

God in the brokenness

Over the last month or so I have said to a lot of people, that even those of us who are more resilient are struggling.

There are times when we can be sitting and watching the TV and tears come to our eyes. There are times when we need to turn off the media and go for a walk as we are feeling overwhelmed. For some of us each day is full and we have plenty to do and don't feel too badly. For many of us the overwhelming of feelings leaves us sitting in a chair struggling to get out of it and do the things that need to be done. Even the thought of not being able to celebrate and remember Easter and now ANZAC day has touched and challenged so many people.

And in the midst of all the things we are experiencing, and missing out on and struggling with, God is with us.

Sometimes it is hard to see but we are not the only ones in this situation.

The reading from the gospel of Luke seems a little strange to have when we have been following the gospel of Matthew. Yet this story has a lot to say to us at the moment.

Two people had been in the city of Jerusalem and had experience of Jesus, and even though they had heard he was alive, they had yet to believe. And on this journey, they meet him but they do not know him.

Long story short they did not recognise in him the words that spoke of something greater than their experience. They did not recognise in the understanding and the knowledge he had, that this was Jesus the Christ. They did not see beyond their immediate grief and confusion what was right in front of them. It wasn't even a case like Thomas, who needed to see for himself, needed to touch Jesus and then he would believe. Jesus was there and they did not recognise him.

Over the years I have worshipped in many churches and come alongside many people from all sorts of understandings of the scriptures. Some can quote bible verses left, right and centre. Others struggle to know where the different books in the bible are located. And all of us can fit somewhere in between. But I wonder, if Jesus walked into our church and we were gathered together for worship would we recognise him?



I think back to the times in my life when I have felt closest to God, and for most of them it was in a time of brokenness. At other times I think there is too much strength that can get in the way. It is our desire that God is strong at all times yet in the times of brokenness God seems so much stronger.

On the road to Emmaus we have two people who were somewhat broken, filled with the grief of wondering about what Jesus death really did mean. It was at the very moment when Jesus broke the bread that they recognised him. Then their eyes were opened.

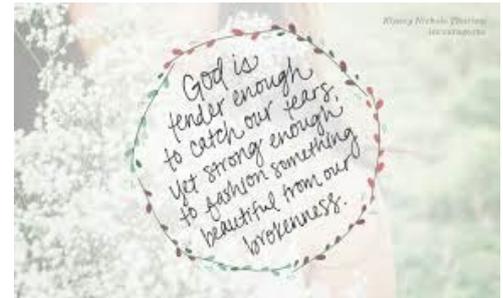
As an introvert (who is a learnt extrovert) my energy comes from being on my own, yet I am never alone as I have always had an awareness of God's presence. There is something special about us sharing in the brokenness of the bread and wine which is poured that breaks through all pretences. There is something raw about the connection between broken bread and the suffering

of Jesus at Easter. Perhaps there is a kind of reassurance that no matter what we are going through in life, God knows what it is like and God is with us.

As I write this sermon there is no time in sight for the easing of restrictions of movement. I have much to do around my house yet I can also feel overwhelmed and part of it is the separation from the people I love. I often speak about Ministry 101- Love your people. And this is so true.

None of us are perfect, we are all doing the best we can in somewhat difficult circumstances but we are held together- not by words, not even by actions but by the One who comes to us in the breaking of bread, in the brokenness of our lives and in the seeming brokenness of our community.

There is a song which has been haunting me recently. It speaks of brokenness and that feeling of not being able to overcome because of uncertainty, anxiety and weakness. The section that speaks to me most though feels as though it comes straight from the Old Testament prophets. It is as though the words from God come to remind me of all that God has done and continues to do.



When Jesus met Cleopas and his friend on the road to Emmaus, Jesus shared with them his brokenness and in the simplest of meals- they were rescued. It will be a couple more weeks before we can join in communion and share once again the sacrament of community but I invite you to read (and hear) the words of a song- words that remind me of God in the brokenness.

May you discover the ways God is reaching out to you in the midst of your brokenness and the brokenness of the world. And may you ALWAYS know that God is with you.