

Service Transcript 5th July 2020

Service Leader: Steve Lineham Communion and Sermon: Mark Reid

Pastor Tony update – because of the Covid 19 restrictions in the Philippines, the inmates are not allowed family visitors, which must be really hard for them, and they are not allowed out of their cells for a service, but Pastor Tony is allowed in to lead a service. Thankfully there's no Covid 19 in the jail though there are still some cases of Tuberculosis.

Two weeks ago, Abigail, one of Pastor Tony's daughters got married, the wedding was supposed to be earlier this year but it had to be postponed because of Covid. They decided to go ahead with the wedding. Only 10 people allowed in the wedding ceremony.

We will Pray for Pastor Tony, his daughter and husband & inmates.

Sovereign God thank you for Pastor Tony, for his passion for reaching out to the prison inmates, to tell them about you and to disciple them. We pray your keeping, wisdom and strength for Pastor Tony and his wife. We pray for Abigail and Fevic as they start their married life together – may they know your presence in their marriage, keeping them close to you and close to each other. We pray for the prison inmates that you will comfort them, that they would know your presence and peace – and that they would be kept safe from Covid.

Amen

Hopefully You remember Thy Kingdom Come – I would encourage you to keep praying for the 5 people God prompted you to pray for. We may have our own ideas of how we might touch their lives – but God may have other, His perfect ideas for that – here's a video from someone, working in the middle east, who found that out for themselves – sharing Jesus through relationships

God show us your way for touching those we are praying for, thank you again for the privilege we have of being your voice and touch into people's lives in your name. Help us to persevere in prayer. To see you working in their lives. Amen

Prayer confession – Lord I get things wrong, but you Jesus are my righteousness, Jesus you shed your blood for me, Lord have mercy on me, you know me through and through, you know what I am really like, and still you love me, in Jesus' name Lord God forgive me, fill me again with your spirit, make me new, help me to be more like what you have made me to be. Amen.

Prayer for our world

Father God as your world continues to fight the Corona virus we pray for wisdom and compassion for world leaders – may they have hearts for their people and the people of the world. Amen.

For MRBC - Lord as the restrictions on our meeting together are relaxed we can look forward to being together again, but we are also anxious about keeping ourselves and each other safe and caring for each other – we pray that we would know your leading and guiding Lord for the future, we pray that in all the uncertainty we would honour you and bring glory to you.

Amen

Communion

As we come to Communion we often take time to bring you fellowship news. As many of you will know, David and Linda Bunn have moved to Gunton in Lowestoft in the last couple of weeks. They have been part of the fellowship for a number of years and have made a significant contribution to the life of the church. We're sad to see them go, but pray that the Lord will go with them as they move nearer family.

Father, we pray that you'll be with David and Linda as they start a new chapter in their lives in Gunton. May they settle rapidly in their new home and may you lead them into the church fellowship you want them to be part of. May they be blessed and be a blessing in their new community. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen

We have already expressed in prayer and song our confession and our desire for the peace of God to reign in our lives. So as we come to Communion let's remind ourselves of just who Jesus is.

Reading: Colossians 1:15-18

Prayer of Thanks

Lord Jesus, thank you that you loved us so much that you were prepared to become one of us in order that we may be delivered from sin and death. As we eat the bread and drink the wine, may you help us to realise afresh how great your love is for us. It is love so amazing, so divine that demands our soul, our life, our all. Please help us to do your will in the power of your Spirit, to bring good news to our generation.

We ask this in Your name

Amen.

Words of Institution

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said,

"This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying,

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

THE BREAD AND WINE

Father, thank you that we have been able to remember in the bread and wine, the broken body and shed blood of Your dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, may we reflect Jesus in our lives day by day to all those in our families and community.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

FELLOWSHIP PRAYERS

Lord we would lift our fellowship before you. We thank you that even though we are still limited in our movements, we are able to come online to worship, to listen to Your word, to pray and to meet one another on Zoom. We pray for those who don't have access, that they will feel You close to them and they will use what means they have to hear Your voice and be encouraged. We pray for those in the fellowship who are sick at this time, that they may know Your healing and wholeness. We pray for those who are grieving loss of loved ones and those going through personal difficulties, that You will be with them and show them a way through their situation.

We ask this in Jesus' name

Amen.

Sermon

Reading: Isaiah 61:1-3

We live in a broken world. How often have you heard that statement in the past few years? At the moment, we're in a world being broken because of CORONAVIRUS. Not so many months ago we were talking of a world being broken by POLLUTION, or a world broken by CONFLICT, broken by POVERTY, and more recently, broken by RACISM. The Irish Author John Connolly has written: QUOTE "The world is full of broken things: broken hearts, broken promises, broken people." *The Unquiet*

BROKEN GLASS

If the world's not broken one way, it's broken another way. It's rather like this picture of a broken window. It's broken in different ways, in different patterns and shapes. That's our world too, and it's been broken in all sorts of ways since people have been around because of conflict, greed, uncontrolled exploitation, suspicion, hatred or whatever. But in our picture of a broken windscreen, it's been shattered in different ways but it's breakage was due to a single impact – a stone right at the centre of the circular pattern.

God's view of our broken world, is that it's the way it is because of a single thing – sin. It comes right down to human wrongdoing. It's at the epicentre of everything that's broken in the world.

As we've considered Isaiah 61, we have seen how a promise went out to the people of Judah; its land stripped of its wealth and its people, its brightest and best transported into captivity, its leaders jailed. It was a nation that in its latter days inflicted injustice on its own citizens, was now victim to injustice itself from the Babylonians. Such is the nature of sin. If our own sin doesn't break us, someone else's does!

Yet God was sending an Anointed One to rescue them from poverty, captivity, imprisonment and, the subject of our service today, their brokenness. As we said in past weeks, we can see in some ways how this was fulfilled by Cyrus of Persia who conquered Babylon and allowed conquered nations an opportunity to return and rebuild their lands, in albeit a limited way.

But in Isaiah, as in many other parts of the OT we see another narrative the returning Jews recognised, of an Anointed One (a Messiah) who was going to come and re-establish the kingdom properly and was going to be a leader, a king who was going to establish a just nation, where poverty was eradicated, the slavery and domination of foreign powers removed and bring healing to those downcast. Here's what the Messiah was going to do amongst all the other things on the list: *He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted,*

The picture here is of binding up a wound. Some translations use heal the broken-hearted. The term is as we understand it today. It's no surprise as the figure of speech broken-hearted in English actually comes from the OT. It's a figure of speech because it's nothing to do with physical state of our internal organ, it's describing those who have been broken in will, in intellect, in emotion; people who don't feel life is worth living any more because something has been taken from them that has broken them. It's placed them into a state of melancholy, depression, a low state.

We often use broken-hearted for people who have lost a loved one. I know of many people whose lives have been shattered by bereavement. Some are still broken by it, years after the death. They are broken, can't move on, trapped, captives to their grief and loss. Perhaps that's you this morning.

BROKEN HEART We use the term in other ways – loss in matters of love and romance. How many heartbroken have we known who have been rejected, cheated upon in relationships. It's stuff of many love songs.

Or those who've been heartbroken by their children or grandchildren, a brother or sister.

Or heartbroken because of loss of theft of something we treasured. Broken-hearted, shattered.

How often have we heard the words "he died of a broken heart, she died of a broken heart." Broken-hearted, broken. If we have never been broken-hearted ourselves, we know of those who have. Maybe we have been there to try to pick up the pieces. Maybe we've been there ourselves, picked up the pieces and moved on.

Heart-broken is a horrible situation to find ourselves in. But in brokenness and in sorrow, we find a there is God who cares, who doesn't want to be broken-hearted, but really quite the reverse. Here are a few verses:

Psalm 34:18 " The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.."

Psalm 147:3 "He heals the broken hearted and binds up their wounds."

Notice that these are all in the OT. Whereas in OT times, broken-hearted was a figure of speech in common parlance in Hebrew times, it's not used in the NT.

However, even though the figure of speech wasn't used, it's sentiments were still being spoken about using different forms of words.

Matt 5:3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

But (the Lord) said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 ESV

We have a God who deeply loves those living with injustice, tragedy, personal disaster, the consequences of sin. The communion this morning reminded us of how much God loves us.

As long as we are broken, we are also trapped, prisoners in our own situation, in our past, in our emotions or whatever. We need healing from that, we need repair, we need to be freed from the situation in which we find ourselves.

When I have a broken windscreen, I know there is nothing much I can do about it. Once broken like this (PICTURE) it can't be put back together. Fitting a new windscreen isn't a DIY job.

The broken-hearted are people who often need help. I praise God for the many people out there who are able to help the broken-hearted. To get alongside them and help them. If you are broken-hearted this morning, look for those who will help you. Life is too short to remain broken.

Most of all, God specialises in the broken. He loves them. He loves you. C H Spurgeon once said this: "There are many sorts of broken hearts, and Christ is good at healing them all."

We have a Father who cares, a Saviour who heals and a Spirit who has power to change our most broken of situations. If you know Jesus, then be encouraged that He can see the bigger picture. You may not see beyond your problem but He can.

Here's another quote from an American author, Lysa TeuKeurst " We live in a world full of broken people. Isn't it comforting to know that God isn't ever broken? He isn't ever caught off guard, taken by surprise, or shocked by what happens next.

If you don't know Jesus this morning and you've seen the communion, heard this message, but struggle with being broken-hearted then please understand that Jesus died for you and he is able to bring value and meaning back into your life if you are prepared to trust Him and to follow Him, because you'll be following Him out of your situation..

Let me close by saying this, we have a God who is able and willing to change the most negative experiences in our lives. And He does if we would only trust Him. Sometimes it is only when we are most broken in spirit that God can get through to us because we have come to an end of ourselves and our strength and have to take His promises at His word. Trust, follow.

Let's pray.

Father,

Thank you that You love us and that You are filled with mercy and compassion when you see us broken-hearted. Lord Jesus, we pray that you will come alongside anyone who had heard this and are broken-hearted due to bereavement, breakup of relationship or any other situation that has resulted in loss for them. Holy Spirit, by Your power, release them from being captive to loss and bring them the hope that comes through trusting Jesus. We pray that you will bring to each of these the help and encouragement they need, and the ability to seek help.

Finally Father, for those of us that are in a good place at the moment, we pray that you will give us opportunity to be and encouragement to those that are broken-hearted to come alongside them, and pray for them and with them.

We ask this in Jesus' name,
Amen.

Song: Beauty for brokenness

BENEDICTION

Ephesians 3:20-21 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

For Reflection and Discussion

1. Have you ever suffered heartbreak? What caused it and how did you manage to pick up the pieces?
2. Read Psalm 34:18, Psalm 109:6, Psalm 147:3, Isaiah 61:1 Describe God's attitude to the broken-hearted.
3. As Mark said in the service, there are many other ways and metaphors for describing the loss and weakness of brokenheartedness. Read some of them here: Psalm 34:17-20, Psalm 73:26, Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 57:15, Jeremiah 29:11, John 14:27, 2 Cor 12:7b-10, 2 Cor 1:3-4, Romans 8:31-39. What do these verses tell us about how we

may escape from being low in spirit. How may we help those who are broken? How do you think the Anointed One (Jesus) comes into this?

4. Take time to pray for those who you know are brokenhearted and low in spirit.

Please note that some translations of the New Testament have "heals the brokenhearted" in Luke 4:18 which is where Jesus visits the synagogue at Nazareth. Those words are not present in the most reliable Greek manuscripts of Luke's Gospel and for a very good reason, which Mark will deal with in next week's service.