ALAN took those words of Jesus quite seriously. He became the salt of the Earth, he became the light of the world, and

even those in the House saw the glory of God in the life of Congressman ALAN NUNNELEE. I rose early this morning in my motel and at about 5 in the morning, I had gone down to the lobby to grab a cup of coffee. The television was on, and there was a beautiful tribute to my nephew, and I was all alone watching it, watching news footage that I had not seen before. It was very touching.

Right after that, there was a story of a young man who spoke recently at Auburn Baptist Church, a nearby church in Lee County, and I was intrigued by what I saw. His name was Clay Dyer. Clay was born with no legs, missing one complete arm on one side and had a partial arm on the other side, and he was in a mobilized wheelchair. He had been at Auburn Baptist Church where they filmed this and he was just sharing his testimony. He was a professional fisherman if you could believe that. Yet he shared that the secret of his life was his relationship with Jesus Christ. He said, "Nobody has an excuse when they look at me, for not experiencing the joy of the Savior." Here was a man who did not look down at what he lacked, but he looked up at what he had. That was my ALAN. When he was blind at Mississippi State, coping with an illness at the end of his life and all the challenges in the middle of life. ALAN never looked down at what he lacked. But he always looked up with what he had. I think Uncle Ed probably taught him this. I've heard it reiterated several times. I think I'm the teacher.

We cannot control what life does to us, none of us can. We can decide what we will do back to life. Regardless of the circumstances, ALAN faced the circumstances of life with faith in God and the Lord Jesus Christ. He took one step at a time forward with persistence, prayer, and as it has already been so beautifully stated in everything he gave thanks for. This is the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning God's children.

You've been sitting a long time, and ALAN would want you to stand and stretch your legs, but also to show respect for God's word. I want to dedicate the 112th Psalm to my nephew. Would you stand in reverence for the word of God. Listen very carefully to what this passage says.

"Praise the Lord. Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who finds great delight in His commands. His children will be mighty in the land. The generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house and his righteousness endures forever. Even in darkness, light dawns for the upright, for the gracious and compassionate and righteous man. God will come to him who is generous and lends

freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. Surely he will never be shaken. A righteous man will be remembered forever. He will have no fear of bad news. His heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is secure. He will have no fear. In the end he will look in triumph o'er his foes. He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor. His righteousness endures forever. His horn will be lifted high in honor."

Another version simply says, "His deeds will never be forgotten. He shall have influence and honor." May God bless the reading of the Scripture. You may be seated.

In 1904, a woman by the name of Bessie Stanley wrote these famous words, "It has been said," she said, "That a successful person is one who lived well, laughed often, and loved much. Who has enjoyed the trust of pure women, the respect of intelligent men, and the love of little children. Who has filled his niche and accomplished his task, and who has left the world a better place than he found it. Who has never lacked appreciation of Earth's beauty, or failed to express it. Who always looked for the best in others and gave them the best he had. Whose life was an inspiration, and whose memory, a benediction." No wonder the Bible says the memory of the just is blessed.

ALAN knew a lot of Scripture. He could quote a lot of Scripture. ALAN valued that proverb that says that "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches and loving favor rather than silver and gold." But he also understood the paradoxical statement in Ecclesiastes 7:1 that said, "A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death is better than the day of one's birth." Isn't that something to think about? "The day of death is better than the day of one's birth."

It has been said that faith grows a Christian, life proves a Christian, toil confirms a Christian, and death crowns a Christian. One of my favorite verses is Psalms 116:15, that simply says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." The word "precious" is a word that literally means an experience to be highly valued, to be highly esteemed. It's the greatest single moment of a person's life when they take their last breath and they're absent from the body and precious, they're in the presence of the Lord. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

ALAN loved sports, he loved sports personalities. He would be thrilled that I'm using a quote from Lou Holtz to formulate my thoughts today. I was watching ESPN, a commentary and Lou was involved, and I don't know what in the

world they were discussing, but all of a sudden, he just stopped what he was thinking about and went on a completely different track talking about a life application lesson from his heart to every one of us, and he said, "Listen to me. Everyone needs something to do, someone to love, something to believe in, and something to hope for." I want you to understand that ALAN had something to do in this world. God ordained his steps, orchestrated his life, but God gave him a lot to do as he asked many other of these distinguished guests that are here today.

I go back to Deuteronomy 6:4 after Moses had given the Ten Commandments to the Hebrew children, he gave instructions to the patriarchs of the land, the leaders of the land, the heads of the homes of Israel, and he wanted them to heed that instruction that said, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. And these commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home. When you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up."

ALAN took that instruction very seriously. I believe that the key to a great nation is a great home. This is teaching us that in a home setting, the man is to be the spiritual leader in the home. He is to be a role model, as has been shared by his son and others. ALAN was that role model, who modeled Christianity, and he taught by precept and personal example. The Bible said, "So whether eat or drink, whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." I just want to briefly talk to you about a life that glorifies God and that's my ALAN.

Ray Kroc was the founder of the McDonalds fast food franchise, and I am not trying to diminish him in any way at all publicly, but Ray Kroc was once asked the question, "Sir, what do you believe in?" He thought for a moment and said, "I believe in God, I believe in family, and I believe in McDonalds. But when I go to work on Monday, I reverse the order." That could never be said of ALAN NUNNELEE. ALAN kept his priorities straight, and God and God's will were the primary concerns of his life.

Patrick Morley, in his book "Walking with Christ in the Details of Life" said that spiritual excellence is not ascending the ladder of leadership to greatness, it is about descending the ladder of humility to servanthood. That's just what our Lord Jesus taught us. Whoever wants to be great among you

must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. That is what ALAN chose to be. A servant to the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords and a servant to the people of his State, community, to the Nation, and the world. ALAN had something to do.

But ALAN also had someone to love. I am overwhelmed with what I have seen over the last 2 days. Visitation yesterday was 6 hours long. Today, 2 more hours. Eight hours of people coming through the line from all over the country to say, "We loved ALAN." We love ALAN's family, and many of you made a long journey today because ALAN first loved you. ALAN had a lot of people to love. Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another as I have loved you. So you ought to love one another and by this all men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another."

I will just briefly tell you that the love of his life was his wife, Tori, and I had the privilege of assisting in their wedding ceremony 34 years ago at Morrison Heights Baptist Church in Clinton, Mississippi. Dr. Kerman McGregor began the wedding ceremony and I did the vows, exchanged the rings. I got to the point after they had exchanged their vows and I looked at ALAN and Tori, and I said to them, "If these vows are solemnly kept and faithfully discharged, they will add to the happiness of this life, dividing the inevitable sorrows, and multiplying all its blessedness. But if these obligations are neglected and violated, you cannot escape the keenest misery and the darkest guilt." ALAN would laugh and remind me all the time, "You really tied a tight knot." Then he said, "I couldn't bear to think of facing that keenest misery and that darkest guilt." ALAN was faithful to every vow he ever took. Whether it was to his precious wife Tori, or to the Lord Jesus Christ, or to the Government of the United States of America, ALAN was a keeper of his vows. Tori, again, I've said privately and I'll say publicly, I've never seen a spouse take better care of a husband than you have done, and we thank you.

ALAN had something to do, he had something and someone to love, and also, as old Lou Holtz said, we need to have something to believe in. That's where the faith dimension of ALAN's life comes in. He was a consecrated Christian. He was following his Lord, Jesus Christ, regardless of whether anybody else would follow or not. ALAN was committed to following and always trusting and obeying Jesus Christ. I can remember when Jesus told his disciples, "I'm going to leave you soon. I'm going to die a horrible death. And I'm going to

be leaving you and I'll no longer be with you in a physical sense." The Bible said that their hearts were troubled, deeply in sorrow. Then Jesus said to them, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. And in my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. But I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

One of the disciples present said, "Well we don't know the way." Of course Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the light, and no man cometh to the Father but by or through me." That's usually where we stop. But the very next verse may be the most important verse of all, where He said, "If you had known me," Jesus said, "you should have known my Father also, and from henceforth you know Him and you see Him. ALAN may have been blind, but he could see God, every moment of every day. ALAN had someone to believe in.

I also want you to know that ALAN had his whole life shaped by his Christian faith and his focus. His beliefs in Jesus Christ shaped his convictions, his character, his compassion, and on and on. But I also know that ALAN, like the great apostle Paul, could simply say that I am not ashamed of the Gospel because it is the power of God in salvation who for everyone who believes, first for the Jew, then for the gentile. He was unapologetically Christian. That there was one way to God, not many ways to God, and that one way was to be saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone, never depending on his good works or good deeds or human achievements. He gave God all the glory. The apostle Paul said, "May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world." They started to put a flower over my lapel cross and I said, "No, you can't do that." I said, "Because the cross is the greatest symbol that the eyes of man can ever look upon. It is a symbol of what sin will do, it is a symbol of what love will bear, it is a symbol of what forgiveness cost, and a symbol of what every human being is worth."

And I thought, "Well I better boast of ALAN and all of his achievements." But I said, "I know ALAN, and ALAN would not want me to boast of human achievement or accomplishment. He would not want to call attention to himself but he would want to boast only of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save him from his sins, and to give him for-

givenness, and to grant him the gift of everlasting or eternal life.

Lou Holtz said, "Everybody needs something to do, someone to love, someone to believe in, and finally something to hope for." When I was a young boy, I went to Mickey Owen baseball school in Miller, MO, and I met a legendary baseball player by the name of Pepper Rodgers. He made a statement, Pepper Martin, excuse me. He had just won a World Series, and somebody asked Pepper, "Now that you've won the World Series, what do you want to do?" He quickly said to the reporters, "I want to go to heaven when I die." Everybody laughed, thought he was making a joke. But then he got dead serious and he said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I just told you the truth that when I die, I want to go to heaven to be with the Lord." You see, hope is not wishful thinking when you believe in the Gospel. It's a sure thing. Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see.

I can remember where I was in 1995 just before Hurricane Rita hit the coast of Texas. I was in Dallas at a convention of church planters, the largest gathering of church planters from all over the world. They told us the storm is coming and if you're afraid you need to get out of town and go home, and so I was one going home. But there was a man by the name of John Maxwell who was about to speak and I said, "I'm going to listen to that man before I go to Tupelo, back to northeast Mississippi." John Maxwell, I can't even remember what he was talking about, but all of a sudden in the middle of his message he did a Lou Holtz kind of thing, and he stopped and looked at us, and he said, "I want you all to know something. I want to make a difference with the people who make a difference. At a time in history when it will make a difference, doing something that will make a difference." That is ALAN NUNNELEE. He was concerned until the very end, asking his brothers and sisters, "Have I made a difference?" I can say, "Yes ALAN, you really made a difference."

As you sum up all that has been experienced today, think of the influence of your life, the impact of your witness. If you don't know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, we hope and pray you'll find him today. You'll invite him into your heart as ALAN did as a 6-year-old boy and let Christ transform you from the inside out. If you are a Christian, rededicate your life to the lordship of Jesus Christ today and be determined from this moment on that you're going to make a

difference with the people who are going to make a difference doing something in history that is going to make a difference at a time when it will be important for you to make that difference. ALAN has hope because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's where our hope comes from. I looked at what cancer did to his body and I was reminded of the beautiful truth that death is powerless now. Death cannot cripple love; it can't shatter hope; it can't corrode faith; it can't eat away peace; it can't destroy confidence; it cannot kill friendship; it cannot shut out memories and silence courage; it cannot invade the soul; it cannot reduce eternal life; it cannot quench the Holy Spirit; and it cannot lessen the power of the resurrection. To God be the glory for his child ALAN NUNNELEE. He made a difference.

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