

'Brokenness' - A Good Friday reflection by Pam Skelton 2020.04.10

Good Friday is an awesome day, a day when we focus in on the most important event in His – Story. In terms of our Christian faith and the Christian calendar there is no other day quite like it! I hope that aside from my message and beyond our own thoughts, that we may all appreciate afresh **the** message, the most important message of all time, in this season let us experience the unfurling of **the** essential gospel; be inspired, and jubilant!

The given theme for today on our roster is, “Brokenness!”

I don't think any of us will have to think very long to come up with examples of how today's world is broken.

Let us all think of a few examples. ....

Perhaps you included - isolation, loneliness, disease, death, broken hearts, loss of livelihood, loss of homes, loss of nature, broken relationships, lost dreams and aspirations for the future.....and more. With brokenness comes grief and some griefs are hard to bear, some appear never to heal. The wounds and scars may last a lifetime and we yearn for relief.

Perhaps our children would like to think of a time when something precious was broken and you brought it to someone who loves you to get it fixed? Can you think of that toy that stopped working? Or perhaps a time when you couldn't figure out how something was supposed to go together and you needed someone with more experience or wisdom to tell you how to make something work properly. Often it is Dad or Mum who comes to the rescue.

Almost a year ago to the day Notre Dame de Paris, that mighty cathedral, was greatly damaged by fire. The world looked on as Parisians and indeed all of France felt this grievous loss of an icon of French life. Almost as rapidly as the fire consumed the famous towers the French rallied to promise restoration.

Over €800 million was promptly donated by various billionaires and corporations to help rebuild Notre-Dame. The promise of something valued being fixed. However, the cathedral is “not saved yet” and has to undergo a delicate operation to remove fused scaffolding around the spire. We must all wait and see if these promises will save the precious building.

Of course, in the last year, Australia and indeed the whole world has had plenty of its own disasters. Bushfires have consumed not just buildings of significance but whole towns, communities, lives and ecosystems. Corona Virus 19 is a very present disaster on a world scale seriously affecting the physical and mental health of millions. The immediate response of governments has swung between the concerns for health and life and death decisions as opposed to striving to preserve economic wellbeing. Again, the promises to shore up the health system and balance this with sustaining any sort of economy, have been inordinate in scale and we may wonder where all this money is coming from. Is this rescue package going to work? Can this broken situation be fixed? Where is our hope placed?

Casting our minds back to Jesus’ life and the political and societal context of his death perhaps there were similarities. Michael spoke last week about a people yearning for a new king, a political structure not dominated by Roman invaders, for justice and freedom and preservation of the Hebrew cultural identity. Every person in his times would have felt the brokenness of their society. Michael indicated that as Jesus rode into Jerusalem the populace saw in Him the new king, the one about whom the prophets had spoken, *‘Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’* Zechariah 9:9. They laid down their coats and sang ‘Hosanna!'; here indeed must be the fulfilment of their hopes.

All of the readings for today speak strongly of the plan of God for the redemption of His people, not just the Hebrew people but as we read in Paul's letter to the Hebrews 5:9, *'the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him'*. If we spent this hour solely reading today's scriptures, we would have **the** message with hardly any explanation necessary.

The readings from Isaiah and from Psalm 22 are prophetic, pointing us to the crucifixion of Jesus. Please read them, if not now then during the next few days. Psalm 22 begins, *'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'* we hear these words from the mouth of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross. Throughout the gospel reading of John we read repeatedly that things happened *'so that Scripture would be fulfilled'*,

Here are a few examples'-

- As Jesus hands himself over to his captors, he insists his disciples go free, *'This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: I have not lost one of those you gave me.'*
- Simon Peter has a very personal experience of the fulfilment of that which was prophesied by Jesus himself. All of the gospels record this event, *'before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times!'* Imagine how Peter felt as that rooster crowed for the third time.
- After handing over the care of his mother, Jesus knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled', Jesus said, "I am thirsty.... When he had received the drink, he added, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Jesus, *knowing all that was going to happen to him.....*The crucifixion account is grim and horrible. Jesus knew what he was in for! Where now are the crowds that saw Jesus as the Messiah, who laid down their cloaks for him? Were they shattered in their faith? Did they not know that this terrible death was foretold in their scriptures? Did they hear the first line of Psalm 22 and in their minds think through the whole Psalm? Could no one comprehend what was happening? Undoubtedly, they were struck with grief, hardly able to see a future in which Jesus could still be present with them. How unbearable must the next few days have been for all who loved Him who wanted so much to serve and obey him and see him rise to power, and yet they were silenced and numbed by the horror of all that was in front of them.

Might we find ourselves asking the same questions of God in the midst of our troubles? How could this be? Where is our Heavenly Father? How could he let this happen? Who can fix things and make them good again, make things work as they should? Who will relieve every aspect of our brokenness and deliver good news? As we ponder the ways of God and the necessity of sacrifice note that Psalm 22 ends with,

*All the ends of the earth  
will remember and turn to the Lord,  
and all the families of the nations  
will bow down before him,  
for dominion belongs to the Lord  
and he rules over the nations.  
All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;  
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—  
those who cannot keep themselves alive.  
Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord.  
They will proclaim his righteousness,  
declaring to a people yet unborn:  
He has done it!*

Here is the triumphal note! Here is a promise for us all, when Jesus ‘knowing *that everything had now been finished, as the Psalm predicted, ‘he had done it!* Jesus has delivered the ultimate rescue package that cannot be measured in billions or trillions of any currency, that is effective in life and in death. The resurrection message, **the** message, of Easter Day completes the plan, the wonderful wisdom and extraordinary accomplishment of the One who loves us and seeks to restore to good working order our very lives and that of the planet.

Today is an awesome day, we pause in the pain of sacrifice and anticipate the day of Jubilation.

God Bless You all.