

The death of one so young will raise a host of fears. Did Wayne have enough time? Did he live life well enough? Did we love him enough? Is there more we could have done? He seems like a child to us now.

You know how children are. They've got a mind of their own. They will delight you, disappoint you, but you love them all the same.

There is a child inside us all. This child has many fears. It asks questions about death because it isn't sure about life. Life is so hard to figure out sometimes. But the child inside us is a child of God, and whether we delight Him or disappoint Him, He loves us all the same.

St. Paul has written a beautiful passage about the love of God. Do you want to know how much God loves us? Think about how much God loved His child, Jesus. God the Father loved Jesus the Son; they were one; they wrote the book on love. And yet, God loved the world so much he gave us Jesus. And St. Paul asks, "If God has already given us Jesus, do you think for a moment that he would withhold anything else from us? Nothing can separate us from the love of God--not trials, distress, persecution, hunger, nakedness, dangers, or the sword; I am certain that neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, nor powers, neither height nor depth nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God comforts the child inside us with the child inside him, Jesus Christ.

We're going to miss Wayne. Fears will haunt us. Sorrow will pester us, but the love of Christ will bring us peace.

Now, I want to tell you something more personal. Wayne Woods was the first black man I had the chance to call my friend. I was in eighth grade. He was a pioneer in my life. He opened my life to other worlds, worlds of friendship, worlds of sorrow, worlds of fear, and worlds of wisdom. I was proud of him on the day we met, and I'm proud of him on the day he died. In a way, we were just two kids growin' up on Woodland Avenue, but in another way, the world will never know peace till we all have a friend like Wayne.